

# 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



## **Day Trip Planning Guide**

Welcome to the most incredible field trip experience your students will ever have! At McDowell Farm School (MFS), students are reintroduced to food right at the source. By pulling a carrot out of the ground or collecting eggs from our chicken coop, students leave with a deeper understanding 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 as they apply classroom concepts to the natural world.

On this day-long trip, students will spend half of their time **meeting our farm animals** and the other half **exploring the gardens** with hands-on activities. If time allows, they might even explore the beauty of camp on a **short nature hike**. Students will be divided into groups ahead of time, each led by one of our trained Farm Instructors.

We can't wait to have you and your students out to the farm! This trip will be one of the most impactful trips of their lives! Please email [farmschool@campmcdowell.org](mailto:farmschool@campmcdowell.org) with any planning questions you have.

Scotty Feltman, Director

## **Trip Cost: \$40 per Person**

- ***For every ten students who attend, one adult may come free.***
- Additional adults may attend for full price.
- Most groups bring their own lunches, but **sack lunches may be provided for \$48 per person**. All of our kitchens are nut-free. Vegetarian, Vegan, Dairy-Free, and Gluten Free (\*not celiac-safe) dietary needs can be accommodated with advance notice on the Health Form.

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# PROGRAM DETAILS

## Example Schedules

Our schedules are flexible to meet your arrival and departure needs. We recommend spending at least 4-5 hours at the farm to get the full farm experience.

<u>Example #1</u>	<u>Example #2</u>	<u>Example #3</u>
8:45 Arrival & Welcome	10:00 Arrival & Welcome	8:45 Arrival & Welcome
9:00 <b>Morning class</b>	10:30 <b>Morning class</b>	9:00 <b>Class #1</b>
11:30 Lunch	12:30 Lunch	11:00 Lunch
12:00 <b>Afternoon class</b>	1:00 <b>Afternoon class</b>	11:30 <b>Class #2</b>
2:30 Depart	2:30 Depart	1:30 Break
		1:45 <b>Class #3</b>
		4:00 Depart

## Classes

- Our Staff: The staff at McDowell Farm School come from all across the country 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 farming 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 Course of Study Standards. Please see [our website](#) for detailed information about how our classes correlate to these standards.

## 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/First Aid certified. Camp McDowell has two full time nurses that take great pride in the care of our students and *may* be on-site at the time of your trip. Schools are responsible for handling their own students' medications.
- 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.
- Emergency Guidelines: If advanced medical care is required, the patient can be taken to Walker Baptist Medical Center in Jasper, 15 miles away. In the event of a severe weather emergency, we will guide everyone to a storm shelter (multiple located around camp).

# **LEAD TEACHER INFORMATION**

Your students are SO LUCKY to have a teacher like you!

## **The Lead Teacher's Role**

Most of the Lead Teacher's responsibilities deal with pre-trip preparations. The **Lead Teacher Timeline** (next page) lists your responsibilities in recommended order. During the program we encourage you to be a participant, learning along with your students. We want your trip to go smoothly and the planning process to be as easy as possible for you. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions!

## **Teacher and Chaperone Guidelines**

There must be at least one adult chaperone in each farm crew. MFS recommends a **1 to 10 adult/student ratio including teachers**. We have found that too many chaperones detract from students' experience.

## **Health and Release Forms**

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 and arrive 14 days prior to your trip.

## **Helpful Hints**

- Have your students wear name tags
- Have students bring water bottles & dress appropriately (closed-toes shoes, rain gear, warm clothes if cold, and hats are great!)
- Plan snacks for your trip. Especially for younger students (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade), it is a good idea to plan for snacks. Possible snack times include: on the bus, immediately after you get here, mid-morning, or right before you leave. *Please let us know when you plan these, so that we can adjust our schedule accordingly.*

## **Payment:**

Before you leave your trip, we will give you an invoice for the balance of your payment. Payment is due within 10 days after your trip.

## **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.



# 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 farm crew
- ☐ Arrange for transportation through your school, or private charter
- ☐ Suggestion: Collect a deposit from students to secure their spot on the trip

## **3 MONTHS prior**

- ☐ 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)

## **2 MONTHS prior**

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

## **1 MONTH prior**

- ☐ Email the ***Farm Crew Lists*** to us
- ☐ Check that all participants attending have completed the online ***Health and Release Form***

## **2-3 WEEKS prior**

- ☐ 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.

## **DAY of the TRIP (before leaving the school)**

- ☐ Be sure everyone has appropriate clothes for the weather, closed toed shoes, and water bottles

## **ARRIVAL at CAMP:**

- ☐ Meet the MFS staff greeters at the Camp Store
- ☐ Give any last-minute group changes to the staff greeters
- ☐ Join us for a brief Welcome Meeting and head off to activities
- ☐ Relax and have a great time!

# McDowell Farm School Day Trip Planning Form PG.1/2

EMAIL to farmschool@campmcdowell.org

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

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Reserved dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary School Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Arrival time:** \_\_\_\_\_ (8:30-9:30 suggested) **Departure time:** \_\_\_\_\_ (2:30-3:30pm suggested)

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

Please indicate your lunch preference:

☐ We will bring our own sack lunches for no additional charge.

☐ We need sack lunches provided for an additional cost.

Are you bringing a snack for your students? YES / NO If so, what time during the schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

**# STUDENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **#ADULTS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL #:** \_\_\_\_\_ (including all teachers)

**# Farm Crews:** \_\_\_\_\_ (~12 - 14 students per group)

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**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 farm crew; communicate with students, parents and chaperones about the trip; collect fees & medicines; email farm crew 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>>>**

# Day Trip Planning Form PG.2/2

All students will take the same classes. To get a full farm experience, all day groups take **Farm Fauna** (meet the animals), **Plant It Earth** (experience the garden), and **Nature Hike** (explore trails).

## Example Schedule:

Time	Group	Class
8:45 arrival	Welcome Meeting (all)	
9:00-11:30	Farm Crew 1	Farm Fauna
	Farm Crew 2	Nature Hike / Plant It Earth
	Farm Crew 3	Plant It Earth / Nature Hike
11:30-12:00	Picnic Lunch at the Barn (all)	
12:00-2:30	Farm Crew 1	Plant It Earth / Nature Hike
	Farm Crew 2	Farm Fauna
	Farm Crew 3	Farm Fauna
2:30 departure	Thanks for coming!	

Reach out to our Program Coordinator [farmschool@campmcdowell.org](mailto:farmschool@campmcdowell.org) with any questions you have about class selections; day programs are flexible, and we want to build the best program for you!

## *The following info will help us better understand the needs of your group.*

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 is your primary goal while visiting the Farm School for a day?

Do any of your students have special needs of which our staff should be aware? (i.e. physical limitations, low level/non-readers, severe food allergies, emotional/behavioral concerns, etc...) The more information you give us ahead of time, the better we can prepare for your students!

# **FARM CREW LISTS**

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

- Divide your class into farm crews of 10 to 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 teachers’ names on the form

**EMAIL** to [farmschool@campmcdowell.org](mailto:farmschool@campmcdowell.org)

***Please email this list 1 month prior to your visit***

**Please organize farm crews in the following format (or similar)**

Google Sheets work great

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Field Group 1</b>	<b>Field Group 2</b>	<b>Field Group 3</b>	<b>Field Group 4</b>	<b>Teachers Floating</b>
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	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>We recommend 10-12 students and 2 adults per group</b>
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,

During their time on the farm, students are teeming with questions...“Why are the eggs warm? What makes the best soil? Why are you a farmer?”

Each question provides the space to not only deepen their science understanding, but to connect their knowledge to new situations. Our goal is to bring kids face to face with the science of the classroom through the lens of sustainable farming. Students discover their interests and we facilitate understanding and appreciation of their world. Our chosen pathways are through food and water systems - we emphasize the power of personal choice and how choice directly affects outcomes.

Each day on the farm, students apply classroom concepts to the natural world. Our classroom extends beyond the walls of our teaching kitchen, beyond our 40 acres of gardens and fields, and even beyond the 1100 acres of forests, streams and canyons of McDowell! We make the world our classroom and our place to discover.

Listed below are a few important items worth emphasizing about your child’s upcoming visit to ensure their safety and comfort. Please read the information below carefully.

**Appropriate Clothing:** Living and learning on a farm can be messy business and because we spend most of our time outdoors (even in the rain and cold), please be sure to pack appropriate clothing for your child. In truly inclement weather, we have ample indoor teaching space.

## **PACKING LIST**

- ☐ Bring OLD clothes and shoes! You may get dirty, wet and muddy.
- ☐ Bring a water bottle.
- ☐ Pack a raincoat or poncho (and warm clothes if applicable). Classes are held rain or shine.
- ☐ Pack a lunch if necessary!

## **Suggested Items**

- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Bug spray
- ☐ Hat or visor
- ☐ Bandana
- ☐ Small backpack to carry everything

If you have any questions or concerns about our program, personnel, or facilities, please contact us directly. We are more than happy to take your calls!

Scotty Feltman, Director



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