# Cuyamaca Outdoor School

# FAQ's

## For Parents, Students and Teachers

## Arrangements and Safety

### Where is the camp located?

Cuyamaca Outdoor School is located at 12561 Hwy. 79, Descanso, CA 91916, in the middle of the beautiful 25,000-acre Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. We have miles and miles of trails that the students can experience – right from our 25-acre campus. Cuyamaca Outdoor School has been on the same site since 1946. Luckily, the buildings are newer than that! Over the years, we have upgraded our sleeping facilities and in 2010, we built Fox Lodge.

### Who are your staff and what are your staff requirements?

Our staff members work for the San Diego County Office of Education. All employees go through the employment protocols required by SDCOE, in addition to fingerprinting, CPR/First Aid certification, and a TB test. All of our instructors have degrees, many in science-related fields. Some staff have worked here more than 25 years!

In addition to our program staff, we have maintenance, custodial, and kitchen staff, including two cooks, four food service workers, and a Child Nutrition Supervisor. Every week we get rave reviews from students and visiting teachers about the quality of our food and the care that they get from our kitchen staff.

### Is there a full-time nurse present while children are attending Cuyamaca Outdoor School?

A registered nurse and a health technician are in the Health Center during the day. A health technician is available all night to address students' needs. We are equipped for emergencies with an AED, an oxygen tank, and medical supplies.

### What are the housing arrangements at camp?

Cuyamaca Outdoor School has three villages, Oak, Pine, and Cedar that each have one cabin for girls and one for boys that each sleep up to 72 students. Students are arranged by gender. Each village is supervised by a credentialed head teacher, along with eight outdoor education specialists, who hike with, teach, and mentor the students. An outdoor education specialist and a camp counselor supervise their cabin during the day. A cabin leader spends all four nights with their cabin.

### What are the cabins like inside?

Four "dens" open into a large center room. Each den has nine bunk beds for a total of up to 18 students per den. All of the cabins have heat, drinking fountains, door locks, intercom phones, and alarms on the exterior doors (for sleepwalkers). There are two bathrooms per cabin. Each bathroom has three sinks, three restroom stalls, and three showers, including one ADA accessible toilet stall and shower per cabin. There are also bathrooms and drinking fountains in the lodge, assembly halls, health center, and dining hall.

### What are the shower arrangements?

**There are individual shower stalls with curtains for privacy. The students take showers Tuesday through Thursday in the afternoon. The showers are two minutes long. Yes, only two minutes long! We recommend you have your child practice taking short showers and changing their clothes discreetly (e.g., like at the beach, under a big towel) before arriving at camp.**

### Will an adult be present at all times in the cabin, even while students are sleeping?

Absolutely! There is always an adult in the cabin when students are present. The adult "den" has an intercom phone and a two-way radio to provide access to administrative support and/or health care. The same cabin leader spends the night in the cabin all week, so the students get accustomed to the same adult each night. There is also a credentialed Head Teacher and Health Technician available to assist with issues during the night. The same camp counselor and an additional staff member are in the cabin during waking hours.

## Curriculum and Activities

### What is the science curriculum taught at Cuyamaca Outdoor School?

Our curriculum is aligned with California's Next Generation Science Standards and supports the Environmental Principles and Concepts, STEM, and California's Common Core State Standards. Students participate in a variety of Citizen Science projects, collecting scientific data to share with actual scientists around the country. All students receive a beautiful field journal that they get to take home.

### What type of activities will the students participate in?

**Daytime:** Two Nature Studies (hiking and hands-on Citizen Science projects), one All Day Adventure (like a nature study, but six hours in duration, further from camp, with lunch out in the field), a craft class (rock or wood), and Wilderness Recreation Activities Program (WRAP): rock climbing or archery (choice), geocaching, low elements challenge. **Nighttime:** Campfire with singing, Night Hike with astronomy (depending on the time of year), Native American program, and Talent Show.
**Cabins:** Storytelling and teambuilding activities. Also, if there is snow….snow play!
***Note:*** *On a four-day week, we only have one nature study, no night hike, and no Wilderness Recreation Activity Program (WRAP).*

## Preparing for Camp

### How much luggage is allowed?

One duffel bag or rolling suitcase, one sleeping bag (or sheets/blanket) and a pillow. In addition, students may carry a backpack on the bus. Please don't tie items together.

### Can students take their cell phone or other electronic devices to camp?

No. Because of our location, there is no cell service here (adults can get service nearby or use our telephone). Expensive phones or other electronic devices may get lost or broken. Cuyamaca Outdoor School is not responsible for the loss or damage of any items sent to camp. We consider camp a wonderful opportunity for students to "unplug", talk to friends, enjoy nature, and the world around them.

Please see "What to Take to Camp" for a complete student packing list.
If a student forgets something like a pillow, toothbrush or jacket, rest assured we have items to borrow during their stay. Please tell your child that it is "OK" to ask. (They can keep the toothbrush!)
**Put your student's name on ALL items.**

## Communication

### Can parents write letters to their children?

Yes! They are welcome to send mail. Parents should mail their letter the Thursday *before* camp to ensure the letter reaches their child. Your child may also write letters to send home during the week. Please provide your student with envelopes or postcards and stamps (self-addressed with a stamp is best!).

### Address and Phone Numbers:

Cuyamaca Outdoor School (aka Camp Cuyamaca and 6th Grade Camp) 12561 Hwy. 79, Descanso, CA 91916 Office: 760-765-3000.
Health Center: 760-765-4110 (24 hours a day when students are present) Kitchen/Child Nutrition Supervisor: 760-765-4108.