SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Excellence and Equity in Education

SINCE 1968
SAN MATEO OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Information for Parents

Your school district is offering your child a week long educational experience in the outdoors through the San Mateo County Outdoor Education Program. The San Mateo County Office of Education in cooperation with local schools and YMCA Camp Jones Gulch runs this award-winning environmental education program and has for over fifty years.

Since 1969, more than 250,000 fifth and sixth graders have learned about the physical and social sciences as well as art and music through our residential outdoor science school. The program emphasizes experiential, tactile and interdisciplinary learning in natural places.

In addition to academic learning, the program provides a unique opportunity for students to develop their self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and social responsibility. Students take care of themselves (making their beds, caring for their clothes, keeping themselves clean) and work as part of a team (setting up and cleaning the dining hall, working as a cabin on a skit performance). The opportunity for new friendships and the spirit of cooperation make the week at Jones Gulch a memorable educational experience.

Please check out Outdoor Education's website at www.smcoe.org/outdoored/ for more information on our program.

TRANSPORTATION AND COSTS

Each school determines the cost to students of the week at Outdoor Education and arranges for transportation to and from the site. If you have any questions about costs or arrival/departure time, please ask your child's teacher or principal.

STAFF

Our dedicated staff strives to awaken in students an appreciation of the environment and the interdependence of all living and non-living things. Our staff biographies are posted online at www.smcoe.org/learning-and-leadership/outdoor-education/staff. Here you can learn more about the Naturalists your child will meet during their week. District teachers are also an active part and serve as a link between school and home. The program has developed a loyal following of teachers who return with their students year after year to discover the benefits of the Outdoor Education experience.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students live in heated cabins with bunk beds. The YMCA staff prepares well-balanced meals which are served family style. Special diets, for medical reasons, should be noted on the **REGISTRATION FORM** and discussed with the Site Director, {650) 747-0414, at least one week prior to attendance.

COMMUNICATIONS

PHONE: There are no phones available for students, so please do NOT ask your child to call you or expect to reach him or her by phone. For emergencies, you may call (650) 747-0414. In case of an emergency at the site, the Site Director will contact you.

VISITS: Parent visits during a student's Outdoor Education week may detract from the positive development of self-reliance and may negatively affect those children who cannot have a parent visit. As such, we ask that you do not visit your child while he/she is attending Outdoor Education.

MAIL: Your child will look forward to a letter from you. Letters should be sent early to ensure that they arrive before your child completes his or her week. Mail is distributed at teacher time Tuesday through Thursday. Please send only one letter per day. The address is:

Student's Name and School
San Mateo Outdoor Education
11000 Pescadero Rd.
La Honda, CA 94020-9711

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What to Bring: A Checklist for Parents

First Day Lunch:

You should bring a sack lunch for the first day. Please pack a meal that creates as little waste or trash as possible and includes only food that can be eaten during this lunchtime. The program will provide all meals and snacks for the rest of your stay.

Clothing:

The following list of clothing is recommended. Older but serviceable clothing is best. We urge you **NOT** to buy new clothing or equipment and do not send highly valuable items. **Clearly label all items with your name**. Space is limited – please send only one duffle bag or suitcase and a sleeping bag.

YOU SHOULD BRING RAIN GEAR AS WET WEATHER CAN OCCUR AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR.

Essential Items:

- ☐ One sleeping bag and fitted bottom sheet **or** one bedroll including a blanket, top and fitted bottom sheets
- ☐ One pillow
- ☐ Two pairs of shoes (tennis shoes are fine)
- ☐ Five pairs of socks
- ☐ Five changes of underwear
- ☐ Three t-shirts with appropriate messages only
- ☐ Two heavy cotton/flannel or wool shirts
- ☐ Three pairs of pants (jeans, cords, or heavy trousers)
- ☐ One or two pairs of pajamas
- ☐ One heavy jacket or coat (regardless of the weather)
- ☐ Rain gear (no matter how sunny)
- ☐ One day-pack and water bottle
- ☐ Flashlight and batteries
- ☐ One hat or cap
- ☐ One bathing suit

Toilet Kit Containing:

- ☐ One bath size towel
- ☐ Soap and shampoo
- ☐ Toothbrush and toothpaste
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ One washcloth
- ☐ Comb or hairbrush
- ☐ Shower slippers or flip-flops
- ☐ Laundry bag or plastic garbage bag

Optional items:

- ☐ Single-use or inexpensive digital camera
- ☐ Bathrobe
- ☐ Gloves or mittens
- ☐ Shorts (for warmer weather)
- ☐ Binoculars
- ☐ Letter writing materials pencils, stationery, stamps)

Prohibited Items:

- ☐ No food, except for lunch for the first day
- ☐ No valuables*
- ☐ No electronic devices such as mp3 or media players, games, laptops or cell phones*
- ☐ No curling irons, hair dryers, or aerosols
- ☐ No cologne or perfume
- ☐ No knives
- ☐ No curling irons, hair dryers, or aerosols
- ☐ No cologne or perfume

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All forms, medical information, responsibility contract and photography release need to be reviewed, signed, and returned prior to your week at Outdoor Education.

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Behavioral Standards, Student Rights and Responsibilities

The Outdoor Education Program is part of the public school system and therefore school rules and regulations apply. Our conduct code is based on our mission to respect and protect our participants and our environment. Each student has an opportunity to attend the program, but no student has the right to interfere with another's enjoyment of the program. Please review these rules with your child. Your cooperation and support enhances everyone's opportunity for an enjoyable week at Outdoor Education.

A. Each student has the right to feel safe and respected;

Therefore, each student has the responsibility to be respectful towards everyone. No one should be made to feel uncomfortable or threatened.

B. Each student has the right to enjoy the outdoors and the facilities at Outdoor Education;

Therefore, each student has the responsibility to take care of the natural environment and to maintain the facilities.

C. Each student has the right to learn and enjoy activities;

Therefore, each student has the responsibility to safely participate in activities, follow all directions, and allow others the opportunity to learn.

SPECIFIC OUTDOOR EDUCATION RULES

1. Stay with an adult leader at all times.
2. Cooperate with your leader and follow all directions.
3. Respect all students and staff members. Avoid using put-downs, name calling, or hurting other people's feelings.
4. Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Fighting will result in being sent home.
5. Respect others belongings. Avoid touching others hats, clothing, sleeping bags, and personal belongings.
6. Avoid using foul and inappropriate language and gestures.
7. If you have a disagreement with someone, find a way to talk it out peacefully.
8. Stay on the trails and behind your leader.
9. Avoid running unless it is part of an activity.
10. Participate only in safe and supervised activities. Avoid jumping on beds, pillow fighting, rough housing, or play fighting.
11. Enter only the cabin to which you are assigned.
12. Leave sticks, rocks, and other objects on the ground.
13. Keep noise moderate and respect cabin quiet hours.
14. Leave all food items, money, knives, and electrical devices at home.
15. Allow plants and animals to remain undisturbed by people.

CONSEQUENCES

Fighting or cabin raiding will result in students being sent home.

Prohibited items such as food, money, knives, or electronics will be collected at the beginning of the week.

When students break any of the above rules they will be referred to the Principal's Office and the following steps will be taken:

1st	A behavioral contract will be made and recreation time will be missed.
2nd	Another contract will be made. Teachers and parents will be notified. Recreation time and a major activity will
3rd	be missed. Parents or guardians will be contacted to pick up their child.

NOTE: major rule infractions, i.e. pushing, fighting and sexual harassment may result in the student receiving an immediate second or third referral.

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You Can Make a Difference in a Child's Life!

Dear Parents,

You may have attended the San Mateo Outdoor Education Program when you were in 5th or 6th grade. If you grew up in San Mateo County, chances are you went to Jones Gulch. It is the same incredible program your child is about to attend.

Perhaps you remember the impact the program had on your life and would like to support Outdoor Education in our effort to provide environmental and science education to children of San Mateo County.

Keep this letter until your child returns from the program. If Outdoor Ed. had as big an impact on your child as it does most children, please consider donating to the Outdoor Education Scholarship fund.

It costs about $300 to provide food, lodging, instructors, equipment, and supplies for a student to attend a week of Outdoor Education. We want every child in San Mateo County to have the opportunity to experience a week in nature with their classmates. Your donation provides scholarships for those families who need financial support. Any amount is greatly appreciated!

Your child will be sent a t-shirt as a thank you gift for each donation of $50 or more. Please specify your child's name, their shirt size and school. The t-shirt will then be sent to your child's school.

Please make checks payable to **SMCOE** and mail them to:
San Mateo County Office of Education
Outdoor Education
101 Twin Dolphin Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065-1064

Your gift is tax deductible. Our Federal Tax ID Number is #94-6002468.

For further information, please call (650) 802-5360.

Thank you for your consideration!

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We Challenge YOU to Bring a NO GARBAGE LUNCH to Outdoor Education!

A no garbage lunch only contains items that you can:

REUSE

• plastic bags, plastic containers, Tupperware, handkerchiefs, cloth bags, lunch boxes

RECYCLE

• tin or aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic containers #1 and #2, aluminum foil

COMPOST

• Food that comes from plants – bread, vegetables, fruit (no meat, eggs or cheese!)

Instead of...	**You could bring...**
a sandwich in plastic wrap	a sandwich in a reusable bag or container
a brown bag	a reusable cloth or plastic bag
a lunchable	crackers and cheese in reusable containers
a juice box, Squeeze-It, or Capri Sun a	juice in a reusable or recyclable plastic or glass bottle
small package of chips or cookies	chips or cookies (from a large package) in a reusable bag or container

San Mateo Outdoor Education:

T-Shirt Order Form

T-shirt Description: Outdoor Ed Banana Slug Logo on the front with a colorful native wildlife of Jones Gulch design on the back.

1. Fill out form below.
2. Make check payable to your child's school.
3. Return both the form and the check to your child's teacher.
4. The t-shirts will be distributed at camp while your child is at Outdoor Ed.

SCHOOL: _____

TEACHER: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

CHILD'S MAILING ADDRESS:_____

PHONE NUMBER: (_____) _____

QUANTITY	SIZE	COST
_____	Adult Small	$20.00
_____	Adult Medium	$20.00
_____	Adult Large	$20.00

Total number of t-shirts ordered: _____

Total cost: $_____