

FRESHMAN MINIMESTER CAMPING 101

MARCH NEWSLETTER

TECH FREE

The Freshman Minimester offers students an opportunity to fully engage in TECH-FREE experiential learning! Participants will NOT be allowed to bring phones, smart watches, iPads, or any other tech devices on this trip. This experience allows students to step away from their electronic devices and forge connections with one another and the natural environment surrounding us. Rest assured, staff will have access to phones at all times, and parents will receive an emergency contact number to reach staff throughout the trip. We'll take a break from our screens and focus on building relationships with each other and the beautiful natural world as we explore the plants and animals of the Chesapeake Bay watershed area.



REMINDER: MINIMESTER IS APRIL 20-24, 2026!

SAFETY GUIDE

- Use common sense.
- Don't eat stuff you find, unless someone qualified tells you it is safe.
- Don't touch animals without permission (bugs and aquatic life are animals).
- If a situation or person feels unsafe, let a trusted adult/teacher know; your safety is always our priority.
- Watch your step - tripping hazards, holes, poison ivy, etc.
- No horseplay in risky areas - overlooks, river banks, on boats, near roads, etc.
- When in doubt, ask an adult! All of your teachers are First Aid certified.

By now, everyone should have paid in full for the trip. If applicable, PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET CAUGHT UP ON ANY MISSED PAYMENTS - our trip is in less than a month. Reach out to the Freshman Minimester Team if you have any questions or concerns about this.



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LEAVE NO TRACE

We all share the outdoors, and the outdoors is for EVERY body. If we all do our part, we can make the outdoors a welcoming and inclusive place for ALL people!

An easy way to be a good guest and citizen is to follow the outdoor rules known as “**Leave No Trace.**”

Plan ahead and prepare for the day ahead - bring enough lunch, snacks, and your water bottle; bring the right shoes and clothes for the day’s activities and weather.

Stay on the trail or other designated areas - going off trail can damage habitat; straying into private or prohibited areas can get you in trouble.

Respect wildlife - You are in their home; do not harass, hurt, or kill wildlife. This includes plants, bugs, spiders, fish, crabs, snakes and other small animals. If you do this, you will lose any privileges of doing independent or unsupervised activities.

Respect other people - We are guests in all the places we visit on this trip! Just like you want to have a nice day, so does everyone else you meet. You are not just representing yourself - you are representing RCHS and the city of Richmond, Va. We want to be welcomed back for years to come.



Pack your trash out - Don’t want your trash? Others don’t want it either! Don’t throw it on the ground or leave it behind for others to pick up. Hold onto your trash until you can put it in the proper receptacle. You can be a GREAT guest by leaving places cleaner than you found them!

Take nothing but photos - It is tempting to pick flowers or take items we find, but if everyone did that, there would be nothing left for us to enjoy! Photos are a much better and longer-lasting way to remember something cool or pretty that you see.

Have fun! The outdoors should be a safe and fun place for ALL people. Your choices make a big impact on making the outdoors a safe and welcoming place to everyone.

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MEDICATIONS

All medical forms need to be in now!

Even if you will NOT be taking any medications, your parent must complete **page 1 of the medical forms packet.**

For ANY medications, even nonprescription, you must return the appropriate **additional form(s) in the packet**, signed by your doctor and your parent.

Your parent must **bring your medications to the NURSE at RCHS on MONDAY APRIL 13.**



PACKING

Be sure you are following the **PACKING LIST instructions** for items that go in your labeled **duffle bag** and items that go in your **backpack.**

Don't bring anything NOT on the list, including extra clothing - we don't have space in the vehicles and tents.

Be sure you have your **sleeping bag**, and extra small blanket if you choose, rolled up in a labeled plastic bag!

You must bring your **packed duffle bag and your sleeping bag to RCHS on MONDAY APRIL 13.**

“OOPS, I LOST MY FORMS AGAIN!”

We've got you: ALL CAMPING INFO IS ALWAYS ON THE RCHS WEBSITE! Select “**Programs and Activities**” and then select “**Minimesters.**” Click on the “**Freshman**” class tab.

The **MEDICAL PACKET** is linked there - remember that ALL minimester students must submit page 1, even if they will not be bringing in any medications.

The **PACKING LIST** is in the last section of the INFORMATION PACKET also posted there.

And, as always, all forms are also on the **RCHS Freshman class Canvas**; all freshmen are enrolled in this “class” and have access!