



The Outdoor School

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Santa Barbara, CA 93105
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www.theoutdoorschool.org

Dear Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents,

Welcome to The Outdoor School, an environmental education program nestled in the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains. We hope you are ready for a week of **adventure, excitement, learning, team building, and hiking.**

This book will address any questions or concerns about The Outdoor School, especially your role at The Outdoor School.

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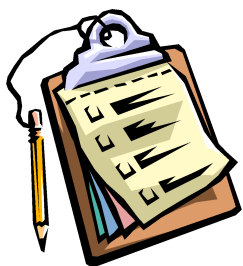
We look forward to spending a week with you and your students. Everyone at The Outdoor School is here to make your week more enjoyable and educational, so if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions, do not hesitate to call **(805) 335-2899**, email **Amanda.chick@scouting.org**, or speak to us while you are here.

See you soon,
The Outdoor School Director
Mako Shark

The Outdoor School Checklist

THREE MONTHS BEFORE ARRIVAL

- ❖ Call The Outdoor School to schedule parent slideshow or receive the link to the slide show
- ❖ Confirm number of students attending
- ❖ Send deposit to confirm your week at the Outdoor School
- ❖ Send out waivers/waiver link to all participants coming to the Outdoor School
- ❖ Begin to organize Parent Chaperone Cabin Leaders. **Each cabin needs TWO chaperones.** Email the Director if you are unsure how many you need. This can be done sooner to confirm parent schedules.
 - ❖ Call local high schools to schedule cabin leaders if needed.



ONE MONTH BEFORE ARRIVAL

- ❖ Cabin leaders should be selected and trained - contact the Education Director if you need any assistance in this process.
- ❖ Send links to parent and student handbooks home
- ❖ READ this handbook – any questions, comments, or concerns, please call the Director

THREE WEEKS BEFORE ARRIVAL

- ❖ Check for all final waivers. No more waivers will be accepted during this time
- ❖ Email Organization Forms to Amanda.chick@scouting.org
 - o Prepare girls' and boys' cabin assignments
 - o Prepare Hiking Groups
 - o Fill out Special Concerns
 - o Fill out dietary restrictions
- ❖ Payment is due before arrival



DAY OF YOUR ARRIVAL

- ❖ Make sure to bring **ALL** student health, emergency forms, and medications.
- ❖ Please arrive between 9:00–9:30 a.m. (Contact the Director for late arrival times). Make sure to let bus drivers know to be back on the last day at 11:00 a.m. for loading and departure around noon.

Packing List

Personal Items

- Bedding – twin size sheets. It can be a sheet and a sleeping bag or a sheet and a blanket.
- Pillow
- Toiletries
- Towel
- Hiking shoes – 2 pairs in case one gets wet
- Outerwear – including rain gear, warm and cold weather clothes
- Long Pants for hikes – lots of poison oak on the property
- Comfortable clothing
- Reusable water bottle
- Backpack
- Treats and snacks for you (NOT FOR STUDENTS)
- Reusable beverage cups (coffee, tea, etc.)



Supplies and equipment

- Teacher handbook – yep, this book
- Any school work, papers to grade, report cards
- Recreational reading
- Any musical instruments you play

Forms

- Class health summary sheets
- Cabin assignment sheets



Miscellaneous

- ❑ Emergency phone number of your school administrator
- ❑ Great attitude and a willingness to have fun with your students!

Mission Statement

The Outdoor School facilitates the development of community and environmental stewardship in students through a direct experience with nature. We broaden students' horizons by inspiring a sense of wonder and curiosity about our dynamic, diverse, and interdependent local and global environments.

Objectives

- o Students will gain knowledge of botany, geology, wildlife biology, fire ecology, water science, astronomy, and Chumash culture through experiential learning.
- o Students will gain a new understanding of their place and responsibility in our environment through hands-on activities guided by naturalists.
- o Students will acquire teamwork skills through the course of their studies.

You, the Teacher, at ODS

Teachers play an integral role in The Outdoor School.
Teachers started The Outdoor School in 1957.



At The Outdoor School, you are a:

- ✗ **PARTICIPANT** – the students want to share this adventure with you. Your participation will enhance this experience for both you and your students.
- ✗ **ROLE MODEL** – you will model good learning for the students on curriculum hikes. The students will turn to you as an example of how to behave in this new setting.
- ✗ **SAFETY RESPONDER** – Teachers are responsible for administering any student medications. Teachers will help with any safety procedures and ask the naturalist for First Aid guidance.
- ✗ **SUPERVISOR** – specifically, teachers will help supervise recreation, showers, and morning and evening bed checks.
- ✗ **MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY** – the Education Director, Naturalists, and teachers will work together to provide a positive, educational experience for the students. We strive to communicate openly and honestly with each other all week and appreciate your assistance in this.

If you feel you do not understand your role, or would like to contribute more, please contact the Director at (805) 335-2899 or amanda.chick@scouting.org anytime.

Location

The Outdoor School is located at Rancho Alegre Boy Scout camp, on the north-facing slopes of the Santa Ynez Mountains, near Lake Cachuma. The site is approximately 40 miles south of Santa Maria and 20 miles north of Santa Barbara, on Highway 154.

Facilities

The teacher areas are private entrance areas off the main cabins for the students. Each location has a twin bed and a full bathroom. You will need to bring your own bedding and towels.

In addition to the teachers', four dormitories are split into eight cabins, the dining hall and kitchen, mountain biking trails, and archery range. The buildings have electricity and are heated and have air conditioning.

The Outdoor School Community

- ❑ **NATURALISTS** are the teachers at The Outdoor School. They conduct hikes, lead special activities, supervise meals, and guide campfires. The Assistant Director is responsible for The Outdoor School when the Director is not available.
- ❑ **DIRECTOR** is in charge of the day-to-day operations of The Outdoor School, including supervising naturalists, and cabin leaders, and assisting the teachers with student supervision and discipline. If the Director is not available then the Assistant Director is in charge.
- ❑ **PROGRAM COORDINATOR** is in charge of leading the cabin leaders and aids the Director in all aspects of the program.
- ❑ **KITCHEN STAFF** cook all meals (including desserts) and need lots of 'thank you' and 'that food was awesome'. The Kitchen Director accommodates the students' food allergies and dietary restrictions.
- ❑ **MAINTENANCE** maintains all the buildings and facilities on the property.
- ❑ **CABIN LEADERS** stay in the cabins with the students at night, accompany one hiking group on hikes, assists with meal set-up, clean-up, food serving, and escort the students everywhere (more information below).
- ❑ **CLASSROOM TEACHERS**...well...that is you!!!

Cabin Leaders

Cabin Leaders are a VERY IMPORTANT part of The Outdoor School experience. Their attitudes, enthusiasm, and maturity will guide your learners and support the program. It is the responsibility of participating teachers to recruit, select and train the cabin leaders who will be joining their group.

If high school cabin leaders are necessary, the teacher must contact their local high school to arrange cabin leaders for the week they are attending. Please contact The Outdoor School when these arrangements are made so we can set up cabin leader training. Also, call if you need assistance finding cabin leaders. Discipline of the cabin leaders is the responsibility of the teacher who made arrangements with the high school – the Education Director will assist with this discipline.

Please carefully consider the Cabin Leader responsibilities below and consult the Cabin Leader Handbook before choosing these individuals. As always, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact us.

- **The Cabin Leaders should be parents, high school juniors or seniors, or in some cases, school staff. In cases where the Cabin Leaders are over 18, California state policies will require them to be fingerprinted and/or have a background check and take a 2-hour online training.**
- **We require at least two Cabin Leaders for each cabin. It is up to each school to recruit the right number of Cabin Leaders.** We can have a maximum of 14 students per cabin and 2 cabin leaders, making the cabin a total of 16. Unless otherwise specified, if multiple schools attend the same week, the students will be mixed in the cabin. If you wish not to have your students mixed, we can try to accommodate this request. This is not always possible, though.
- All cabin leaders are expected to stay on-site for the entire duration of the program. If a Cabin Leader needs to leave, they will need their departure pre-approved by the Director and must sign out appropriately. 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.

Responsibilities

- o Assist Naturalists with supervision and activities on curriculum hike
- o Monitor safety and model good behavior in the cabins
- o Respond responsibly to student needs
- o Supervise meal set-up, clean-up, food serving, and behavior
- o Communicate any concerns or questions with the Naturalists, Education Director and Teachers
- o Escort the students to activities on time

- o Create a sense of community in their cabin and hiking groups



The Learning Environment



It is our belief that The Outdoor School should be a place for all learners. We strive to create an environment built on self-respect, respect for others, and for the environment. We are avid practitioners of positive role modeling, teamwork, and we make every effort to foster the development of intrinsic motivation and joy in all of the participants.

We also use positive reinforcement to extrinsically reward what we see as stellar behavior in the form of “stars” and the “Golden Star Award” which is given out at the end of each week. As is often the case when trying to balance the needs of individuals with the needs of a group, we sometimes are forced to rely on an extrinsic system of discipline to help students better understand their role as learners at The Outdoor School. When a student repeatedly demonstrates inappropriate behavior, they will receive “checks”.

- 1st check – a formal warning and discussion about inappropriate behavior with a Naturalist. Participating teachers will be alerted of this warning.
- 2nd check– the student loses the ability to choose their next Special Activity and teachers are asked to intervene in the developing situation.
- 3rd check – the student misses recreation time or a Special Activity and the learner creates a behavior contract with the Education Director or Program Coordinator.
- 4th check – the student misses a Special Activity and/or recreation time and a phone call is made to the student’s parents to discuss their behavior issues.
- 5th check– the parents of the child are notified and the child is sent home.

Any student or students who exhibits extreme or unsafe behavior such as fighting or intentionally harming others physically or emotionally, intentionally endangering themselves or others, participating in cabin raids or other violations of personal space, stealing, bringing or using knives or controlled substances will be immediately removed from The Outdoor School by parents or their school’s administration. We reserve the right to adjust our policies after consulting with teachers and, though it is not our intention to remove youth from the program, we do reserve the right to have any person or persons removed from the property, at any time, if their behavior is deemed dangerous or inappropriate. If you or a parent has any questions regarding the learning environment at The Outdoor School, please feel free to contact us.

Early Dismissal and Guests

If a student has to leave the program early for any reason (discipline, emergencies, special events, etc.) it is the responsibility of their teacher to ensure that the child is picked up by a responsible individual (preferably the guardian) and is signed out in the binder located in the Office. If you would like to have school staff or guests visit the program other than parents (which are not 8 allowed) please clear it with the Director ahead of time and sign them in and

out at the office. All visitors must wear a wrist band, located with the binders in the office and you assume responsibility for their behavior/activities during their stay.

Refund Policy

A student that attends The Outdoor School in conjunction with their public or private school will owe the respective fees appropriated for each student (Outdoor School rate is \$375.00 per student, payable by the student's guardian. For the guardian this rate may fluctuate depending on other costs designated by the attending institution (such as transportation fees). This payment by the guardian is due to the child's public or private school at the appropriate date designated by that institution. The institution will then owe The Outdoor School for the number of students that attend OR must pay for 90% of the contracted number of students (if contracted enrollment goes below 90% of the expected student population designated on the contract).

Final payment is due 7 days before the first day of attending the program. Payments not received by that date are subject to a 2% late fee. Payments every thirty (30) days thereafter will be subject to an additional 2% late fee on the unpaid balance.

A school may change their contract numbers by the following dates:

- Schools attending between October and December (of the respective school year) must submit final numbers by **Sept. 15th**.
- Schools attending between January and March (of the respective school year) must submit final numbers by **Dec. 1st**.
- Schools attending between April and June (of the respective school year) must submit final numbers by **February 1st**.

In the event that a student attends the Outdoor School and must go home for a major circumstance (such as illness, death in the family, medical emergency) the Outdoor School reserves the right to charge for the dismissed student(s) in full; partial; or forgiven (non-charged) amount.

A student leaving within the first 24 hours of programming will typically be forgiven the due amount or be charged a partial fee of $\frac{1}{4}$ the 4-day rate. A student leaving between Day 2 and Day 4 of the program is typically charged the full tuition of \$375.00. All circumstances and rates determined are subject to change under the administration of The Los Padres Council, Scouting America & The Outdoor School at Rancho Alegre.

The student's public or private institution may also choose to refund the guardian of the respective student(s) in full or partial amounts based on transportation costs; in meeting 90% of the contracted amount; or other designated criteria.

Students that are sent home for disciplinary action at any time will not receive a refund.



Curriculum Hikes

The Outdoor School’s curriculum embodies years of tradition blended with the best of place-based experiential education. Our Curriculum Hikes include team building games, explorations and inquiries, hands-on science learning, and engaging activities linked together with direct experiences in nature. The themes and content of the five Curriculum Hikes are closely aligned with the California State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards for fifth and sixth grade.



- ❑ **Ecology Exploration** – students discover the flora and fauna that live at ODS including their ecosystems, adaptations, food sources, and their relationships with other animals and humans.
- ❑ **Fire and Water Hike** – students will gain an understanding of how fires spread and study the post-fire recovery of our native ecosystems as well as gain an understanding of the water cycle and its impact on the environment.
- ❑ **Dynamic Earth Hike** – Students will explore why and how the Earth is constantly changing by studying eroded creek beds, searching for fossils, modeling the Solar System, and exploring the geographical features of the Santa Ynez Mountains!
- ❑ **Night Hike** – this hike is the highlight of the week. Activities focus on astronomy, nocturnal animals and adaptations, as well as confidence building through the famous “Courage Walk”.
- ❑ **Closing Hike**– The Outdoor School experience will be wrapped up by reviewing the week’s curriculum hikes, discussing ways to live more sustainably with the land, and solving the week's riddle.



Special Activities



Special activities are offered on Day Two and Three from 2-4 pm and Day Three from 8-9 pm. On Thursday afternoon we ask that a teacher or two go on the 9 mile ridge hike to assist the naturalist.

The following is a list of special activities that may be offered (**but not always**) at The Outdoor School:

The 9-mile Hike – Hike to Lake Cachuma – Archery – Old Man Murphy – Frog City – Extended Campfire – Mountain Biking – The Lost Redwood – Survival Hike – Rock Hopping – Shelter Building – Bird Watching – Animal Tracking – Owls and Mice – and many more!

Cabin Groups

- ❑ Have the students select 2 or 3 friends for their cabin or you can choose what you feel is best for the group dynamic.
- ❑ Divide the students into even groups in all the cabins using the cabin/hiking group organization form.
- ❑ The other school(s) attending with you will divide their students equally and we will merge them. Each cabin will have students from each school unless requested otherwise and we have the space to separate schools.
- ❑ Be aware of the group dynamics of the cabin you have created – we want this to be a successful week for all students.
- ❑ Please fill out the organization form that was emailed to you by the Director. This form is for hiking and cabin groups and includes the meal information and student concerns. If you need this form again or have questions please email Amanda.Chick@scouting.org

Teacher Meetings

Day One

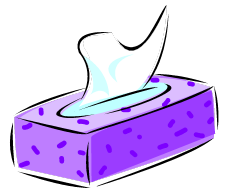
- 11:15 am with the Naturalists to review students' needs on hikes and special activities
- 10:30 am with Director and Cabin Leaders to discuss student needs in the cabins
- Bring to the meeting
 - Class health summary sheet
 - Dietary needs
 - Health or safety concerns

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE: Teacher attitudes and enthusiasm are a major influence on the success of our program. Please share your excitement with your students and help them get excited before they come!

Health Information

Emergency Form

It is ESSENTIAL that all parents fill out The Outdoor School online waiver form (no student will be able to attend The Outdoor School without this form). All participants, including students, adults and chaperones, must fill out the waiver.



Medications

DUE TO CHANGING DISTRICT POLICIES, THE OUTDOOR SCHOOL DOES NOT PROVIDE MEDICATION FORMS. EACH SCHOOL NEEDS TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN MEDICATION FORMS BASED ON SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY. **IN MANY CASES, MEDICATION CANNOT BE ADMINISTERED TO A MINOR WITHOUT THE PRE AUTHORIZATION, IN WRITING, FROM A DOCTOR, INCLUDING OVER-THE COUNTER DRUGS THAT WE STOCK LIKE BENADRYL, TYLENOL, IBUPROFEN, ANTIHISTAMINE LOTIONS, ETC.**

First aid

The Naturalist will provide first aid if the injury occurs on trail. Otherwise the student will be brought to the infirmary for first aid. First aid for minor accidents generally includes rest, ice, compression, elevation, wrapping of sprains, and cleaning and bandaging scrapes and cuts.

Emergencies

- ❖ Fever over 100 degrees – notify parents/guardians and the child should be sent home. Contact the Director or Lead Naturalist **before** calling the parents/guardians.
- ❖ Medical emergency
 - o Minor – A teacher, Director, Administrative Assistant, or Lead Naturalist will transport the injured student to Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital (15 minutes). It is preferred that two adults transport students
 - o Major – Immediately notify the Director. She will call 911 and notify them of our location and then the parents/guardians will be notified
- ❖ All of The Outdoor School staff has first aid and CPR training
- ❖ **DO NOT CONTACT** parents/guardians without discussing the matter with the Education Director

Special needs

We welcome all students at The Outdoor School. If your students have a special need (sleep walking, bed-wetting, snoring, shyness, homesickness, health condition, dietary requirements, etc.), please do not hesitate to send them to The Outdoor School. Discuss any special needs of the student with their parents or guardians prior to departure. If you still have concerns, please feel free to call The Outdoor School Director.

The Outdoor School is truly a place for all learners. The staff and administration are experienced in and able to accommodate most childhood issues from bedwetting to food allergies, mobility problems, shyness, snoring, behavioral disorders, health problems, and learning issues. The more we know in advance and the more details you provide us with during the Day One meeting, the better we are able to serve your learners.

If the special need involves **dietary restrictions**, please have the parents list substitution items on the health form. **Our kitchen staff needs to know what the student can have, not simply what they cannot. This is important to know so the kitchen staff know what they can make as a substitution for the student.**