

# FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

Come here for answers to questions that parents frequently ask.

## What is the weather going to be like at Outdoor School?

The weather at the Outdoor School sites is quite variable. Temperatures at Outdoor School are usually a bit cooler than in town. Sometimes it will rain at Outdoor School when it is merely overcast in Portland. Students should come prepared for any kind of weather, even if it is sunny and warm when they pack their bags to go to Outdoor School! [Click here for a packing list](#). Study plots at Outdoor School feature tarps to keep the rain off, and every Outdoor School site has rain ponchos and warm coats that children may borrow. Cabins are heated.

## Where and when will my child be attending Outdoor School?

Outdoor School is in session in the fall and the spring of the school year. If your child is going to Outdoor School during the fall session, your child's teacher can tell you where and when as early as the first day of school. If your child is attending in the spring, contact your child's teacher in February to find out which site and week he or she will be going to Outdoor School.

## What time will the bus leave for Outdoor School?

Your child's teacher will have specific instructions for bus departure. Typically, buses leave the school by about 3:00 p.m. on the Sunday of the Outdoor School week and return to the school at about 1:30 p.m. on the Friday of the Outdoor School week.

## Who do I call for dietary and/or medical concerns?

If you have specific concerns about your child's dietary or medical concerns, you can contact the Outdoor School nurse (in English only) at 503-257-1606 or by e-mail at [cfike@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:cfike@mesd.k12.or.us).

## Who do I call with concerns about my child's special needs?

Be sure to share any concerns at all about your child's participation at Outdoor School with your child's teacher and/or principal. Also, feel free to contact the Outdoor School Student Services Assistant (in English only) at 503-257-1607 or by e-mail at [kborver@mesd.k12.or.us](mailto:kborver@mesd.k12.or.us).

## What medicine should I send with my child?

The nurse maintains a small supply of over the counter medications for children at Outdoor School. You should send prescription medications in the original container with your child to Outdoor School. For more information and specific instructions, see the [Health History Form](#) (in English only).

## What happens if my child gets hurt or ill at Outdoor School?

Each Outdoor School site has a licensed nurse to respond to illness and injury. Nurses are on site 24 hours a day, every day. Also, every Outdoor School staff member is certified in first aid and CPR. In the unlikely event that your child becomes ill or hurts him or herself, the nurse will contact parents as soon as possible.

## What happens if my child gets homesick?

A little homesickness is a very common occurrence at Outdoor School. The staff and teachers work to keep children active and engaged in the activities at Outdoor School. Most homesickness fades away after the first night. To help prepare your child for success, before their departure encourage them to have a good time; clarify that "you want them to enjoy Outdoor School," "build memories," and "return home with stories to tell them." For many students, this may be their first extended period away from home. Reassuring your child about the fun you want them to have decreases the likelihood of homesickness.

## How are high school student leaders trained and selected?

High school student leaders must be at least in the 10th grade and in good academic standing at their school before being eligible for Outdoor School. Teachers and counselors at the high school give students permission to attend a training workshop. At the workshop, Outdoor School staff members train and select students who show an aptitude for leadership and demonstrate responsibility, enthusiasm, and leadership skills. After the workshop, high school students who are selected are again screened by high school teachers and counselors before they receive permission to attend as an

Outdoor School student leader. While at Outdoor School, high school student leaders work under close supervision of Outdoor School staff and classroom teachers.

**How much does Outdoor School cost?**

Outdoor School is a service of the Multnomah Education Service District for school districts in Multnomah County and the surrounding area. Some school districts charge a fee for Outdoor School, while some do not. Contact your child's principal to find out if your school district charges a fee for Outdoor School.

**Where can I send a letter to my child?**

Send letters to your child at the address of the site he or she is attending. Addresses are on the [Site Information](#) page (in English only) of this website. Please do not send "care packages" with food or candy to children at Outdoor School. Please be cautious in the word choice in your letters. Sharing your feelings of sadness at their absence can spur homesickness in your child. Instead, focus on how much you are looking forward to hearing about their week at Outdoor School when they get home. Mail is distributed daily to students, but may take several days to reach the Outdoor School site from Portland, so please plan ahead.

**Are Outdoor School staff trained in first aid and CPR?**

Outdoor School requires all program staff to be certified in first aid and CPR. In addition, most staff members are trained to respond to severe allergic reactions.

**Are the cabins heated?**

All cabins at Outdoor School are weatherized and heated. Students sleep on bunk beds with mattresses. Bathrooms are either in the cabin or in a nearby building and are furnished with flush toilets, sinks and showers with hot water.