

MISSION SPRINGS



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Parent & Student Manual

Mission Statement

Mission Springs Outdoor Education utilizes hands-on science and team-building activities to foster positive student relationships and to promote good stewardship of the environment.

Program Location and Experience

Mission Springs Camps & Conference Center, located in a small redwood canyon just north of Santa Cruz, has offered an outdoor education program since 1978. The outdoor classroom at Mission Springs consists of 200 acres of redwoods, mixed evergreen forest, and chaparral. Approximately 4,500 public and private school students attend our program every year, and our school return rate is over 90%. We serve schools from all over Northern California, and we welcome the opportunity to be a part of your students' education.

What have others said about us?

"Mission Springs was really fun. I will miss everything about this place; the friends, the interactions, the hikes, the activities, the field trips, and my naturalist, Laura."

(Student)

"In the words of one student this morning, 'I love being here because we can learn it all here...without sitting inside a stuffy classroom!' As a regular classroom teacher, I appreciate learning new games, and new teaching techniques. I love watching the kids in a different environment and listening to them respond. It's wonderful to see how they step up to your naturalists/staff expectations."

(Teacher)

California Science Standards & NGSS

Our outdoor classes and field trips have been designed to teach students about natural science while building positive social skills through facilitated team-building activities. We have tailored our curriculum to support the California Science Standards for 4th-6th grade.

Professional Staff

Under the supervision of a full-time Director and Associate Director, 12 Naturalist Instructors are responsible for your students' learning during the week. We carefully select Naturalists who have the following qualifications:

- Bachelors degree (usually in Biology or Elementary Education)
- Excellent references
- Experience working with children
- Fingerprint clearance
- First Aid / CPR certification

Supervision

Along with the leadership of our Naturalists, students are supervised by teachers and parent chaperones from their schools, with a required ratio of 1 chaperone to 10 students, and with gender proportionate supervision. Parent chaperones help us provide a well-supervised program during all classes, activities, meals, and cabin times.

Classes and Activities

Our classes focus on the natural sciences, environmental stewardship, and team-building. The majority of students who come are 5-6th graders, so curriculum is designed for that age group. Classes are taught by Mission Springs Naturalists with supervisory assistance from parent chaperones that the school provides. Class size varies from 15 to 20 depending on the number of students attending that week. All classes involve hiking.

Housing

The beautiful lodges of the Mission Springs Conference Center give our program a higher level of comfort than most other outdoor schools. All rooms are equipped with carpeting, heating, and hot water. Some rooms have bathrooms in them; other rooms are arranged around a central hallway with a shared bathroom. Housing is assigned by Mission Springs to best serve the supervisory needs of each school. A typical housing situation has 3-4 students in a room with chaperones either in the same room or right next door. Teachers determine roommates. We have a maximum capacity of 300 participants per week, but most weeks are capped at 200.

Student Health and Safety

Our staff have First Aid / CPR certification and place student safety as the highest priority. If an illness or injury occurs, the teacher will call parents to inform them of the situation. Minor scrapes and bumps will be treated on site. Mission Springs has an RN, 911 emergency service, an Urgent Care in Scotts Valley (10 min), and a 24-hour emergency room at Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz (20 min).

Parents: Please take time to completely fill out the Student Registration Form found later in this packet. You will need to sign the form.

If your child is bringing medication to Mission Springs, there is a second form to be signed by you and the child's physician. Make sure to include dosage information with the medication. Prescription medications are handled our RN.

If you do not sign and return the appropriate forms before your school's deadline, we will not not allow your child to participate in the program.



Writing and Telephones

In order to avoid homesickness, students are asked to not call home during the week. Out-going

mail service is available for students who wish to send out letters. If they do call home, it is likely due to disciplinary problems.

In case of an emergency, parents should call the Outdoor Education Office first at (831) 335-3205 or the Administrative Office at (831) 335-9133.

Food Service

Our desire is to care for all students with special dietary needs, especially those with severe allergies. Please ensure that students, chaperones, and teachers with food allergies complete a 'Special Diet Info Form' at least three weeks before attending (available in this packet or a fill-able form on our website: www.missionspringsoe.com). Please fax or email to our kitchen manager, Becca Berroteran: becca.berroteran@missionsprings.com
The school must also provide an adult representative for your child, who understands the student's special dietary needs. This person will help facilitate meals with the kitchen during the week.

Parents can contact the Food Service Director at becca.berroteran@missionsprings.com or (831) 335-9133.



General Student Guidelines

Teachers, chaperones, and Mission Springs staff enforce these guidelines to ensure the safety of all participants.

- Respect each others' personal space and property. Students may only enter their assigned cabin/room. Treat your rooms like you would treat your home.
- Be considerate of others. Quiet hours are from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am. All students should be in bed with lights-out by 10:00 pm.
- Treat others as you would like to be treated. Show respect to each other and encourage one another.
- Respect teachers, chaperones, and naturalists. When a leader raises a hand or claps, please quietly direct your attention to the leader for information.
- Respect the natural world around you by not littering or disturbing plant or animal life. Do not handle equipment or animals when you have not been given permission to do so.
- Stay with your group. Remain on trails and in designated areas for all activities. Soda, snack and ice machines are off limits.
- Come to classes and activities prepared. You should have a full water bottle, journal, writing utensil, and appropriate clothing for all classes.

Behavior Policy and Procedures

When appropriate, informal warnings and reminders are given to students. When these warnings are ignored or if the problem is major, then "steps" are given. Teachers, chaperones, and Mission Springs staff all use the Step System explained below to deal with behavioral problems.

STEP 1 Warning: A student displaying disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be individually addressed and informed that repeated misbehavior will result in loss of free time and a phone call home. The student's name is written down in the discipline book.

STEP 2 Phone call home: For a second infraction after a Step 1 offense, the student will lose free time or another privilege. A phone call will be made to a parent and/or the principal. The head teacher is informed of the phone call before it occurs. The student's name is written down in the discipline book.



STEP 3 Expulsion: Upon a third offense (or earlier in extreme cases), parents will be called and asked to pick up the student. This will only occur after consultation with the head teacher. The student's name is written down in the discipline book.

Note: There are no refunds for disciplinary dismissals.

Student Packing Checklist

Please be aware that the Santa Cruz Mountains can be wet and cold, even in October and May. We will go hiking even in wet weather. Warm, durable clothing, worn in layers, is best.

Forms that must be signed by a parent or guardian before you can go:

1. Student Registration Form
2. Medication Form (if needed)
3. Special Diet Form (if needed)

You Must Bring:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof hooded raincoat or poncho | <input type="checkbox"/> Bath & hand towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm sleeping clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal backpack |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm jacket and/or sweatshirts | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 pairs socks and underwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries (<i>including sunscreen</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 pairs shoes or boots (<i>1 waterproof if possible</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Several pencils |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 pairs jeans or heavy pants | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 shirts for warm and cool weather | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag and pillow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun protection (hat, sunscreen) | |

Optional items:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof hat | <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic laundry bag (<i>for dirty or wet clothes</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathmat or towel
(<i>for bathroom floor</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alarm clock (<i>no clock radios, please</i>) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money for T-shirt (\$13) - <i>either cash or check made out to Mission Springs</i> | |

Please do not bring:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Cell phones | Alcoholic or tobacco products |
| MP3 or CD players | Knives or other weapons |
| Food or beverages | Fireworks |
| Electronic games or radios | Matches or lighters |
| Scooters, skateboards, or roller blades | Illegal drugs |

**These items will be confiscated and returned (if appropriate) at the end of your stay.*