

RE: **Outdoor School**



Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

Your child has the opportunity to participate in the residential Outdoor School program. Outdoor School has been serving schools in the Portland metro area for 50 years. Your child's class and teacher will attend one of our Outdoor School sites. About 100 students from four classes attend for programs ranging from three to six days. This opportunity is provided to schools and is a program of the Multnomah Education Service District.

The Outdoor School experience is an educational program where students attend school 24-hours a day in a beautiful outdoor setting. Outdoor School is an extension of the classroom, offering a hands-on, engaging approach to learning. Best of all, it supplies an enjoyable learning experience in which students show a genuine enthusiasm for their studies.

The Outdoor School program has taken precautions to ensure your child's comfort, health, and safety during his/her time at the Outdoor School site. Students will be transported to the Outdoor School in a regular school district bus with a fully qualified driver. A registered nurse will manage health concerns and oversee medications and treatments necessary to students on site. If you have a child with specific medical needs, please contact the Outdoor School office at 503-257-1600. Transportation is always ready to take any student to the hospital should an emergency arise. Generally, if children are sick enough to be in bed, they should go home, and parents will be notified to come and pick up their child. Students are housed in winterized, heated cabins, and adequate rain shelters and dry rooms are available for wet-weather days. The Outdoor School program has secured accident insurance coverage for all participating students.

COST: If your school or school district charges a fee for Outdoor School, you will receive separate instructions about any cost and how to submit payment.

Program costs are offset by support from the East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, Metro, Friends of Outdoor School, and the schools themselves.

CONDUCT: Just as at their home school, students at Outdoor School will be provided a learning climate supported by positive behavior expectations and, when necessary, discipline for inappropriate or unacceptable conduct.

MAIL: A letter from home is a welcome experience to all students away from their families. Children will be encouraged to write home and relate their experiences at least once during their stay at Outdoor School. Mail will be sent out and picked up daily. Due to an increasing number of students with food allergies, and the site's inability to receive packages, please do not send "care-packages" to your child while they are at Outdoor School.

Your child will be at one of the following addresses:

Howard Outdoor School, 11010 SE Camp Howard Rd., Corbett, OR 97019; Phone: 503-695-2470

Camp Angelos (Sandy River) Outdoor School, 32149 SE Stevens Rd., Corbett, OR 97019; Phone: 503-695-5388

Arrah Wanna Outdoor School, 24075 E Arrah Wanna Blvd, Welches, OR 97067; Phone: 503-622-2619

Canby Grove Outdoor School, 7501 S. Knights Br. Rd, Canby, OR 97013; Phone: 971-334-1264

Namanu Outdoor School, 10300 SE Camp Namanu Rd, Sandy, OR 97055; Phone: 503-257-1600

HEALTH HISTORY FORM: We require a **completed** Health History Form. Information students share will be used to help us understand how to better evaluate our programming for improvement, and will remain confidential. A copy is included in this packet. Any prescribed medications being taken by the child must be supplied from home for the entire stay, and must be in an **original prescription bottle** (available at your pharmacy), labeled with the student's name, doctor's name, medication, prescribed dosage, and the condition for which the drug is given. These will be kept by the Outdoor School nurse who will see to their prescribed administration. Especially note any health, emotional, or physical problems that might require special staff planning. Please do not send aspirin, cough drops, band aids, home remedies, etc., as the dispensary is already equipped for proper treatment of minor ailments. Please note, there are special instructions for *dietary supplements* on the Health History form.

Please sign the Health History form where indicated to grant permission for a physician to treat your child in case of medical emergency. Any other restrictions should be similarly noted. Please sign this statement. The completed Health History Form should be returned to the teacher at least three weeks before your child is scheduled to go to Outdoor School.

The Outdoor School program continually works to improve our instructional programming. As part of these efforts, your child may be invited to participate in a brief interview about what they are learning while at Outdoor School.

TRANSGENDER and GENDER NONCONFORMING STUDENTS: Multnomah ESD and Outdoor School are committed to creating a learning environment conducive to the overall development and social-emotional health and well-being of students. Gender nonconforming students often experience discrimination, harassment and implicit bias at school and in their lives. These experiences can send students the message that they do not belong. At MESD and Outdoor School, we make it clear: All students do belong and are welcome.

Outdoor School will accept and address a student by their preferred pronoun (he/she/they), gender identity, and name. Students will be assigned to the cabin group and bathroom that is aligned with their asserted gender identity; students that identify as male will be assigned to a male cabin and bathroom and students that identify as female will be assigned to a female cabin and bathroom.

CABINS and BATHROOMS: At Outdoor School students typically change clothes in cabins and shower in the school bathrooms. Cabins are led by Student Leaders who live in the cabins with the students. At Outdoor School we support a student's right to use a facility corresponding with their gender identity. Sixth grade students that identify as male will be placed in male cabins and sixth grade students that identify as female will be placed in female cabins. Student Leaders that identify as male will be assigned to male cabin groups and Student Leaders that identify as female will be assigned to female cabin groups. If the student's cabin and bathroom assignment does not meet the student's comfort level, ODS staff will work with the parent to create a solution that ensures student safety and comfort.

Sixth grade students that identify as male will use male designated bathrooms, and students that identify as female will use female designated bathrooms. Student Leaders that identify as male will use male designated bathrooms, and student leaders that identify as female will use female designated bathrooms. Single stall bathrooms are also available to any student who desires increased privacy.

CLOTHING AND BEDDING: We ask that parents equip their child with the items of clothing and bedding described on the Clothing and Equipment List. There are no candy, gum, or soft drinks sold at Outdoor School, and we ask your child not to bring these items. Children should not bring any money since there is nothing to purchase during the Outdoor School program. The MESD is not responsible for loss or theft of personal belongings, so please avoid sending expensive clothing or footwear. **Please remember to label all clothing and bedding with your child's name and school.** If an item is missing upon your child's return from Outdoor School, please contact the Outdoor School Office within two weeks and we will try to locate the lost item.

Experienced Outdoor School staff work diligently to provide your child with an outstanding program full of learning. If, however, you have concerns about your child's attendance, you are encouraged to contact the Outdoor School Office (503-257-1600 - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to discuss these concerns in advance of your child attending Outdoor School. On occasion, an advance visit to the site with you and your child may help ease any anxiety you or your child may be experiencing. Therefore, we will be having a **Family Open House at each Outdoor School site** before the session starts. Information regarding the date and time will be sent home from your child's teacher. Please come out to the site and talk with the staff, see the accommodations and put yourself at ease. Overall, we are confident that your child will have a successful experience that they will long remember.

Please visit our web page at: www.mesdoutdoorschool.org. This web site offers program information, and you can get copies of all Outdoor School forms.

Outdoor School is possible because of the support from:

Sincerely,



Daniel Prince, Coordinator
Outdoor School
Email: outdoorschool@mesd.k12.or.us



DP/lc

August 2016