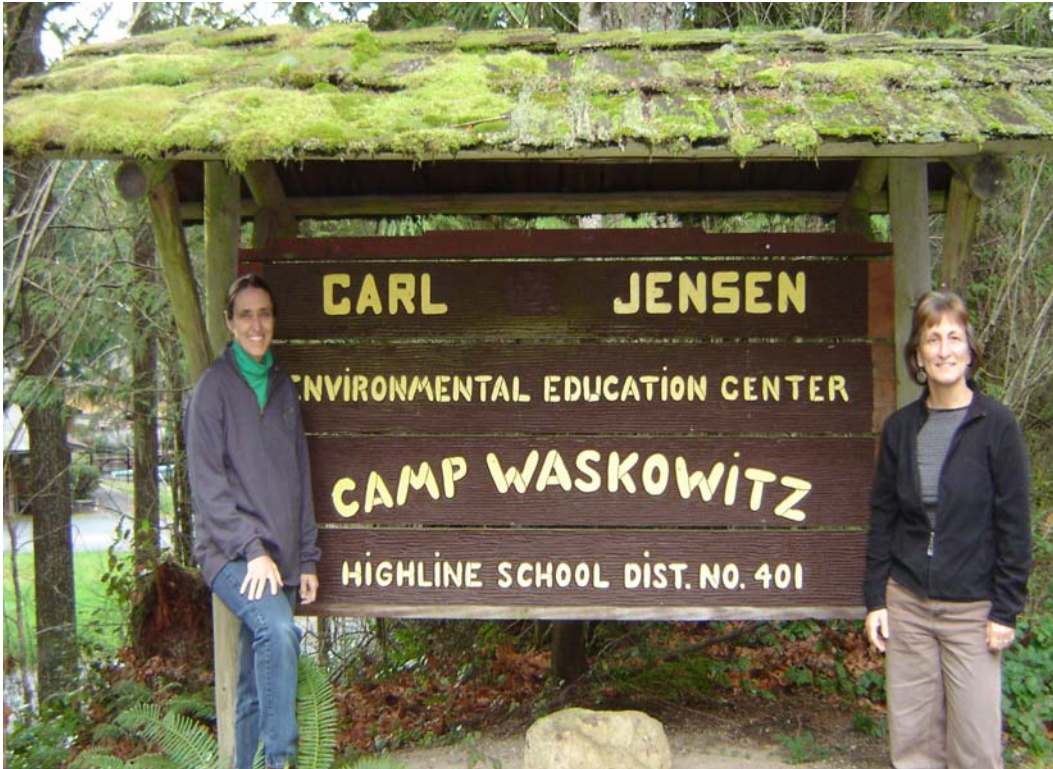


Waskowitz Outdoor School
Parent Information Guide



A journey of discovery exploring the
diversity of people and nature.

“Classroom in the Cascades”



“My week at Waskowitz was the best ever. I had so much fun hiking on the trails and singing songs in the Dining Hall. I learned about nature and I made new friends. I want to come back as a High School leader!”

-6th grade student

Dear Parents:

Waskowitz Outdoor School is a place where learning is active, fun, and an integral part of your child's education. The week long in-residence experience gives students the opportunity to learn about themselves, others, and nature in a positive, safe environment. We at Waskowitz believe that the beauty and power of nature combined with a positive caring community can provide important lessons to becoming responsible, successful adults.

For many students, their time at Waskowitz Outdoor School is a pivotal point in their lives, from increased self esteem to influencing later career and family decisions. It can also be a time of high anxiety and fear for both parent and child as students are away from home and the familiar routine.

This booklet is created to provide you, the parent/guardian, with information about the program, facility, and policies here at Waskowitz. Also included are suggestions for how to best support your child for a successful week at Outdoor School.

We recognize the responsibility and the privilege you have given us by allowing your student to attend school at our site. The Waskowitz staff and your child's teacher are looking forward to working with you to provide the best experience possible for all students.

Sincerely,

Roberta McFarland, Director
Waskowitz Outdoor School



Table of Contents

	Page
Important Facts to Know	1
Outdoor School Mission and Philosophy	2
The Facility	3
What will my child be doing and who will be supervising?	4-5
Community Living	6
High School Leaders	7
Sleeping and Bathroom Arrangements, Medications and Food	8
Homesickness and Bedwetting	9
Behavior Expectations	10-11
Daily Schedule	12
Tips for a Successful week	13
Meet the Staff	14-15
Bringing Waskowitz Home	16
Build a Better World	17
Clothing and Supplies	18
What to Bring Checklist (Inside Back Cover)	19

Important Facts to Know

- Waskowitz is an outdoor school, not a “Camp”. Students will study math, science, language arts, social studies, music, art, and P.E. using the outdoors as their textbook and classroom.
- All school rules and behavior expectations apply.
- All medications need a **licensed health care providers signature** and must be in the **original labeled container** to be administered at Waskowitz. This includes prescription **and** over-the-counter medications (i.e. vitamins, herbs, creams, cold remedies, Lact-aid, Tylenol). Under no circumstances can we give any medication to your child without signed orders from a licensed health care provider (see back page of permission form).
- Food is eaten only in the Dining Hall. Students may not have snacks, candy, gum, or pop in the cabins.
- Students are constantly supervised by either their classroom teacher, Waskowitz staff member or a high school leader.
- You can view our facilities by going to the Highline School District web site <http://www.highlineschools.org/waskowitz>.
- Due to space limitations we no longer have a parent night at Waskowitz. Visits by parents during the week are discouraged. We do encourage you and your family to attend one of the scheduled Open House days. Information about the dates and times of the Open House will be sent home with your child.
- The Waskowitz district office number is **(206) 631-7626**.
- The mailing address for Waskowitz is 45505 S.E. 150th St., North Bend WA 98045.
- The phone number for Waskowitz is (425) 277-7195. Please use this number **only** for emergencies.
- The FAX machine number for Waskowitz is (425) 277-7197.

Waskowitz Outdoor School

Mission Statement

The mission of Waskowitz Outdoor School is to provide a safe, positive and high quality outdoor education experience. We strive to create experiences that foster a respect for self, others, and the natural world.



Philosophy

We believe that nature is a powerful and inspiring teacher. We believe in the value and purpose of every living thing and in the power of individuals to create positive change in the world.

We believe that our core values of integrity, cooperation, attitude, respect and empathy create a positive, caring learning environment.

We believe that active hands-on inquiry based learning is the most successful for student achievement.



The Facility

Waskowitz Outdoor School is owned and operated by the Highline School District. It is located on 372 acres 3 miles east of North Bend, Washington, just off I-90, and is situated on the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River.



Waskowitz is an original Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp built in 1935, and was designated as a King County Historical Landmark in August, 1992. Waskowitz is also listed on the Washington State and National Register of Historic Places. The historic character of Waskowitz compliments its beautiful natural setting.

There are 8 heated buildings with hot and cold running water and electricity. The buildings include a dining hall, sleeping areas, class meeting spaces, staff and teacher quarters. There are many covered shelters and campfire areas on the property. There is also a large grass recreation field and a sand volleyball court.



What will my child be doing and who will be supervising?

Your child will be observing, exploring, hiking, singing, writing, reading, identifying, classifying, recording data, discussing, creating, drawing . . . in other words . . . active! There are no video games or TVs at Waskowitz.

Waskowitz is an outdoor school so much of the time is spent learning outdoors. There are heated indoor spaces for classes to use if necessary. Your child's teacher plans and teaches many of the lessons with assistance from high school leaders. Outdoor school staff teach some classes with teachers present and involved.

Mornings and afternoons are spent "in class" with their teacher and classmates. The main units of study and some possible lessons are:

Forest Ecosystems: Rotting log explorations, soil studies, data collecting.

River Ecology and Watersheds: Observing and identifying insects that live in the river, water chemistry tests, creative writing about river observations, hauling water to gain an awareness of water usage. Field trip to the Cedar River Watershed to see the source of drinking water for many Puget Sound residents.



Wildlife: Predator/Prey activities, Adaptation lessons to see how the pelts, skulls and tracks of animals allow them to survive.



Plants: Comparing and Contrasting, classifying, observing growth processes and patterns, identifying.

Outdoor Skills: Survival lesson about the importance of being prepared, ten essentials, heat loss, map reading, compass lessons, low impact use of the outdoors.

Sometimes the best lessons are those not listed here, like when an eagle soars overhead or the elk and deer decide to make their presence known or a shooting star appears during campfire. Throughout all lessons and activities we strive to help students discover the beauty and wonder of the natural world and allow nature to teach and inspire.

Throughout the week students are introduced to ideas about living and getting along with others. "**Happify**" is the idea of having a positive attitude and sharing that positive energy with others. They learn about things that make strong friendships and strong communities, i.e., cooperation, honesty, caring, kindness and respect. We also share with them ideas for living with less impact on this planet. "**Scrunch the Crunch**" is how we encourage students to reduce garbage and to conserve electricity and water.

Your child will also be participating in folk dancing, nightly campfires, and small group activities with their cabin group.

Students are supervised at all times by classroom teachers, staff members and/or high school leaders. Teachers are always present on-site and a staff member resides in the student living areas.

Community Living

Another part of your child's time at Waskowitz is living with others as part of a community.

Safety is the number one priority at Outdoor School. At all times and in all activities we strive to ensure the physical and emotional safety of everyone (students, leaders, teachers, staff).

In addition to safety, caring forms a basis for who we are and how we interact with each other. We care about ourselves, others, the environment and about making the world a better place.

The acronym **I.C.A.R.E.** helps us remember the other core values that form the basis of our learning community.

- **I**ntegrity – what you do when no one is looking.
- **C**ooperation – working together, participating, sharing, helping.
- **A**ttitude – having positive feelings and thoughts that are shown by posture, language and tone of voice.
- **R**espect – showing honor and consideration for self, others and the natural world.
- **E**mpathy – being able to identify with the thoughts and feelings of another person, being able to put yourself "in someone else's shoes", understanding and caring how your actions impact other people.

Throughout the week we refer to **I.C.A.R.E.** and what it means in the various aspects of daily life at Waskowitz Outdoor School.

We also focus on the following life skills that are necessary for interacting with others in a positive, effective manner:

- **C**ommunication – listening and speaking skills, as well as non-verbal.
- **T**eamwork – working with others.
- **T**aking responsibility for one's actions and contributions.
- **A**ccepting our differences, celebrating our similarities.
- **H**andling conflict in non-violent ways.

This framework helps us to create a fun, positive atmosphere where students can gain a sense of belonging and belief in who they are and the difference they can make in the world.

High School Leaders

Trained high school students serve as cabin leaders and teaching assistants. They are a key component of our Outdoor School program. They go through an application and screening process and are selected based on their maturity and desire to work with children. All high school students attend a weekend of training before their week at the Outdoor School.

There are currently two programs for high school students to become leaders at Waskowitz. The **Waskowitz Environmental Leadership & Service (W.E.L.S.)** program allows students to spend up to three years of high school involved in experiential learning. In addition to classroom studies, they participate in challenge activities, work on environmental restoration projects, complete classroom internships and spend six weeks of the semester being a high school leader at Waskowitz. They earn high school credits and valuable experience. 2014 began the 1st year of W.E.L.S.P.S. and in partnership with PSSC and PSHS, for Seniors, 2015 Lauren Marziliano will be the instructor. 2015 begins the first year of W.E.L.S.P.S. Juniors with Caroline Lauka. the best students who have competed W.E.L.S successfully will be able to finish high school in the program.

The **O.W.L. or One Week Leader** program gives students the opportunity to serve as a leader for one week and earn a one time credit of .5 credit.

All leaders have the opportunity and responsibility to be positive role models and help to ensure the safety of the 6th grade students. They receive on-site support and supervision and a final evaluation/recommendation for their files.

What are the sleeping and bathroom arrangements?

The dormitories at Waskowitz consist of two heated buildings, one for boys and one for girls. Each building is divided into eight cabins. Each cabin has immediate and easy indoor access to centrally located restrooms and individual private shower facilities. Each cabin holds 8-12 students and one or two high school leaders. A staff person lives in each dormitory with the students and leaders.



Medications, injuries, illness

A Registered Nurse is on site for several hours each day and on call 24 hours a day. Emergency response is only minutes away. Please send only necessary medications with your child.

All medications need a **licensed health care providers signature** and must be in the **original labeled container** to be administered at Waskowitz. This includes prescription **and** over-the-counter medications (i.e. vitamins, herbs, creams, cold remedies, Lactaid, Tylenol). Under no circumstances can we give any medication to your child without signed orders from a licensed health care provider (see back page of permission form). **If an illness or injury prevents students from participating in activities, you will be notified to transport the student home.**



Food

All meals are served family style in the Dining Hall. Food is prepared daily on-site, including home made breads, rolls, cookies. Vegetarian options are available at each meal. Please call Waskowitz directly if your child has any **serious** food allergies or restrictions and communicate with your child's teacher. You will need to bring food for students with serious food allergies in containers, clearly marked with your child name. We do not serve Vegan food.

Homesickness

Any student can become homesick, although it is most common for those who have not been away from home before or if they are worried about things at home.

Our staff is trained to look for signs of homesickness and to respond to each case on an individual basis. Please do not tell your child to call home if they get homesick while at the Outdoor School. We have found that phone calls to or from home are often a difficult experience for both parent and child. Your child's teacher can make or receive phone calls and can convey any necessary information.

With staff and teacher support, homesick students usually reach the end of their week feeling good about making it through a difficult time and they do not want to leave Waskowitz.

Bed Wetting

Bed wetting is a common occurrence and one we treat with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality. It is very helpful to know ahead of time if the possibility for bed wetting exists but all beds are checked each day. If your child does wet the bed, staff will take them aside and reassure them and explain what will happen to clothes and bedding.

Sleeping bag and clothes are taken discreetly, washed, dried and returned. During the time of washing, staff tries to find a similar sleeping bag to put in its place so that it is not obvious to cabin mates. It is helpful for you as a parent to encourage your child to talk to a staff member if it does occur or if there is any anxiety or fear of being "found out".

Girls will often have their **menstrual cycle**, some for the first time, while they are at Waskowitz. Please discuss this with your daughter and pack the necessary supplies she may need.

Behavior Expectations

Waskowitz provides a different setting for learning away from the student's classroom and school. It is important that students and parents understand that Waskowitz is an Outdoor School with the same rules and policies as the student's home school. The Outdoor School staff, classroom teachers and high school leaders are responsible for the safety and well being of every student while at Waskowitz. In order to have a safe and positive learning environment both physical and emotional safety are emphasized.

While at the Outdoor School, students are expected to:

- Listen and follow instructions.
- Cooperate and participate in activities.
- Respect the rights of others to learn.
- Respect others and their unique differences.
- Respect the school property and the natural environment.
- Use appropriate language and behavior.
- Tell a teacher, staff member or high school leader if they are having problems with themselves or others.

Behavior NOT tolerated at Waskowitz:

- Bullying
- Verbal harassment
- Physical harassment
- Pushing or shoving
- Intimidating or in any way jeopardizing the safety and well being of another.
- Possession or use of alcohol, tobacco products, narcotics, weapons.
- Theft or vandalism.
- Disrespectful acts towards authority.

Consequences for inappropriate behavior will match the severity and number of offenses. Discipline decisions are made by the classroom teacher with support and input from Waskowitz staff, and if necessary, the Principal of the school your child attends.

Consequences that will be followed for inappropriate behavior are:

1. Verbal warning
2. Separate from group
3. Removal from activity
4. Loss of privileges
5. Written behavior agreement (phone call home and to Principal).
6. Sent home from Outdoor School.

Parents will be called to pick up a student at Waskowitz if a student's behavior is not safe for students or staff. The decision to send a student home will be part of the discipline process.

Please note: Parents will be responsible for the transportation of students who are sent home from Waskowitz due to behavior problems, and no tuition refund will be given if a student is sent home for disciplinary reasons.

Daily Schedule

AM

- 7:00 Reveille wake-up
- 7:30 Flag raising/exercises
- 8:00 Breakfast meal program (singing, teaching skits, announcements)

9:00 Cabin time

9:30-11:40 Class time

NOON

12:00 Lunch meal program



PM

- 1:00 Cabin time, silent sustained reading
- 1:45-4:30 Class time
- 4:30 Recess
- 4:45 Cabin time
- 4:55 Flag lowering, Dinner, meal program
- 6:00 Cabin time
- 6:30 Evening activities (Folk dancing, class meetings, Education Rotation, night hikes, campfires, sharing skits)
- 8:45 To cabins
Showers, journal writing, cabin activities
- 10:00 Lights out

Tips to help your child have a successful week



Read the letters and information that comes home with your student.

Talk with your child's teacher about your questions and concerns.

Attend a Waskowitz Open House. Dates and times of the Open House are sent home with the permission forms.

Talk with your child reminding them Waskowitz is still a school even though they will not be in their classroom setting.

Communicate your positive, supportive attitude, saying things like "I know you can do this", "Outdoor School sure sounds fun", or "Tell me what you are the most worried about".



Meet the Waskowitz Outdoor School Staff

The people who work and live at Waskowitz are professional, dedicated individuals who love the outdoors and working with children. Most of the staff have college degrees and all are trained in emergency procedures and first aid.

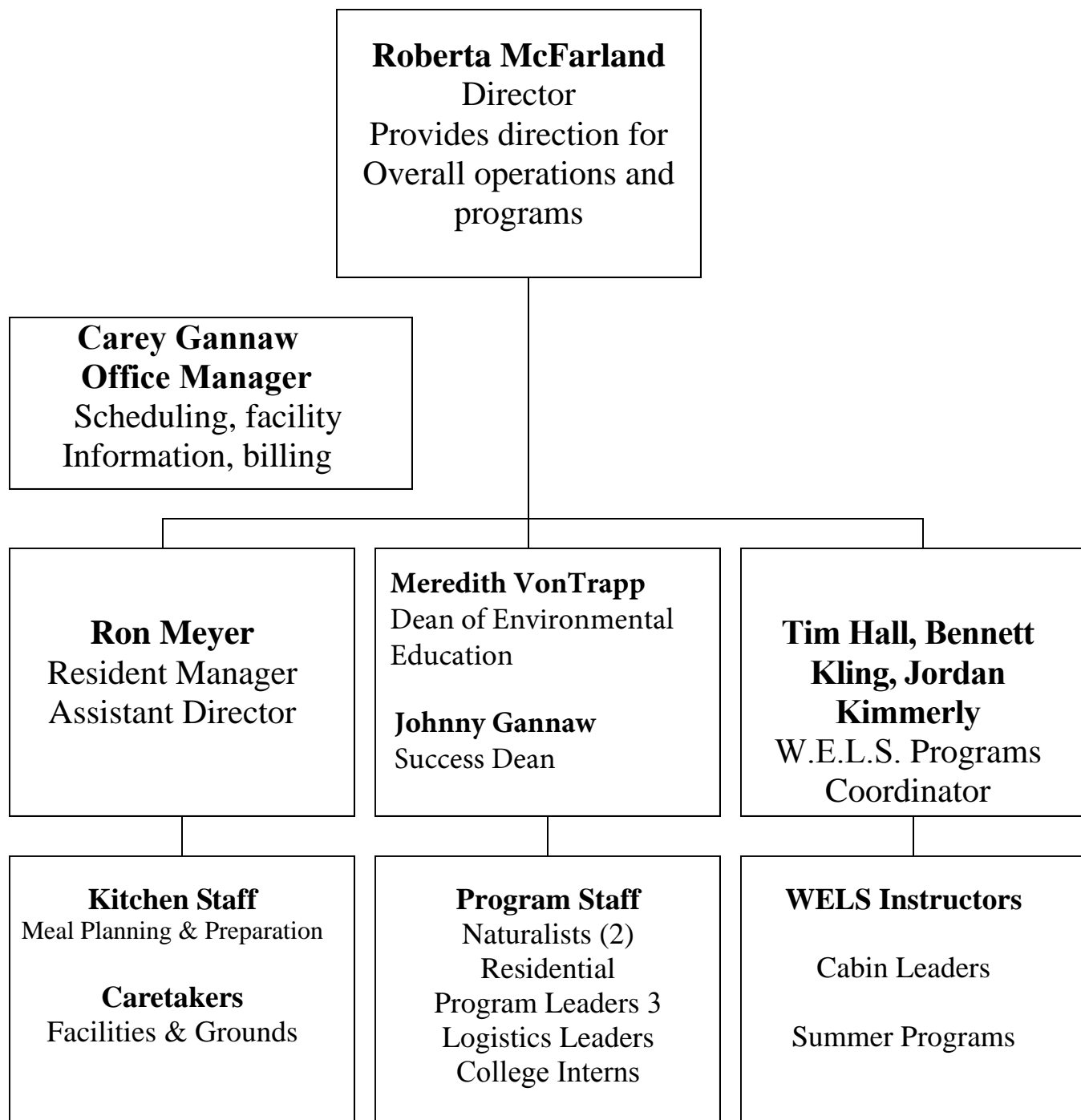
The staff have a variety of backgrounds, experience, and talents. Some are parents themselves and others can easily remember their own Outdoor School experience. All our staff are here not because it's a job but because of a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Roberta McFarland, M.Ed., has served as Director since 1997. Prior to her arrival she was Instructional Coordinator/Director for the Houston (Texas) School Districts' Outdoor Education Center, having worked there since 1979. Roberta and her husband have two daughters and she has a passion for the mission and tradition of Waskowitz Outdoor School.

Ron Meyer, M.Ed., has served as Resident Manager since 1996. He brings a solid educational background having taught High School and many years as a Principal of both elementary and secondary public schools here in Washington State. He and his wife have made Waskowitz their home.

Jackie Pfeiffer, RN, has been a school and camp nurse for over 27 years. Joining our staff in 2002, she is providing Waskowitz with quality professional health care services.

Waskowitz Staff



The dormitories are staffed by two highly qualified Residential Program Leaders. They reside in the dorms with the students and strive to create a safe atmosphere where students and leaders can thrive.

Bringing Waskowitz Home

We want every student to leave Waskowitz knowing they are valuable with the power to do great things and make a difference in the world.

On the last day we present the **Build a Better World** ideas that are found on the following page and then ask your child to write what he/she will do to make the world a better place. Their answers are often surprising, inspiring and sincere.

When your child returns home they may talk about worm bins and feeding the worms. Red Wiggler worms live in bins outside the Dining Hall. After each meal, students separate the waste into landfill trash and "worm food". The worms help us reduce the amount of garbage by eating certain food waste and turning it into wonderful rich soil.

We also talk about "Scrunching the Crunch". Students scrunch the crunch during their week at Waskowitz by turning off the lights when they leave a room and the water off when they brush their teeth.

Scrunching the crunch means to live lightly and respectfully on the earth. Here are some ways to help your child continue to the Scrunch the Crunch at home:

- 🌍 Take short showers. A 10 minute shower can use 50-70 gallons of water.
- 🌍 Wash only full loads in the dishwasher and washing machines.
- 🌍 Turn off the water while brushing teeth.
- 🌍 Turn off lights and computers when not in use.
- 🌍 Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- 🌍 Recycle junk mail. Use the blank sides for notes.
- 🌍 Instead of watching TV, play board or card games.
- 🌍 Go for walks, visit parks in your area, look for signs of wildlife, pick up litter along the way.
- 🌍 Read the newspaper together. Look for articles about the environment or opportunities to clean up or restore an area.
- 🌍 Go shopping together and see who can find the items that contribute the least amount of waste to the garbage can.



Build A Better World

*The world becomes a better place
when we become better human beings.*

Know what is right and have the courage to do it. The world badly needs such people.

Give more to the world and learn to take less. Take pride in what you give and create, not in what you buy and own.

Listen to your conscience. In all the world, the only thing you really have control over is you.

Do the right thing for its own sake. Then you'll be satisfied whether people remember to thank you or not.

Choose love and friendship over power and control. Make decisions that show you care more about others than about what you will get.

Invent better ways for people to live and work together. Look for ways to be more generous and to treat the natural world more kindly.

Be open to the gifts and lessons everyone has to offer. Friendship gives you the chance to see the world through another person's eyes.

Above all, never stop believing that the things you want most deeply are possible.

It is possible to live gently and respectfully with others.

It is possible to live comfortably without destroying nature.

It is possible to keep the promises and commitments you make.

Excerpt from the book *Higher Sanity* by Lawrence Brown



Clothing and Supplies



The best clothing for Outdoor School is used, comfortable and warm! Although your child may disagree, Waskowitz is not a place for high fashion or cotton. The best fabrics to wear for outdoor activities in this wet climate are:

Wool or wool blends provide warmth even when wet.

Polypropylene
A light weight fabric that allows moisture to escape from the body while providing warmth.

Fleece provides warmth without the bulk.

Anything waterproof!

Coats with hoods are preferred and **warm hats** are usually appreciated after the first day. Expensive hiking boots are not necessary, but **sturdy, closed-toe shoes** are. Platforms or shoes with heels often result in sprained ankles. Brand new shoes often cause blisters so old shoes or ones that have been well broken in are best. Wool or wool blend socks can prevent wet, cold feet and are preferable to thin cotton socks. For some, a thin liner sock of nylon or silk works well for warmth and to prevent blisters. Jeans are fine, but tend to take a long time to dry if they get wet. Nylon warm-up pants or rain pants are good to wear over jeans as vegetation and benches are often damp, even on non-rainy days.

Second hand stores such as Value Village, Salvation Army, Goodwill, etc. are great sources for affordable outdoor clothing.

Personal water bottles are important, but there is no need to buy an expensive bottle that might get lost. Reuse a pop or juice bottle.

What To Bring Checklist

Please use this list as a guide when your child packs their bags for Outdoor School. Used clothes and items you have around the house work well, and we hope you won't need to buy any new things. Pack all items in a suitcase, backpack, duffel bag or stuff sack. Fasten each piece of luggage securely.

LABEL ALL OF YOUR BELONGINGS WITH YOUR NAME AND SCHOOL

Necessary Items

- _____ Sack lunch for Monday (or first day). Beverage will be provided.
- _____ Bedding (at least 3 blankets or sleeping bag and a pillow)
- _____ Pajamas
- _____ Pants or jeans (at least 2 pair). Weather permitting, shorts can be worn in Camp but pants or jeans are required for hiking.
- _____ Underclothing (enough for 1 week)
- _____ Socks or stockings (2 pair per day)
- _____ Bath towel and washcloth
- _____ Soap and shampoo
- _____ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- _____ Comb and/or hair brush
- _____ Shoes (at least 2 pair of sturdy, closed toe shoes. Tennis shoes are fine, sandals and flip flops allowed only in dorms.)
- _____ Gloves or mittens, warm hat (depending on time of year)
- _____ Raincoat or rain poncho
- _____ Heavy jacket (with hood if available)
- _____ Personal water bottle (for use on hikes)
- _____ Book to read

Additional useful items, but NOT necessary items

- _____ Small back pack for use on hikes
- _____ Laundry bag (reuse a shopping bag)
- _____ Inexpensive camera

Do NOT Bring

Any items not allowed at school (electronic games, tape players, tape recorders, knives or weapons of any kind, gum, food stuffs, money)
Expensive watches, cameras, jewelry
Pagers or cell phones
Hair dryers and curling irons

