

PARENT LETTER

Dear Guardian,

McDowell Environmental Center's philosophy is to teach students in the great outdoors and give them a lifetime of memories and experience. Your child will be learning through hands-on environmental science classes, seeing nature up close in a 1,140-acre outdoor classroom. Our instructors have been trained in a child-centered, experiential approach to teaching and are passionate about sharing the natural world with students and adults. We would like to mention a few important items worth emphasizing about your child's upcoming visit to ensure their safety and comfort while away from home.



Appropriate Clothing: We offer hands-on science and team building classes, so we spend most of our time outdoors, even in the rain and cold. Please help your child be prepared with appropriate clothing and gear, as indicated below. In truly inclement weather, we have ample indoor teaching space.

- **Wear:** Old clothes and closed toed shoes (*For safety, no sandals, crocs, or flip flops please*)
- **Bring a daypack with:**
 - Raincoat or Poncho
 - Water Bottle
 - Lunch & Snack (if suggested by the teacher)
 - Extra set of clothes if taking Aquatic Adventures or Canoeing
 - 1 pair of shoes and socks that can get wet or muddy

Student Health and Waiver Form: All of our staff are first aid and CPR trained, additionally we have a camp nurse who is typically on-site. For your child's well-being, please complete the **online** Health and Waiver Form once you receive the link from your teacher. Paper copies may be available from your teacher if preferred or needed. *Anyone without a completed form may not attend or participate.*

Dietary Needs: Our Kitchen Staff can accommodate a wide range of dietary needs and we are a nut free facility. Our food receives the highest reviews, however if your student has a special diet (i.e. vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, lactose free, etc.) please note it on their health form as indicated.

Your child's school teachers will send home all the information. The teachers from your school will select chaperones for the trip. If you have any questions regarding our program, personnel or facilities, please feel free to call us or visit our website at www.mcdowellc.org.

Meredith Donaldson (she/her), Director
Kim Corson (she/her), Assistant Director

pc@campmcdowell.org
205.387.1806 ext. 108

CHAPERONE LETTER

Dear Chaperone,

Thank you for agreeing to accompany students on their exciting trip to McDowell. As a chaperone, you will play an important role in creating a fun, safe and non-competitive learning environment. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about your role as a chaperone.



The lead teacher from your school will assign you a field group of 10-12 students to supervise during the day. You will be with the students the entire time during your stay. You are directly responsible for the safety and supervision of your field group. **All Chaperones must fill out the Health and Waiver form online as provided by the lead teacher from your school.**

During classes, the McDowell Instructor will be directly responsible for the group, but they will rely on you for support and attentiveness. Please actively participate in all classes and activities that you attend. Look forward to active classes which may include hiking or wading in a stream. We appreciate your enthusiasm during these classes, as it can be a great motivator for the students!

Here are some general policies for adults:

- Smoking is not allowed indoors or in front of students. Alcohol is not allowed.
- Try not to use your cell phone around the children.
- Corporal or harsh verbal punishment is not allowed. If you experience difficulty managing the student's behavior, speak to their teacher for help. In cases of extreme student misconduct, such as fighting, the school's lead teacher may decide to send a child home.
- When you come to McDowell, it is most likely that you will share our campus with other schools. We believe positive interactions among all participants create potential new friendships. Please be a model of respect to the other schools, both children and adults.
- Chaperones are responsible for supervising the students during classes, breaks, and meals.

Your school may eat a picnic-style lunch as a group. Work with your lead teacher to help ensure the safety of all students during lunch and do not allow students to leave the immediate area without permission. Water coolers will be provided.

In some of the classes, you and the children will get wet and muddy so wear OLD clothes and shoes. A raincoat is essential, because classes are held rain or shine. Our classes are hands-on, so be sure to bring a daypack with a water bottle. **Wear comfortable, closed toed, hiking shoes.**

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for agreeing to be a chaperone. Please feel free to call us if you have any questions. We look forward to meeting you!

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