

mcdowell

FARM SCHOOL



teacher information.

This guide includes information on cost, schedule, and class offerings including class curriculums and standard correlations.

trip planning.

This guide includes information on how to plan and organize your trip, and tips and tricks for teachers and chaperones on the trip.

participant papers.

The guide includes information on student paperwork, packing lists, parent/chaperone letters, and much more.

2026-2027

Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire students to explore the outdoors with curiosity and wonder, while connecting them to their food system through hands-on learning on our farm. We empower students to recognize the value of the food they eat and their role as active participants in a sustainable future

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Welcome to McDowell Farm School

Here at the farm, we believe that experiential education, through inquiry and self discovery leaves long lasting impressions and deeper understanding across all content areas. Using sustainable farming as a lens, students are reintroduced to food. From feeding a chicken, to collecting an egg, to making a frittata, students become immersed in our food system. They make connections between their choices at home and the large-scale systems that work to feed us every day. As active participants on our farm, students leave with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the time, planning, energy, and emotion that goes into food production.

On the farm, students are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and arrive at their own conclusions through experience. Our multi-day, overnight program allows students to carry over concepts from class to class, creating a cohesive understanding of the science of sustainable farming. Students share living and dining spaces, complete projects as a team, and are asked to support one another through new challenges.

Our classroom extends beyond the walls of our teaching kitchen, beyond our 40 acres of gardens and fields, and even beyond the 1,140 acres of forests, streams and canyons of McDowell! We make the world our classroom and our place to discover.

Once you contact us and confirm your trip, we will guide your planning process. Please read through this packet very thoroughly as the first step in planning your trip. If you plan to bring multiple grade levels, consult with us about how to provide different classes for each grade level. Each class variance allows students who are returning to receive new information and experiences.

Materials in this packet may be duplicated to ensure that your students, parents and chaperones are well informed. Chaperones are vital to making this trip go smoothly, so we strongly encourage you to select those individuals carefully. Notice the pages to print out and send home to parents and chaperones.

We look forward to creating a unique learning experience for you and your students. If you are new to our program, please feel free to request an informative presentation for your teachers, parents and/or students.

Please contact us with any questions you have.

Scotty Feltman, Director
farmschooldirector@campmcdowell.org
205.387.1806 ext. 106

DATES & RATES

We offer trips Monday-Friday from late February - May and September - November
Contact us to book a trip or learn more

TRIP PRICES

2026-2027 School Year

Overnight Trips

3-day, 2-night trip: \$180 per person

7 meals, 4 snacks, 2 nights lodging, 12 class hours, 2 night programs

2-day, 1-night trip: \$140 per person

4 meals, 2 snacks, 1 night lodging, 6 class hours, 1 night program

Day Trips

Bring Your Own Lunch: \$40 per person

Lunch Provided: \$48 per person

Bag lunch or 'pasture party' meal depending on staffing and time

For every ten students who attend, one adult may come for free!

Additional adults may attend for full price

Payment: At the end of your trip, you will receive an invoice with the total amount due for your school. Payment of this invoice is due within ten days of the completion of your trip. Please make checks payable to McDowell Farm School.

Scholarships: Contact us to inquire about funding assistance.

Capacity: For overnight groups, we can accommodate up to 95 students per session. For day trips, we can accommodate 120 students per day. If your group exceeds this, we can divide them into multiple sessions. We may book other groups during your stay if space is available.

New Schools: For new schools, a **non-refundable** deposit is required 2 weeks from the date your reservation is made in order to secure your place on our calendar. The reservation fee is \$200.00 for fewer than 50 students or \$400.00 for 50 students or more. This deposit will be used towards your trip total. **The reservation fee is waived for annually returning schools.**

PROGRAM DETAILS

Students who attend the Farm School are able to make connections about the foods we eat and how it comes to our plates. Students will experience regenerative agriculture, teamwork, and hands-on caring for our gardens and farm animals. Whether it be collecting an egg or harvesting a carrot, students create connections and a deeper understanding of their involvement in food systems.

Schedule

For 2-day/1-night trips, disregard "Day Two"

| <u>DAY ONE</u> | | <u>DAY TWO</u> | | <u>DAY THREE</u> | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 10-11 | Arrive, move into cabins | 8-9 | Breakfast | 7:15-8 | Clean up, pack up, & move out of cabins |
| 11-12 | Welcome Meeting (Mon) | 9-12 | Morning Class | 8-9 | Breakfast |
| 12-1 | Lunch | 12-1 | Lunch | 9-12 | Morning Class |
| 12:45 | Welcome Meeting (Wed) | 1-4 | Afternoon Class | 12-1 | Lunch |
| 1-4 | Afternoon class | 4-6 | Canteen & Recreation | 1:00 | Depart |
| 4-6 | Canteen & Recreation | 6-7 | Supper | | |
| 6-7 | Supper | 7-8:30 | Night Program & Snack | | |
| 7-8:30 | Night Program & Snack | | | | |

Please Note: Student field groups will rotate through all the class selections chosen by the Lead Teacher. Everyone, including adults, will have canteen and will be able to choose a drink and snack. It is the responsibility of the chaperones to supervise the students during canteen and recreation times. The Camp Store (gift shop) will be open during recreation time at least one day of your trip.

Classes

Our Staff

The staff at McDowell Farm School come from all across the county and are professional educators. They go through an intensive staff training focusing on a student-centered approach to education. They will plan all classes and lessons and provide any materials needed. Our instructors share their love of nature with students. The ratio of one instructor for every twelve students promises safety as well as a personalized learning experience - with plenty of fun, adventure and increased confidence.

State Standards

Our curriculum is correlated to Alabama Courses of Study standards. Please see [our website](#) for detailed information about how our classes correlate to these standards.

Curriculum

Check the [curriculum guide](#) for all class offerings and descriptions.

Accommodations

Lodging for Students & Chaperones

McDowell Farm School (MFS) has 10 cabins with heating and air conditioning. All cabins are universally designed and accessible for everyone. Each cabin sleeps a total of 24 people in one open room, has individual showers and toilet stalls in the bathroom, and has a designated storm shelter. Participants need to bring towels, pillows, and bedding (sleeping bag or sheets/blankets). See the [Packing List](#) for more info.

Lodging for Teachers

Separate lodging may be requested for teachers who are not needed for cabin supervision. Teacher lodging has private rooms (2 full beds), private bathroom, and access to community kitchen and living room space. Bedding and towels provided in the teacher lodge only. Contact us if you want more info.

Meals

Three meals a day are prepared by our talented food service staff and served family style in Doug Dining Hall. Our food receives the highest reviews! **All of our kitchens are nut-free. The following dietary needs can be accommodated with indication on the health form: vegetarian, vegan, no pork, dairy-free, and gluten free (*not celiac-safe).** Additional allergies and dietary restrictions cannot be accommodated. **If you need to pack meals or supplemental foods to ensure a student's safety, please contact farmschool@campmcdowell.org and we'll get you more information.**

Health & Safety

Camp Nurse & Medication

We make every reasonable effort to ensure the health and safety of your students while they are here. All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. Camp McDowell has a full time nurses that take great pride in the care of our students. They are available to administer medication and respond to any health issues that may arise. Medication may only be administered to a student by the Nurse, the student's legal parent or guardian, or authorized school personnel. We will gather this medical information, as well as all allergy and dietary information, on the online Health/Waiver Form ahead of the trip. Students bringing medications will also need to complete the [Medication Packing List](#).

Accessibility

We can customize our classes to make them fun and accessible for most students with cognitive or physical limitations. Please discuss any special needs with us **ahead of time** so that we can be prepared to meet them. All of our cabins and facilities are wheelchair accessible.

Emergency Guidelines

Upon your arrival you will be briefed on emergency procedures by the MFS staff. If advanced medical care is required, the patient can be taken to Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper, 15 miles away. One chaperone or teacher must drive to Camp McDowell separately so that a vehicle will be at Camp in the event that an emergency should occur. In the event of a severe weather emergency, we will guide everyone to a storm shelter (multiple located around camp). In the event of an overnight weather event, cabin bathrooms double as storm shelters.

Student & Chaperone Tips

Preparing Your Students

The more prepared your students are for the trip, the quicker they will acclimate and start enjoying their experience. Essential topics to discuss with your students:

- The schedule including meal times, class times, lights out, rec time, canteen, night program
- What classes you have chosen, what to wear to class, level & type of physical activity
- The expectations for students including your school's guidelines, MFS rules (below), expected behavior, and consequences
- Where Camp McDowell is located and the travel time to Camp
- What to expect in the cabins including how many beds, bathrooms, and chaperones will be in their cabin
- Answering any questions and calming nerves or fears about the trip

Rules for students at McDowell Farm School

- Always ask a chaperone if you leave the group. Take a buddy with you. Tell a chaperone when you return.
- Please help keep camp free of litter and graffiti
- MFS staff must approve the collection of any plants, animals, and other natural things
- Please don't chew gum at camp. Animals cannot digest gum that they find on the ground
- Walk, don't run- there are many roots and rocks to trip over
- Bare feet and sandals are only allowed in the cabins
- "If you can't say something nice...Don't say nothin' at all." –*Thumper from Bambi*
- Do not enter anyone else's cabin
- Playgrounds may only be used with adult supervision

Helpful Hints for Choosing Chaperones

- Please limit chaperones to 3-4 per cabin and farm crew. Too many adults in each group can distract from the experience for students.
- Make sure they will be a positive role model for the group. Our classes are held outdoors rain or shine. If the chaperone is not enthusiastic about being outside, this will lessen the students' experience.
- Chaperones should be in good health. The classes at McDowell Farm School are very active. Most of them require some degree of walking, sometimes up and down steep hills. The distance walked each day varies from 2 to 6 miles, depending on the schedule and classes.
- Let chaperones know that the schedule will be very busy and what is expected of them. They will be with the students all day and all night. Sometimes they might be the only chaperone present.
- Make sure they are committed to taking an active role in supervision of the whole group. Taking care of one's own child is different from supervising a group of 12 students.
- Consider asking parents to complete an application if they are interested in being a chaperone. This can help you make a well-informed decision about who to choose, especially if you have many interested adults and need to narrow the number down.

LEAD TEACHER INFORMATION

The Lead Teacher's Role

Most of the Lead Teacher's responsibilities deal with pre-trip preparations. The enclosed *Trip Planning Form* lists your responsibilities and the [Lead Teacher Timeline](#) helps you to sequence them. During the program we encourage you to be a participant, learning along with your students.

Health and Release Form

Lead teachers are responsible for distributing the link for the online Health & Waiver Form and ensuring all are completed. Each school will have a unique link to the Health and Release Form online to fill out. The lead teacher will share the link with participants and parents/guardians of students. **All participants (including all chaperones and teachers) must have a completed Health and Waiver Form to attend.** If you need to use paper copies of the Health and Waiver Form, please email us and we will share them with you. Paper forms must be mailed to Camp McDowell and arrive 14 days prior to your trip. If your forms do not arrive seven days before your visit, you will be responsible for handing ALL medications on the first day until the RN, kitchen, and education staff can be updated on health concerns.

Teacher and Chaperone Guidelines

There must be at least one adult chaperone in each field group and cabin. MFS recommends a **1 to 10 adult/student ratio including teachers**. We have found that too many chaperones detract from the experience for students.

Planning and Cancellation Policies

Planning Policy: An **accurate** count of participants is due at the time of planning form submission (90 days prior to the scheduled trip date).

Cancellation Policy: If you cancel within 90 days of your visit, the school is responsible for a payment of 10% of the number of participants (student and adult) on the contract. If the planning form was not submitted we will use the number provided on the Reservation Contract. Payment is due within 30 days of cancellation. If you cancel within 30 days of your visit, the school is responsible for a payment of 50% of the number of participants (student and adult) on the contract.

If the planning form was not submitted we will use the number provided on the Reservation Contract. Payment is due within 30 days of cancellation. Schools are able to carry over the amount owed to a rescheduled trip for the same numbers of participants that occurs within 1 year of the original trip date.

Cellphones

We ask teachers to please collect all cell phones from students upon arrival to camp. It is part of our mission to build community connections, and phones are a distraction in the dining hall and during class.

Teacher Credit

We are a PowerSchool/AMSTI affiliate. Teachers are given a certificate, reflecting the time spent in classes at MFS, which most school systems accept for PD credit. For 3 day/2 night trips, teachers earn 15 hours of AMSTI-approved credits.

Lead Teacher Timeline

As Soon As Possible

- ☐ Email **Reservation Contract** (mail deposit for new schools)
- ☐ New Schools: Arrange a parent and/or student pre-trip meeting at your school
- ☐ Recruit physically-active chaperones, at least one for every cabin and field group
- ☐ Arrange for transportation through your school, or private charter
- ☐ Suggestion: Collect a deposit from students to secure their spot on the trip

3 months before

- ☐ Email the completed and signed 2-page [Trip Planning Form](#)
- ☐ Send out the [Parent and Chaperone Information](#)
- ☐ Send out the online link to the **Health and Release Form** (link will be emailed to you)
- ☐ Suggestion: Collect second payment from students and chaperones

2 months before

- ☐ Confirm your final numbers of participating students and adults & notify MFS of any changes

1 month before

- ☐ Email the [Farm Crew Lists](#) and [Cabin Group Lists](#) to us
- ☐ Check that all participants attending have completed the online **Health and Release Form**
- ☐ Host a meeting with your chaperones to prepare them for the trip expectations
- ☐ Suggestion: Collect the remainder of student payment

2-3 weeks before

- ☐ Check that all participants attending have completed the online **Health and Release Form**
- ☐ *If using paper forms:* Mail the original **Health and Release Form** to us. Please arrange them alphabetically, split by student and adult.

1 week before

- ☐ Contact us to check in about last minute updates, details, and estimated arrival time
- ☐ Make copies of the Cabin and Farm Crew Lists for all of your chaperones and co-teachers

DAY of the trip (before leaving the school)

- ☐ Collect all medicines and be sure they are in original containers w/ [Medication Packing Sheet](#)
- ☐ Pack luggage - separated by cabins in cars or buses
- ☐ Be sure everyone has bedding, appropriate clothes for the weather, and water bottles
- ☐ Hand out copies of the Cabin and Farm Crew Lists to your chaperones and co-teachers

ARRIVAL at Camp:

- ☐ Meet the MFS staff greeters at the Camp Store
- ☐ Give any last-minute group changes to the staff greeters
- ☐ Turn in all medicines and final paperwork, including inhalers & epi-pens to the Nurse
- ☐ Get settled into your cabin, then join us for the Welcome Meeting and Lunch
- ☐ Relax and have a great time!

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Our program is a mixture of core classes and additional day and night classes chosen by the lead teacher. We are flexible and fluid, changing with the plants, animals, and seasons!

Outdoor environmental education embraces teachable moments which happen regularly in an outdoor classroom. All instructors are professional educators. Your students will most likely have different instructors for each class. Because of this, students will have varying experiences in classes. Instructors will cover the key terms and meet the learning objectives for each class.

CORE CLASSES

FARM TO TABLE

Discover the energy needed to transfer produce from the field to the table. Students harvest farm-grown produce and get creative by preparing a seasonal dish.

Students will:

- Practice proper harvesting, cleaning, and cooking skills
- Explore new foods through taste tests
- Compare resources used in local versus conventional food systems and impact of our food choices



FARM FAUNA

Investigate the roles animals play on the farm by identifying and meeting their daily needs. Students compare our goats, chickens, and pigs and explore the animals' vast impacts on food production, environmental health, and human health.

Students will:

- Identify daily needs of farm animals and care for them (Chores)
- Compare animal life cycles, anatomies, functions, and behaviors on the farm
- Discuss resource use and animal impacts on the farm



PLANT IT, EARTH!

Unearth the secrets of soil! Students get their hands dirty exploring what soil is made of, discovering how farmers care for plants, and working together to complete a planting project. Students will dive deeper into a grade-appropriate focus area.

Students will:

- Investigate the flow of energy and nutrients that cycle from soil to plants to people
- Find out what plants need to survive and flourish on a farm
- Discover that soil is alive by exploring the interconnected ecosystem beneath our feet
- Contribute to the farm by planting seasonal produce to be harvested by future classes



Plant It, Earth! Focus Areas

BIG BUG WORLD (1-4th GRADE)

From honey bees to potato beetles, discover the diverse insect populations that live and work on the farm. Students compare and contrast beneficial insects versus pests in the garden by examining the anatomy, niche, and complex social structures of the bugs they find.

Students will:

- Collect insects and compare body structures, behaviors, and impacts on the farm
- Find evidence to determine which insects are beneficial and which are pest
- Create solutions that can be used to attract beneficial insects and minimize pests



IRRIGATION ENGINEERS (5-7th GRADE)

We all need water! The plants on our farm are no exception. In this irrigation exploration, students investigate the different ways we water plants on our farm, discuss reasons for different types of irrigation, and use problem-based learning to put together an actual irrigation system!

Students will:

- Identify different types of irrigation and their functions
- Discuss reasons for different types of irrigation and their efficiency
- Design and test a model irrigation/watering system with peers

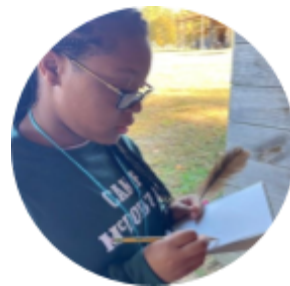


SUSTAINABILITY (8-12th GRADE)

Debate the definition of “sustainability” and assess the farm’s sustainable land management systems. Students follow the flow of energy through composting, rainwater harvesting, reuse of materials, and alternative energy systems to brainstorm how to create positive change in their communities.

Students will:

- Compare and contrast open versus closed systems on the farm
- Discover opportunities to reduce waste and continue the flow of energy on the farm
- Create sustainable solutions to conserve energy and make a positive impact in our communities and the surrounding ecosystem



ADDITIONAL CLASS OPTIONS

CANOEING

Experience the beauty of canoeing on Sloan Lake! Students build communication skills while learning how to canoe. All students must wear a life jacket and be prepared to get wet!

Students will:

- Guided exploration develops a sense of place and connection to our environment.
- Students must work together and communicate to canoe successfully.



FARM ART

How does it feel to receive a bouquet of flowers? Plants have the power to nourish us in more ways than one. In this farm art class, students are challenged to notice plants in a different way and make works of art using natural materials found around the farm.

Students will:

- Create a piece of art using natural materials
- Identify parts of a plant
- Discuss reasons for plant color adaptations



HARD AT WORK

Take part in seasonal, project based learning on the farm. Students work as a team to set goals, problem solve challenges, and build confidence throughout the process. Additional objectives for projects are identified with each individual school!

Students will:

- Identify farm challenges and create solutions.
- Set goals and strategies to complete steps of projects.
- Brainstorm or design ways to implement improvement projects at the farm and in communities back home.



NATURE HIKE

Explore the creeks, streams, and woods of McDowell. Students take time to discover unique trails, plants, animals and insects in the forest.

Students will:

- Develop a sense of place and connection to our environment through guided exploration
- Foster appreciation for southern deciduous forests
- Gain awareness of resources available in the forest and their uses to humans and animals



NIGHT PROGRAM OPTIONS

ALABAMA UNPLUGGED **Group size limit of 40 students or less**

Explore Alabama history and culture through traditional life skills such as safely using a crosscut saw and other tools, making butter, and playing games.

Students will:

- Discuss technology from the past that made life easier, comparing different tools over time
- Evaluate the evolution and impact of technology
- Create handmade items

BARN DANCE

Organized and free style dancing to folk and modern music. Students experience a fun, energizing, and community-building night of dancing, learning, and self-expression.

Students will:

- Learn a specific style of dance that has strong roots in Alabama
- Gain an awareness of folk arts

CAMPFIRE

Everyone spends a fun evening full of singing, dancing, laughing and storytelling around the fire, engaging with each other and our local, traditional folk arts!

Students will:

- Have fun without using electricity.
- Experience culture through song, skits, and creative activities

LIVESTOCK LULLABIES **Group size limit of 40 students or less**

Students experience the farm at night by taking care of the animals, learning about their nighttime habits, and enjoying the peacefulness surrounding the farm at night.

Students will:

- Discover special adaptations that allow creatures to be successful in the absence of light
- Compare and contrast activity from day to night on the farm
- Review animal needs; sing a song to animals to demonstrate care

NIGHT HIKE

Use your senses in a nocturnal setting, seeing the farm and forests from a different perspective! Students explore the surrounding woods, creatures, and night sky.

Students will:

- Discover special adaptations that allow creatures to be successful in the absence of light, including humans.
- Measure activity from day to night on the farm.
- Observe the moon, constellations, stars, and galaxy in the night sky.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Through problem solving, discussion and collaboration the council must persuade their fellow neighbors to get on board with their ideas. Students apply concepts learned on the farm, take on various roles, each with different perspectives and interests in the land, and debate possible management options.

Students will:

- Assess land management options
- Develop persuasive arguments justifying the decisions in a land proposal
- Consider different perspectives and opinions with respect to others' viewpoints

SCHOOL-LED PROGRAM

Lead teachers create and lead their own night program with students. Examples include:

Examples include:

- Board Games
- Talent Show
- Journal Time

McDowell Farm School Overnight Trip Planning Form

EMAIL to farmschool@campmcdowell.org

*Please email this form **3 months** prior to your visit*

School: _____ Grade(s): _____ Reserved dates: _____

Address: _____ City/State: _____

Lead Teacher: _____ Email: _____

School Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____

Secondary School Contact: _____ Email: _____

Arrival time: _____ (Mon 10/Wed 11 recommended) **Departure time:** _____ (12:45pm recommended)

☐ Check if you need to leave earlier than 12:45pm → ☐ Check if you need a sacked lunch to go

How will your group be arriving? (#'s if known) _____ Bus(es) _____ Car(s)

STUDENTS: _____

CABINS: _____ ~24 beds per cabin

ADULTS: _____ including all teachers & chaperones

FARM CREWS: _____ ~11-14 students per group

TOTAL: _____

Do you need separate lodging for teachers not needed in the cabins? If so, how many? _____

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MFS: Assist with pre-trip planning; provide complete educational programming; inform participants of their responsibilities, camp rules and emergency procedures; prepare meals and evening snacks; clean and maintain facilities and grounds; and provide a safe and wholesome atmosphere.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEAD TEACHER: Make a reservation (new schools- submit deposit) and return contract; arrange transportation; arrange for one physically-able chaperone for each cabin and field group; communicate with students, parents and chaperones about the trip; collect fees & medicines; email field group and cabin lists one month prior to trip; ensure health/waiver form is filled out for all; participate in the program with chaperones and students; and submit final payment.

DAMAGE: MFS reserves the right to send home any child who becomes ill, destroys property, behaves aggressively or takes any other action detrimental to other students or the program. The school will be responsible for providing transportation in such cases, and for any damage to the facilities and equipment. No refunds will be made under these conditions. MFS cannot be held responsible for loss or damage to property brought to the Center. Please encourage students to leave valuables and large amounts of cash at home.

INVOICE: On your last day, we will give you an invoice for the balance of your payment. Payment is due within 10 days after your trip.

I agree to the terms and agree that my group will abide by all McDowell policies.

Signature of Lead Teacher

Date

Please complete the next page

Overnight Trip Planning Form - Class Selection

Daytime Class Selection

| CORE CLASSES - <i>all groups take these classes</i> | OPTIONAL CLASSES - <i>select 2 classes below</i> |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm Fauna <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farm to Table <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plant It, Earth Choose one focus area for Plant It, Earth: <input type="checkbox"/> Big Bug World (1-4th) <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation Engineers (5-7th) <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability (8th-12th) | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Art <input type="checkbox"/> Hard at Work <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Hike |

Night Program Selection

| INDOOR | OUTDOOR |
|---|--|
| Alabama Unplugged (max 40 students) Barn Dance (great structure for large groups) Community Council School-Led Program | Campfire (great structure for large groups) Livestock Lullabies (max 40 students) Night Hike |

Please list your **top 4** night program choices below:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Final selections are made based on available spaces, weather conditions, and staff availability.

GROUP INFO

- Have any of your teachers and chaperones attended the Farm School before? _____
- Have any of your students attended the Farm School before? If so, how many? _____
- Does your school have an outdoor garden/classroom?
If so, what is your students' participation in that program? _____
- What specific student needs should we be aware of? (i.e. social/emotional/behavioral concerns, severe allergic reactions, physical limitations, learning needs, etc.) _____
- Please list any objectives or goals that you would like to emphasize while you are here: _____

FARM CREW LISTS

aka "field groups"

Please confirm the number of farm crews your school will be allotted with MFS before creating this list

EMAIL to farmschool@campmcdowell.org at least 1 month prior to your visit.

- Divide your class into field groups of 11-14 students and at least 1 adult
- At least one adult must be with a field group at all times
- It is important to group students in socially compatible groups
- If you are bringing multiple grade levels, group by grade
- If teachers are "floating," and not assigned a group, please still list all teachers' names on the form

CABIN GROUP LISTS

Please confirm the number of cabins your school will be allotted with MFS before creating this list

EMAIL to farmschool@campmcdowell.org at least 1 month prior to your visit.

- Cabin reservations are "first come, first serve," when we receive the Trip Planning Form
- Cabins each have 24 beds for students and adults.
- At least one adult must be assigned to each cabin. We recommend at least two adults per cabin.
- Separate lodging may be requested for teachers who are not needed for cabin supervision. Teacher lodging has private rooms (2 full beds), private bathroom, and access to community kitchen and living room space. Bedding and towels provided in the teacher lodge only.

Please organize lists in the following format (or similar)

Google Sheets work great

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1 | Field Group 1 | Field Group 2 | Field Group 3 | Field Group 4 | Teachers Floating |
| 2 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last |
| 3 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last |
| 4 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last |
| 5 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 6 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 7 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 8 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 9 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 10 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 11 | First, Last | | First, Last | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | Adults | Adults | Adults | Adults | We recommend 10-12 students and 2 adults per group |
| 14 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |
| 15 | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | First, Last | |

[Click here for an example](#) (you can copy and use as your own)

PARENT LETTER



Dear Guardian,

McDowell Farm School's goal is to reintroduce students to their food systems through hands-on, inquiry-based learning. From feeding a chicken, to collecting an egg, to making a frittata, students become ingrained in our food system. By guiding students to be active participants on the farm, they will make connections between their choices at home and the large-scale systems that work to feed us every day. Our instructors have been trained in a child-centered, experiential approach to teaching and are passionate about sharing our farm experiences 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 classes in the farm, so we spend most of our time outdoors, even in the rain and cold. Please help your child be prepared with appropriate clothing, as indicated on the Packing List. In truly inclement weather, we have ample indoor teaching space.

Health and Waiver Form: We have a full time onsite RN here to help keep your child safe and healthy. For your child's well-being, please complete the online Health and Waiver Form once you receive the link from your teacher. *Anyone without a completed form may not attend our program or participate.*

Dietary Needs: Three meals a day are prepared by our talented food service staff and served family style in Eppes Dining Hall. Our food receives the highest reviews! **All of our kitchens are nut-free. The following dietary needs can be accommodated with indication on the health form: vegetarian, vegan, no pork, dairy-free, and gluten free (*not celiac-safe).** Additional allergies and dietary restrictions cannot be accommodated.

→ If you need to pack meals or supplemental foods to ensure your student's safety, please contact farmschool@campmcdowell.org and we'll get you more information.

Medications: All medicines must be in their original containers. Please remember that you must provide any over-the-counter medicines you anticipate your child may need. Please **ONLY** send the amount needed for the trip.

→ *If your child requires an Epi-pen or other injection, please contact the Nurse at farmnurse@campmcdowell.org.*

Your child's school teacher 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, staff, or facilities, please feel free to call us or [visit our website](#).

Scotty Feltman, Director
farmschooldirector@campmcdowell.org
205.387.1806 ext. 106

PACKING LIST

Please carefully look over the following checklist and check each item as it is packed. Here are some helpful hints for packing:

- Limit packing to one suitcase or duffel bag and a rolled up sleeping bag
 - You will carry your belongings from the bus to your cabin. A suitcase with wheels is helpful!
 - Put your name on everything
 - Bring OLD clothes and shoes as you may get wet and muddy
 - Pack a raincoat or poncho (and warm clothes if applicable) as our classes are held outdoors rain or shine
-

Required

- ☐ 2 Water Bottles
- ☐ Raincoat or Poncho
- ☐ 4 pairs of socks
- ☐ 2 pairs of closed-toes shoes (**no Crocs!**)
- ☐ 3 pairs of underwear
- ☐ 3 shirts
- ☐ 2 pairs of long pants
- ☐ 3 pairs of shorts
- ☐ Sweatshirt or Fleece
- ☐ Pajamas
- ☐ Towel & wash cloth
- ☐ Soap, toothbrush, & other toiletries
- ☐ Sleeping bag and Pillow
 - ☐ Or sheets & blankets - single bed
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Small backpack

Do NOT Bring:

Food, gum, candy, or beverages

Optional Additions

- ☐ Hat & sunglasses
- ☐ Flashlight & extra batteries
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Souvenir money - cash or card
- ☐ Sandals for shower
- ☐ Journal and pen/pencil
- ☐ Bug repellent (non-Deet only)
- ☐ Chapstick

Cold Weather Additions

Wool and synthetic clothing work best!

- ☐ Warm hat/beanie
- ☐ Warm gloves
- ☐ 2 pairs of thick socks
- ☐ Long underwear/thick tights
- ☐ Long-sleeve shirt or sweatshirt
- ☐ Heavy and warm jacket
- ☐ Winter or warm boots

Medication/Medicine

- ☐ All medications must be turned into the Nurse (in original container) in a ziplock bag with the [medication packing sheet](#) (see below)

Medicine Reminder

Please print and send to parents

- Medicines at McDowell Farm School are subject to the same rules as medicines brought to school for administration by the school nurse.
- Scheduled medicine times are: Before Breakfast, After Breakfast, After Lunch, Canteen, After Dinner and Evening Snack.
- Prescription medicines **MUST** be in their original containers and have a label containing:
 - o Student Name
 - o Name of Prescription Drug
 - o Strength of Prescription Drug
 - o Administration directions (“give as directed” is **NOT** acceptable)
 - o Parents must indicate what time medication is to be taken
- Please remember that parents **must provide any over-the-counter medicines** they anticipate their child may need.

→ If your child requires an Epi-pen or other injection, please contact farmnurse@campmcdowell.org

Medication Packing Sheet

Please print and pack with medication

Please place this sheet in a ziplock bag with your child’s medicine. All information must be completed by a parent or legal guardian. Please fill out the information for prescription and over the counter medicines.

Student’s Name: _____ School: _____

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS: Circle the time(s) to administer the medicine to the child, choose from following:

B*= Before Breakfast, **B**= After Breakfast, **L**= After Lunch, **C**=Canteen (4PM), **D**= After Dinner, **HS**= At Bedtime

**If a time is not selected, medicines will be given after breakfast.*

| | | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS |
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS |
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS |

OVER THE COUNTER (OTC) MEDICATIONS: All OTC Medications **MUST** be provided by parents/legal guardians of the student. Circle “As Needed Only”, if medication is not taken daily.

| | | | |
|-------------|---------|---------|---|
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS <div style="text-align: right;">As Needed Only</div> |
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS <div style="text-align: right;">As Needed Only</div> |
| Medication: | Dosage: | Reason: | Time Given: B* B L C D HS <div style="text-align: right;">As Needed Only</div> |

CHAPERONE INFORMATION

What is McDowell Farm School (MFS)?

Our non-profit, educational organization provides outdoor learning experiences for school groups in the farm, forests, and lake of beautiful Camp McDowell. Camp McDowell, an Episcopal summer camp since 1947, has hosted hundreds of thousands of children over the years. The environmental program is completely nonsectarian and is offered to all students regardless of race, religion, ability or gender.

It is the philosophy of the MFS that experiencing food systems first-hand can lead to a lifelong awareness and respect for the food we eat and its inextricable connection to our natural world. The ratio of one instructor for every twelve students promises safety as well as a personalized learning experience - with plenty of fun, adventure and increased confidence. By working together in farm crews, cabin groups and in the dining hall, students also learn about living in a community. Our classes provide opportunities for self esteem building, as students have new experiences and successes.

Cabins

- Each cabin has 24 beds (singles and bunks). The cabins are heated and cooled. Each cabin has a bathroom with 2-3 sinks, 2-4 toilets, and 2-4 individual showers.
- Establish guidelines for the students about what you expect of them: shower times, lights out time, no raiding, respecting other students' belongings, keeping their area clean, etc. We ask that you do not bring any food to the cabins which might attract critters. Remind students to pack up their belongings, sweep out the cabin and move their luggage to the appropriate pick-up area in the morning before breakfast on the final day.
- Talk with the students to build rapport. Ask them about what they have been doing, and show an interest in them. If you build a strong rapport, they will be more likely to listen to you.

Food & Meals

- Meal times are also educational opportunities at McDowell. We teach the importance of lowering our food waste in a non-competitive manner.
- Our dining hall serves nutritious, kid-friendly meals, which we eat family-style. At the table, encourage good table manners.
- Let the students help with the work at the table- it encourages responsibility! Be a role model during announcements by listening and encouraging students to be quiet and listen as well.

Safety and Medications

- The safety of the students is paramount at McDowell. A registered nurse lives on-site and our Health Hut is equipped to handle first aid and other routine health care needs. All of our instructors are certified in First Aid and CPR.
- In the event of an emergency, the school and McDowell personnel will make the decision to transport a student to the hospital in Jasper, 15 miles away.
- All medications will be kept and dispensed by the nurse unless your school has made other arrangements. If a child who experiences severe allergic reactions or asthma is placed in your field group or cabin, you may be expected to carry that child's inhaler or epi-pen.
- Be aware of the students in your cabin or field group who take routine medications, and discreetly remind them to visit the nurse with a buddy.
- We monitor the weather closely, and during severe weather, we have an emergency plan that includes tornado shelters.

Classes

- The teacher from your school has chosen the classes your students will be taking, based on their goals for the visit. Actively participate in the classes. Your enthusiasm can often motivate students!
- Be sure that students always have their water bottles during class and activity time.
- Everyone must wear sturdy, closed toed shoes outside of the cabin, no crocs.
- MFS Instructors supervise during classes. Chaperones are responsible for supervision of students at all other times, including Recreation time.
- If a student is being particularly disruptive, we ask that you stand near the student and help them refocus.
- Please contribute any particular information that pertains to your home community. You are a valuable resource!

Canteen & Recreation

- Keep tabs on your farm crew during canteen (snack) time. Unless they have special permission, students are not allowed to go back to their cabins during canteen. No one is to stay in the cabin at Recreation (recess) time unless decided by your lead teacher.
- Chaperones are responsible for students during Recreation time. The nurse will be available for emergencies, however Chaperones are responsible for supervision of students.

Example Schedule

For 2-day/1-night trips, disregard "Day Two"

| <u>DAY ONE</u> | | <u>DAY TWO</u> | | <u>DAY THREE</u> |
|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 10-11 | Arrive, move into cabins | 8-9 | Breakfast | 7:15-8 Clean up, pack up, & move out of cabins |
| 11-12 | Welcome Meeting (Mon) | 9-12 | Morning Class | 8-9 Breakfast |
| 12-1 | Lunch | 12-1 | Lunch | 9-12 Morning Class |
| 12:45 | Welcome Meeting (Wed) | 1-4 | Afternoon Class | 12-1 Lunch |
| 1-4 | Afternoon class | 4-6 | Canteen & Recreation | 1:00 Depart |
| 4-6 | Canteen & Recreation | 6-7 | Supper | |
| 6-7 | Supper | 7-8:30 | Night Program & Snack | |
| 7-8:30 | Night Program & Snack | | | |

Please Note: Student field groups will rotate through all the class selections chosen by the Lead Teacher. Everyone, including adults, will have canteen and will be able to choose a drink and snack. It is the responsibility of the chaperones to supervise the students during canteen and recreation times. The Camp Store (gift shop) will be open during recreation time.

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. You make this trip possible, and for that we are grateful. We would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about your role as a chaperone. Please read the Chaperone Information sheet accompanying this letter for details concerning the trip to the McDowell Farm School.

The lead teacher from your school will assign you to a cabin of students to supervise at night and a farm crew of about 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 farm crew and cabin group.

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 cooking, canoeing, milking a goat, or exploring the night time forest without a flashlight. We appreciate your enthusiasm during these classes, as it can be a great motivator for the students!

Here are some general policies for adults:

- Chaperones may keep personal medicines and/or their own child's medicines with them, but medications must be on your person at all times-or locked in your vehicle. No medicines may be left unsupervised in the cabin.
- Smoking is not allowed indoors or in front of students. Alcohol is not allowed.
- Try not to use your cell phone around the children. When children call home, they often experience homesickness afterwards.
- 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 the Farm School, 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 Recreation (Rec) Time, during meals and in cabins each day.

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!

Scotty Feltman, Director
farmschooldirector@campmcdowell.org
205.387.1806 ext. 106