



Dear Parent Helper,

We, at the Multnomah Education Service District, are excited to have you join us for the Oregon Trail Overnight program. You are a very important part of the program's success.

This program is a unique opportunity for you to experience a bit of Oregon history with your child, their classmates and their teacher(s), and we thank you for being involved.

During field study, our staff and student leaders depend on parent chaperones to help keep the children safe, to help each group stay together on trails and during activities, and to help the students follow directions and use active listening to get the most out of their visit. Parent chaperones also help supervise their cabin groups during mealtimes and in the cabins. High school student leader "trail guides" also help with certain transitions times.

At Oregon Trail Overnight, we encourage staff and participants to dress in pioneer or 'period style' clothing, and/or think of themselves as if they were 'living as a pioneer in the 1850's' to help the whole community become fully immersed in the history of the trail. Please help us with this mindset and encourage your child/children to enjoy this immersion experience.

In order to volunteer with Multnomah ESD programs, you will need to go through your school's background check process. If you have not gone through this process, **please talk to your child's teacher about this as soon as possible.**

We have learned that, to ensure that your group has the most successful trip possible, a few guidelines are best applied to our programs. Please review these before you arrive for the program.

- * Be prepared for *any kind of weather*, as we are located in the forest often with muddy trails, and dress appropriately with good shoes and layered clothing.
- * When packing yours and your child's lunch for the first day, please consider that we provide snacks and meals after the first lunch and that there is no safe place to store any leftovers. We recycle bags, cans and bottles, but using a re-usable lunch container that you can take home would be appreciated when possible.
- * There are no dishes or paper cups in the cabins. Please bring a water bottle in order to have water available to you at night. Additionally, mugs need to stay in the dining hall, so if you would like to carry coffee or tea with you, please bring a re-usable coffee cup.
- * Trails can be dark at night, so please bring a flashlight.
- * Using a variety of techniques and activities, the staff and student leaders will lead the group during field study times. Please be prepared to help students do activities and help with child management during field study. Also, please model appropriate behavior for the students by giving your full attention throughout the program.

Interim Superintendent/Chief Operating Officer *Jim Rose*

Board of Directors *Francisco Acosta, Jr. ♦ Stephen Marc Beaudoin ♦ Mary Botkin ♦ Siobhan Burke ♦ Michael Durrow ♦ Bernie Giusto ♦ Nels Johnson*

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* Please be prepared to work with other parent chaperones to ensure a safe and successful experience for the students, keeping track of students in your assigned groups and helping them follow directions throughout the entire program. For everyone's safety and success we ask that students are supervised at all times by an adult, most often this is you – the chaperone.

* All school facilities are, by state law, *smoke, drug and alcohol free zones*. If you are a smoker and will need a place to smoke while at the program, please talk to a staff member about the appropriate location off-site to do this. Drugs and alcohol are not allowed.

Your student should bring home an invitation to an open house at the site you will be attending. We'd love to meet you and answer any questions you have about being a chaperone.

Lastly, in addition to this letter, we are including basic information about the responsibilities of a chaperone and about small group management. Feel free to review it and come with any questions you may have. We will have copies at site when you arrive as well.

We are thrilled that you have chosen to join the students for this overnight program and we look forward to meeting you.

Oregon Trail Overnight Staff
Multnomah Education Service District



CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT FOR THE OREGON TRAIL OVERNIGHT PROGRAM

Following is a suggested list of needed items (adapted from student packing list). Please **do not** put your family to needless expense, but rather borrow from friends and bring older clothing and equipment that you might already have. The main thing you want to consider is that you will be dressed warmly enough and that you will keep dry in case of rain. Remember, the weather outside may change --prepare ahead. Ideally one small bag plus sleeping gear or one large bag **with** sleeping gear is best to have enough room in the bus.

Sleeping Gear

Warm sleeping bag or three blankets and sheets (extra blanket if your sleeping bag is light)
Pillow and pillow case

Clothing:

One full extra change of clothes from what is worn on the first day:

Jeans or heavy trousers or a long skirt	Warm jacket	Shirt or blouse
Sweater or sweatshirt	Pajamas or night gown	Socks (2 or 3 extra pairs)
Underwear		Extra shoes or boots
Raincoat or poncho (you can find emergency rain ponchos for under \$2.00 at some stores)		

Personal Gear

Wash cloth	Soap	Toothbrush
Toothpaste	Brush or comb	Hand Towel
Water Bottle	Travel Mug	Flashlight
One large garbage bag for wet or dirty clothes		

The Oregon Trail Overnight program does not take responsibility for lost or stolen items in your luggage. Please leave valuable items at home.

OREGON TRAIL PARENT INFORMATION

1. Welcome to a program brought to you by the Multnomah ESD Outdoor Schools program, which also provides the sixth grade Outdoor School program. In large groups, a verbal or visual attention getter will happen when something is changing or we need to give you information, please listen and watch for those times and help students and each other to listen actively.
2. Please listen during the Oregon Trail general welcome. We will be going over basic safety rules with students. Please be aware:
 - a. Nametags should be worn at all times.
 - b. Students should walk (not run), leave sticks & rocks on the ground and wear layers.
 - c. Students are to stay with their group at all times unless they are with an adult.
 - d. Please follow the 'Rule of 3' and avoid being alone with students.
 - c. Please let the teachers or the Oregon Trail staff know if there are students causing problems for others.
 - d. Students may be in the cabins only during designated times and **only with adult supervision.**
3. Coffee, tea water and fruit are available at the dining hall and living room on the counters. Please put dirty cups in the marked bus tub or cup container. Ceramic mugs are not allowed to leave the building.

Your Cabin Group

Cabin group supervision is a primary responsibility of chaperones at the Oregon Trail Overnight. We rely on you to keep your group together and well-supervised for their safety and success.

Each cabin will have a high school student leader assigned as a "Trail Guide." Trail Guides will be present at key transitions to help you. They often have more than one cabin to attend to, so please be patient with them.

MOVING INTO THE CABINS

1. Sleepwalkers should be on a bottom bunk. They are marked with a star on the group list.
2. Set expectations about safe and courteous behavior in the cabin and only being in the cabin when an adult is present.

CABIN TIME into COUNTRY FAIR FIELD DAY

1. After snack, it is helpful for the students to have a quiet time in the cabin in order to prepare for the evening, which is kind of late for students of this age.
2. Feel free to pick up a "Cabin Time Pack" on your way to the cabin from snack time and follow the guidelines there (also page 11 of this booklet) to help this time be successful for all.
3. Trail Guides will collect your groups from cabin time and escort you to Country Fair Field Day.
4. Country Fair is a break time for parents once the event has begun. If you'd like to participate, staff may ask for volunteers to help assist Trail Guides in their stations or students who need extra support.

HOBO STOVE COOKOUT

1. Before dinner begins, meet with the Site Supervisor at the designated meeting time and spot (dining hall or circle field).
2. Choose which adult from each cabin will start out with the stoves.
3. Follow guidelines on Hobo Stove Checklist (page 14 & 15 of this booklet).
4. At the end of the cookout, **meet a staff member to help with clean-up.**

CAMPFIRE

1. In the few minutes before campfire, please work with your cabin group to develop a very short (15 second) cheer to give at the beginning of campfire when we ask for 'cabin calls.' Trail guides will help with this.
2. Please make sure students **carry a coat or jacket** to campfire.
3. Please spread out within the group to help students to focus and succeed at campfire.
4. Encourage participation and good audience manners.

BEDTIME

Nighttime can be a very difficult time for fourth grade students. Fear of the unknown and sleeping in a different bed combined with anxiety about being away from home can create a difficult situation for some students.

Good thing you're here for them!

Hold the Mood

The slow, quiet part of campfire gives you a great chance to head back to your cabin and get ready for bed in a quiet, efficient manner. Try to ask your students to walk back from campfire without using their voices; even have them stop and wait if they become too loud. Being mindful of this will not only help you with bedtime, but other chaperones and their groups as well.

When **getting ready for bed**, give clear directions. Let students know what you expect them to do.

1. Ask all students to go to the bathroom, wash their hands and brush their teeth before bed.
2. Get students in their night clothes and into their sleeping bag.
3. Read or tell an appropriate story. Books are available in the living room resource area.
4. Program staff and trail guides will stay in the cabin area for "firewatch" so parents can go up to the living room. Please feel free to take a break, get a snack or coffee. Staff members will be there as well, playing games and visiting. Please be back in the cabin area at the designated time!

Some Tips

- Challenge your students to get ready for bed by flashlight. If you keep the overhead lights off you help maintain a mellow mood.
- Make bedtime special. Offer incentives. Challenge students to get ready and in bed in a certain amount of time and offer a reward if they do so. Appropriate awards would include reading a story, singing to them, or get a staff member to come and do these things.
- Speak softly yourself. If students have to quiet down to hear you they will keep their volume low.
- Remind them they are earning their 'Z's.

WAKE UP TIME & MOVE OUT

1. Staff members will come around to wake up cabins. Your cabin may wake up sooner than the appointed time. If so, feel free to have them pack and prepare for the day. If you choose to leave the cabin, please keep your group together and away from other cabin buildings.
2. After wake up, please pack gear and help students moving it to luggage loading areas.
3. If you have time, sweeping cabins before breakfast is very helpful.
4. Do a sweep of the cabin for personal items, trash, etc
5. Head to breakfast a few minutes early.

THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING AND MAKING OUR OVERNIGHT PROGRAM GREAT!!



Tips for management of small groups

We realize you are a parent and very familiar with working with your own children, but these are tips for working with groups of children in this new situation. Being a group leader can be difficult. You want your students to have a good time and yet you need to be able to motivate them to do things they may not want to do. Do yourself a favor and set yourself up to succeed. We strive to use these strategies for success as leaders and invite you to join us as you are a chaperone with the Oregon Trail Overnight program.

RESPECT: Offer your students your respect. They will give it back. Children will respond well to those whom they respect.

Basic Tools:

- Get to know them with simple conversations. Share something of yourself. Let them know you care.
- Give clear directions.
- Plan ahead and offer patience.

BE POSITIVE: Use positive words and phrases, and genuine caring. They will respond.

Basic Tools:

- Praise and thankfulness for following expectations.
- Hi-Fives and pats on the back when they step up.
- Smiles and positive phrasing, even when re-directing.

GIVE THEM CLEAR DIRECTIONS: Have a plan and share it with them.

Basic Tools:

- Know the Schedule. Make a plan.
- Set expectations for behavior and response.
- Ask them if they understand.

BE A LEADER FIRST: The friendship comes later. If you create a safe environment your students will be thankful and bond with you.

Basic Tools:

- Set Expectations and hold students to them.
- Implement consequences when called for.
- Ask for help if you get frustrated.

What to do when a child says 'No'

1. Speak calmly and clearly.
2. Find out which of their basic needs is not being met and discover how to attend to it.
3. Offer them choices. You may need to make it clear that "no" is not one of them.
4. Explain your reasons. Why did you ask them?
5. Ask them if they need your help.
6. Remind them of the expectations and consequences.
7. Let them know it is okay to be sad/frustrated/worried, but they still need to participate.
8. Ask for help.

Hints for Discipline

1. Don't be afraid to say "no".
2. Be sure the child knows the correct behavior and what he/she is doing wrong.
3. Give lots of positive feedback for appropriate behavior and down-play the inappropriate behavior ... constant positive reinforcement for your students makes them WANT to act appropriately.
4. Don't issue threats ... ("Do this or I'll") ... children will take you up on them!
5. Give choices, let the children decide how they want to do something. (Always include what you want done in the choices). Let them CHOOSE rather than be forced to do something. A child will always win a direct confrontation or a power struggle!
6. Last, but not least ... Ask for help from a staff member or the classroom teacher if you have a problem that worries you or that you don't feel comfortable handling.

10 Topics for Simple Conversations:

1. If you could travel in time describe the time and place you would go? What would you do there?
2. If you got a ticket anywhere in the world where would you go? Why?
3. What is your favorite way to eat potatoes?
4. How many brothers and sisters do you have? Tell us something about your brother or sister?
5. What is your favorite dessert?
6. What is your favorite sport, team, player?
7. What has been your favorite activity so far at Oregon Trail?
8. What is your favorite holiday? Describe what you do on that holiday?
9. What's your Oregon Trail name going to be when you are in high school?
10. What would you like to do when you are an adult?

Child Mover Ideas

There will be many times during the experience when you will find it necessary to move your assigned group from place to place. This can be most difficult if you have not planned how to line them up, and how to actually move them. So . . . to help you keep from tearing your hair out as your group of children race in six different directions . . . here are lots of different ways that you can line up your group of children.

1. By hair color (brown first, blond second, etc.)
2. Eye color (green first, blue second . . .)
3. Shoe size (size 10 first . . .)
4. Sports (those who play baseball first, basketball second . . .)
5. Favorites (those whose favorite food is ice cream go first, pizza second, hamburgers third...)
6. Alphabetical (all those whose last name begins with "S" go first . . .)
7. Questions (the person who answers the question gets to go first . . .)
8. Jobs (each time you move the cabin group, you ask one person what he/she wants to be when he/she grows up, and that person gets to lead the line)
9. Books (the person who can tell the group about a neat book they just read, gets to go first)