

The Outdoor School

Chaperone's Packet

(All adults attending - both teachers and parents)

2023-24

Our Mission:

The Outdoor School strives to use the outdoors to awaken both ourselves and others to the potential within and around all of us.

Dear Teacher Chaperones:

Thank-you, thank-you for being so dedicated to education that you are willing to sleep (or not sleep!) in cabins with your students. We appreciate you so much, there just aren't enough words to express it.

We're excited that you are about to see your students behave and interact in a way that perhaps you haven't seen in the classroom. We often find that the students who have difficulties within walls excel here... while it isn't generally okay to run around and scream inside, it is here. And that allows those students the chance to learn on "their turf." And it is wonderful to see.

If you have any questions during your trip, please feel free to ask. Open communication is the best way to make sure everyone is satisfied, so we hope that you will feel comfortable talking to us with any questions or concerns during the trip. At the same time, we will communicate with you about anything that arises.

A disclaimer on the topics and requests in this booklet. There may be a few things mentioned here that makes perfect sense to you, and you may wonder why in the world we would include it. But there are a few schools who bring parent chaperones and they are not generally involved in the planning of this trip. So there are things that they do not reasonably know or think about. Thanks for understanding that this booklet is "all encompassing" as to include the parent chaperones.

Thank-you again for your dedication and your time. We truly could not do this without you!

Dear Parent Chaperones:

Thank-you for giving up your busy lives for a few days to attend The Outdoor School with your children. Please know that we do not take your sacrifice lightly! And we want to let you know about a couple of specific things.

First, know that we will treat you as teachers rather than as parents. What does that mean? If we need a chaperone to go with a team for discipline or for extra help and we find you before we find a teacher, we will ask you to be that chaperone. Thank-you in advance for jumping in where you are needed.

Second, know that the schedule has been carefully planned ahead of time between the teachers and The Outdoor School. The teachers have chosen the classes/activities that they want the students to learn, and we have built the schedule around their needs. We are more than happy to answer your questions regarding the schedule should you have any. But if any changes are requested, we will always defer to the teachers.

Third, know that this is a school trip. Some of you may have come out here with Girl Scouts or a church retreat, and there may have been a lot of time to play on that particular trip. Because this is a school trip, it is designed to be educational (which is why the name of our program is "The Outdoor School" and not "Camp Champions"). While we are full of energy and fun, we do take our teaching seriously and believe that our program is an extension of the classroom. And we ask that you think of us in that way too. For example, we know that you would not pull your child out of school to go outside to take a picture or show up with a McDonald's soft drink for your child only, so we ask that you do not do those things here... it can be disruptive.

Lastly, we ask that you treat your child without prejudice. What we mean by that is that you simply treat your child as one of a group rather than paying special attention to your child. One of the beautiful aspects of this trip is that students are in a safe place, and it's a wonderful chance for them to begin making some independent decisions away from mom and dad. If you are chaperoning a 5th grade trip, for example, the students will be heading to Middle School next year and this is a perfect place for them to start experiencing some of that independence. If you are staying with your child's team, we ask that you not "hover." Allow them the chance to be responsible for their own water bottle; let them make the decision as to whether or not they want their jacket; permit them the chance to face new challenges in their own way. You've poured such time and energy into raising them to make good decisions - this is a wonderful place for them to begin exercising that skill.

Again, we thank you for your time spent chaperoning this trip - we really couldn't do it without you!

Our Philosophies:

Universal Respect:

There is a whole world out there and we are only a small part of it. We want to help the kids to encourage each other to respect each part of our world: each other, themselves, our equipment, nature. We really have only one rule here at TOS and it's to keep to Universal Respect. We find that almost every issue or problem can be avoided or resolved through respect.

Challenge by Choice:

This applies mostly to our Ropes Courses and Climbing Wall, although can be applied to areas of other classes (touching a snake in Reptiles, for example). Simply stated, this means that it is your choice how much you want to challenge yourself.

There are two very important words in this philosophy: "Challenge" and "Choice"... both words are critical.

"Challenge":

We DO want students to challenge themselves; to step outside their comfort zones and try something that they haven't done before, perhaps something that might be quite scary to them. We want them to stretch themselves to new levels.

"Choice":

It is their choice as to what they can attempt and achieve. Before anyone climbs we will ask them what their goal is and then do everything we can through encouragement to help them achieve or surpass their goal. The nice thing about it being their goal is that they can change it to make it more challenging or more achievable.

Your role:

We ask that you help us with Challenge by Choice by not pressuring students to climb to YOUR goal FOR them. Encourage them, but please refrain from telling them to go higher, "bribing" them, or comparing them to another student. Allow them the freedom to experience their climb on their terms. Thank-you for your help!



The Schedule:

You will receive a final schedule with the team roster printed on it when you arrive.

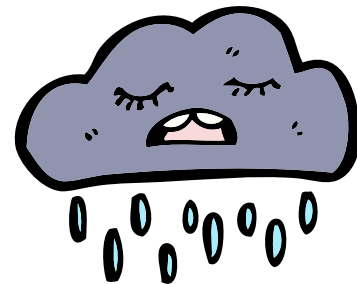
The schedule was put together by the lead teacher and our scheduling team. Please know that you will probably not be the only school on our property, and we often need to work schools around each other. We work very hard to make sure that schools are not mixed in activities, so adjustments sometimes need to be made in order to make this happen. If at any time you have questions about the particulars of your schedule please feel free to ask - we'll be more than happy to explain why your schedule is arranged the way it is.

If we need to make adjustments, we will take into consideration not just your school, but every school on property. Please be patient with us as we work our magic.

Know that all of our activities are an hour-and-a-half long, including the evening activities. If the days are longer (May or September trips) you may have a bit of a break after dinner and before the evening activity begins. It will be up to you to watch your students during those gaps.

What about inclement weather?

Because we are "The Outdoor School" we are prepared to teach outside in all types of weather. Only during extreme or dangerous weather (freezing rain or lightning, for example) do we seek shelter. If we hear thunder or see lightning we do pull students off of any climbing or water activities. We will generally go out of our way to try and make it up for any team that misses out, but please know that "try" is the operative word in that sentence. Sometimes it is just not possible.



What about Astronomy on cloudy nights?

We generally make the call on Astronomy during dinner so that we can switch instructors from one night to another if need be. Sometimes it is the right call and sometimes it is not. Please be patient with us and be forgiving if the clouds miraculously roll back to reveal beautiful skies, but we no longer have the adequate number of instructors to teach because we've released them for the evening. Also know that seeing one or two stars does not make a good night for astronomy... we need to be able to see whole sections of the sky in order to see entire constellations, not just individual stars here and there.

Your Role:

Attending classes:

We do not require you to attend most of our classes, although we LIKE you to because we think our activities are good, we'd like your feedback, and we think it's good for you to see what your students are learning and how they are interacting with each other. But we realize that you are in the cabins at night and you may very well need a break.

There are, however, a few classes that DO need extra help or supervision and we ask for your help in order for your student to be successful (and for us to stay on time!). Those classes are:

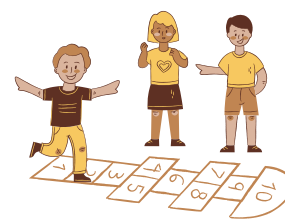
- Kayaking
- Screamin' Eagle
- Campout
- Pirate Ship (ESL/ELL students MUST have a translator)
- Zipline
- Evening Activities



Other times:

There are other specific times that we need you, and we ask that you be present in case there is an emergency or other situation that we need you to take care of. Those times are:

- During breaks, rest time, and free time.
- During showers and bedtime.
- To help with disciplinary issues.
- With any team that has a child with special needs.



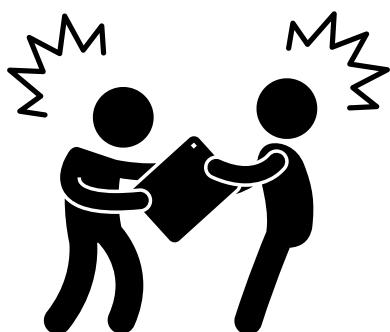
We respectfully ask that you not:

- Swim without a TOS lifeguard present.
- Kayak without your school.
- Leave property en masse

Breaks and Water Bottles:

We have one water bottle station on each side of camp so that students (and you!) can hydrate.

PLEASE make sure all students have a water bottle!



Behavior:

It's nice if you let us handle behavioral issues as the kids tend to respect us a little more when it comes from us. That being said, you know your students better than we do, and you also know what the standards are for your particular students (every school is slightly different). So we ask that you feel free to step in at any time - you will not be stepping on our toes in any way. Please help us help your students to be successful!

Progressive Behavior Policy:

- For **minor** violations such as foul language or non-participation, we will verbally warn the student and then take away the Universal Respect bead. If the behavior continues, we will call for a chaperone and discuss options for consequences with you.
- **Medium** violations included bullying, damaging property, or stealing, and we will immediately call for a teacher.
- **Major** violations include physical aggression and will result in the student being sent home.

Free Time & Swimming:

Free Time:

If your school is not swimming we will ask that you monitor the students during that time as we will be busy elsewhere. There are many different activities that your students can enjoy:

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Football
- Gaga
- Pickleball
- Tennis
- Sit and read or visit

We do ask that you have your students stay on the same side of camp as their cabins rather than wandering to the other side of camp. We will rely on you to decide if students can be inside their cabins or not. We ask that no student be on the docks or near the water without a chaperone present. Kayaking is not allowed during free time.



Swimming:

If your school is swimming, this will take up the majority of your free time. If there are any students who have elected to not swim, we ask that you monitor those students as we will be busy lifeguarding. Your lead teacher will have pre-chosen whether the students are using the lake (free) or the pool (cost).



We have a "green band" system that we will explain more in depth once you arrive. It is a visual cue for us on swimming ability as listed by parents on the med form.

We do require that ALL guests (students and adults) wear lifejackets if swimming in the lake regardless of age or swimming ability.

T-Shirts in the pool:

We mentioned this to the lead teacher when planning the trip, but want to make sure that all chaperones understand that no cotton clothing is allowed in the pool... that means no cotton t-shirts may be worn over swimsuits. Polyester fabric is fine (such as a rash-guard or dri-fit shirt). Cotton fibers clog the filters something fierce and create a maintenance nightmare. Please understand our point-of-view and help us enforce that rule.



Night Time & Cabin Time:

Quiet Hours:

We ask that you please respect and adhere to the "All Quiet" time on the schedule. Voices carry in the dark and even if your cabin flaps are down, a loud cabin can be heard on the other side of camp (and even across the lake!). Please be respectful of your neighboring cabins.

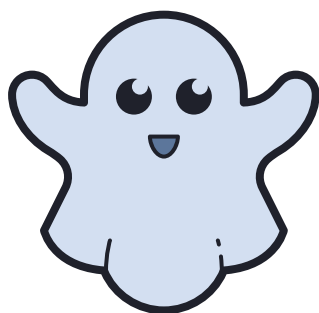
Some tips for getting students to bed:

- Bring a book from home and read to them (even older students like this one!)
- When the students are in bed and the lights are out, have each child say something that they learned that day. Or someone they were proud of. Or something that they can apply to their lives... no comments from other students or it can spiral into mass-talking. Keep it to a quiet reflection time and you'll be surprised how many students fall asleep as they're reflecting!



Also in the morning, if your students wake up early, please do not allow them to start playing basketball at the crack of dawn. Others may still be attempting to sleep. You could:

- Take a morning nature hike away from the cabin area - look for animals that may be resting later on during the day.
- Cabin calisthenics or runs.
- Cabin clean up.
- Read to them.
- Have an early morning devotional if you are a religiously based school.



Ghost Stories:

Our instructors do not tell your children ghost stories. It seems like a great idea, but we've found that it quickly gets out of control. We want to be sensitive and respectful to those students (and adults!) with night fears, so ghost stories are not part of our program. We will also quash any stories that your students tell each other.

Raids:

Raiding cabins can often get out of control, so we ask that you not allow raiding.

Sleeping Bags:

We have a few extra sleeping bags in the Teachers' Lounge for you to borrow if you have any students who forgot theirs. Take what you need and please return them before you leave.

Bed Wetting:

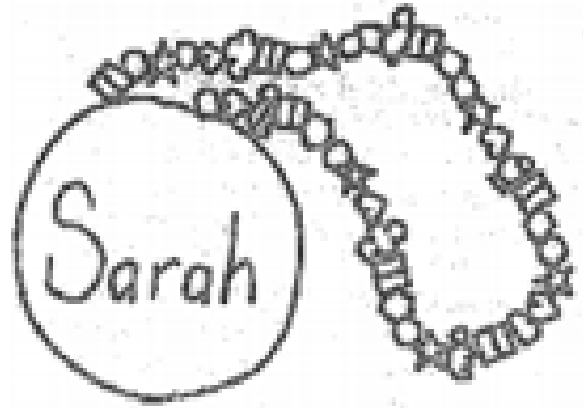
It can happen... and we do not wish for any child to feel ashamed. Please discretely bring us any soiled bedding/clothing at breakfast. We will wash and dry it and return it by lunch. We are happy to assist with accidents or emergencies, but please know that we are not a laundry service.

Nametags & Beads:

Every student will receive a nametag during orientation. For our younger students they will be wooden nametags. For our older students, we find that they have reached an age where the wooden nametags have lost their "coolness factor." They teen-age-edly refuse to wear them, so we give them stick-on labels until we know their names.

Wooden Nametags:

This is an important part of our program and we ask that students wear their nametags practically everywhere. First, it helps us learn their names more quickly, and part of Universal Respect is using students' names rather than "hey kid." Second, we have a bead system here and they must have their nametags to have something to put the beads on.



We do ask that they are responsible with their nametags so we only give them one. If they lose it they do not receive a replacement; if they break it they do not receive a replacement. It's a small lesson in keeping track of, being responsible for, and respecting what they have been given. If it breaks because it is weak or if we misspell their names, we will gladly replace it as it is our fault.

Beads:

Each of our activities has a bead that corresponds to that activity. Students have the opportunity to earn those beads during their trip. There are two very simple things that they must do to earn the beads:

1. They must have their nametag ON and
2. They must participate positively in the activity.

During orientation we ask that all students agree to abide by Universal respect. The first bead they will earn is the Universal Respect bead; it is also the first bead they can lose. We will take it if they behave poorly but they can always earn it back again if their behavior changes.

Chaperones:

We will ask you to make a nametag for security purposes - we know you are supposed to be here if you have a nametag on. You are welcome to earn beads right along with the students. Please know that the instructors are focused on the students and may legitimately forget that you are there. Feel free to stick out your hand to receive yours too. We do ask that you actually attend the activity to earn your bead... the students will call you out if you sneak in the last 5 minutes of a class and then take a bead!

Our Facilities:

Cabins:

Our cabins do not have heat or air conditioning. Make sure you pack appropriate bedding for the forecasted weather.

Each cabin has ONE electrical outlet. We ask that you NOT bring extension cords or power strips to plug more things in... the extra load will blow the circuit breaker.

If your cabin has wooden window flaps as opposed to the vinyl flaps:

- We ask that the wooden window flaps are either all the way open or all the way closed. If they are partly raised it is easy for someone to walk into them on the outside of the cabins and injure themselves.
- If it starts to rain and they are all the way open, lower them so that water doesn't funnel onto the top bunks.
- It takes two people to raise/lower the flaps. If the flaps are allowed to slam down rather than being slowly lowered they can break.
- If you close the flaps at night, it is always a good idea to turn the "locks" on the outside to prevent them from banging in the wind. You'll sleep better!

Please do not let students write in or on the cabins.



Bathrooms:

We are under Health Department regulations as to how hot we can have our water tanks and under TCEQ regulations as to how much flow we can have to our shower heads. That means that while you WILL have a hot shower it won't be steaming or powerful.

Our toilets are also low flow and we have discovered that children use waaaay too much toilet paper. So the toilets clog. Please help us remind them that just a few squares will work.

If you walk into a bathroom and hear a toilet running, please jiggle the handle to allow the flapper to flap down and not constantly run.

Maintenance & Housekeeping:

We want you to enjoy your stay here, and so we want our facilities to work properly for you. If anything needs attention please let us know! We can't fix it if we don't know it's broken, so communication is key.

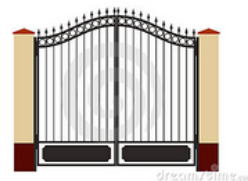
Our maintenance and housekeeping teams are generally here from 7am to 3pm. If there are issues that need attention after they have left for the day, we will attempt to fix it, but it may need to be on their list for the next day. If it is truly an emergency we will call someone in from home.



Safety & Security:

Front Gate:

Our front gate is open during the day, generally from 6am to dusk. Anyone needing onto the property while the gate is closed will need to call in on the keypad at the gate. This will call the emergency phone and we can let them in if they belong.



Visitors:

We ask that you not allow anyone to visit during the trip unless it is a school administrator. Parents may not come for the day. If anyone does come (a parent picking up a sick child, for example) they MUST check in at the office.



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First Aid:

We do not have a nurse on staff. All of our instructors and Directors are certified in First Aid and CPR. We all carry first aid kits with us so that we can take care of whatever may arise out on the trails. In addition, there are First Aid supplies in the Teachers' Lounge that you have access to. Everything we have is topical; we have nothing ingestible, so if you need Tylenol or Benadryl or Pepto Bismal and did not bring your own First Aid kit, you will need to go to HEB to pick those items up.

If your school is bringing a nurse along, that's wonderful! If you would like to set up a central area to be we will be happy to work with you in designating a location that is convenient. We ask that you not use the Teachers' Lounge as a nurse station as we want to reserve that space for teachers only.

If a student is running a fever, we ask that the student go home.



Emergency Facilities:

Because we do not have permission to transport students in our camp vehicles we ask that schools bring a vehicle for that purpose. We have a minor emergency clinic in Marble Falls (about 15 minutes away) and a Baylor Scott & White hospital also in Marble Falls (about 20 minutes away). Directions are in the back of this packet.

If you DO need to transport a student, we ask three things:

1. Please let the Director on Duty know what is happening.
2. Ask us for a copy of the medical form and take it with you. The hospital will not treat a child without the signed "permission to treat" section on the Medical Form.
3. Only one or two adults need to go... you're leaving the rest of the students here, and they need supervision.

Emergencies:

We have an emergency phone and someone will have that phone on 24 hours a day. We will share that number with the lead teacher so if you need us for an emergency they will be able to reach us. We ask that you NOT give this number to parents... this is a number reserved for emergencies while you are here on property.

Severe Weather:

We pay VERY close attention to the weather and are acutely aware when storms draw near. We constantly monitor the radar (as you also do on your phone) so we know when and where the weather will strike.

Lightning:

We follow Red Cross protocols regarding lightning. And we use both our lightning meter and "Spark" on the WeatherBug app to see how far away lightning is. If it is:

- 20-40 miles away we continue activities and closely monitor conditions.
- 8-20 miles away we pull students off any climbing and water activities, and all activities on the trails are brought back to main camp
- 3-8 miles away we are under shelter on main camp
- 0-3 miles away we send all guests back to their cabins

Tornado:

If a tornado warning is issued we will ask you to seek shelter with your students. You have two options - we advise the first option, but if you prefer all your student to be together, the second option is also viable:

1. Guests should take shelter in their cabin, under bunks, pulling mattresses down over them. If your cabin is elevated, you should go to a cabin on the ground.
2. Guests can take shelter in the bathrooms. They are made of cinderblock and sturdy.

Moving about:

Lightning is dangerous! Once we seek shelter we ask that you, as well as the students, stay put. We will communicate with you so that you know when it is alright to come out... if you do not hear from us, stay put! If at all possible, do not allow students to run from cabin to bathroom during severe weather.

Nighttime:

No news is good news! The Director on Duty will be aware of any weather rolling in during the night. If you do not hear from us, everything is ok! We will make sure all guests are taken care of during bad weather during the nighttime hours.

During meals:

If bad weather comes right before a meal is to be served and you are sent to your cabins, stay there! We will delay a meal if necessary, but if lightning or bad weather is directly on top of us, walking across the field to get to the Fillin' Station is not a wise decision. We will let you know as soon as we can when it is alright to start coming over to the Fillin' Station.



All the Random Bits Left Over:

Cell Phones:

We ask that you either turn off your cell phone or turn it to vibrate. If you do need to make or receive a call, please walk away from the group of students to do so. We would love to be tech-free, but understand that you still have lives back home. It is great if the students can see that they actually CAN live without a phone for 48 hours!



We strongly recommend that students not be allowed to have cell phones as it can increase homesickness if they actually talk to a parent. However we will let schools make that final determination. We do NOT allow students to carry phones as a camera, however.



Internet:

We do have wireless. Please understand that our service out here in the "country" is sometimes hit-or-miss. You will have connectivity in/near the Teachers' Lounge. The signal does not reach to the cabin area. The network you are looking for and the password is posted in the Teachers' Lounge.

Camp Store:

Your lead teacher has let us know if they would like the store to be an option during your trip. Some schools do not want the store to be available due to financial or other reasons. If the store IS an option, talk to your lead teacher about which option will be available for your school:

- Option 1: **NEW!** We now have the ability for students to pre-order and pay for merchandise on our camp store website (www.KneemanMarkus.com). We will pull the items and pass them out during your trip.
- Option 2: We can also build time into your schedule for additional store time if you would like.
- Option 3: If you would like to only offer TOS apparel to your students, we have asked the Lead Teacher to take the Camp Store page out of the Student Packet. Teachers should make a list of students with size and color of t-shirt and we will pull them once we have that list and money in hand.
- Option 4: We do not have to offer the camp store at all!



Drones:



Our insurance does not cover damages caused by drones. We respectfully ask that you leave yours at home. If you find that you simply must bring one, you must supply us with a copy of your FAA license and proof of insurance. You must also sign a waiver stating that any damages caused by your drone will be covered by you or your insurance.

The Outdoor School Packing List

Please watch the weather reports as you are packing! It is often cooler here in the Hill Country than it is in Austin (especially at night) so make sure you pack warm enough clothing.

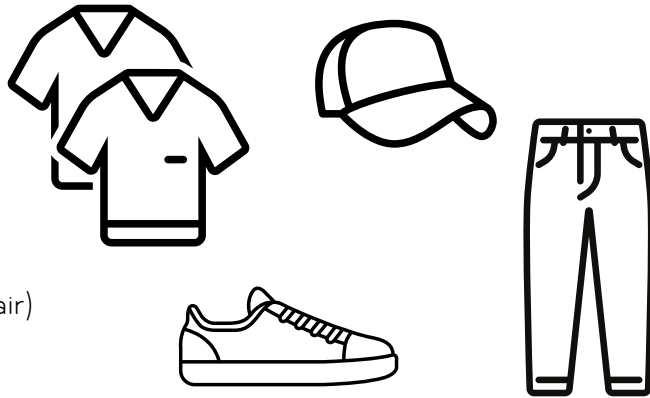
Mark **ALL** of your belongings with your name.

OVERNIGHT GROUPS:

This list is based on a 2-night stay. If your school is staying for a longer or shorter period of time you will need to adjust this list accordingly. This list is also generic, not weather specific.

CLOTHING:

- 1 set of Pajamas
 - 2 pair of shorts
 - 1 pair of long pants
 - 1 long sleeve shirt
 - 3 short sleeve shirts
 - Underwear
 - Socks (make sure you bring 2 extra pair)
 - 1 sweatshirt for cool nights
 - 1 hat
 - 2 pair of shoes (must be closed-toe, laceable, and comfortable for walking - NO CROCS)
 - Rain gear (poncho or raincoat with hood - umbrellas are not recommended)
 - 1 jacket (hat & gloves too if it's cold)
 - 1 swimsuit if your school is planning on swimming or kayaking (check with your teacher)
- *Please note that cotton (regular t-shirt) is not allowed in the pool*



PERSONAL HYGIENE:

- Soap
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Comb and/or hairbrush
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste & Toothbrush
- Towel and washcloth for bathing
- Shower Shoes
- Towel for lake activities if your school is swimming or kayaking (check with your teacher)



SLEEPING EQUIPMENT:

- **NOTE: Pack for the weather... our cabins are not heated or air conditioned.**
- Sleeping bag or bedroll made of sheets and blanket
- Pillow

MEDICATION:

Please check with your teachers on how they would like to handle medication.

OTHER REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:

- Water bottle - you will be outside most of the day
- Plastic bag for soiled or wet clothing or towels
- Sun screen
- Chapstick or lip balm with sunscreen
- Insect repellent



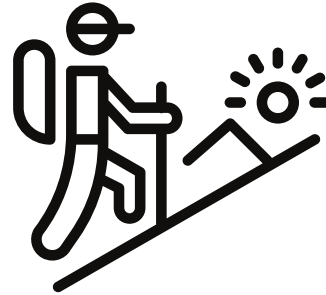
OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT:

- Camera (no cell phones)
- Flashlight with batteries
- Water shoes for protection from zebra mussels if swimming or kayaking.

OFF-SITE DAY TRIPS

We take a day trip to Enchanted Rock with some schools. If your school is scheduled to do this day trip, these additional items are REQUIRED for you to bring:

- Day back pack
- Flashlight or headlamp
- LARGE water bottle or two (8 oz is NOT enough)



PLEASE LEAVE AT HOME:

- Electronics: Radios, mp3 players, electronic games - We like to enjoy the sounds of the outdoors.
- Knives and other weapons - None of our courses require them.
- Jewelry - We'd hate for the squirrels to take these items home.
- Perfumes or colognes - We like the natural scent.
- Snacks, gum, candy, chips, cookies, or other edibles - A surefire way to attract ants and other critters (snacks will be provided).
- Money/purses/billfolds - Only needed if you're bringing money specifically for the camp store.

The Outdoor School will not be held responsible for the loss or theft of any object that you may bring.


Please mark all of your belongings with your name.

DIRECTIONS TO MINOR EMERGENCY AND HOSPITAL

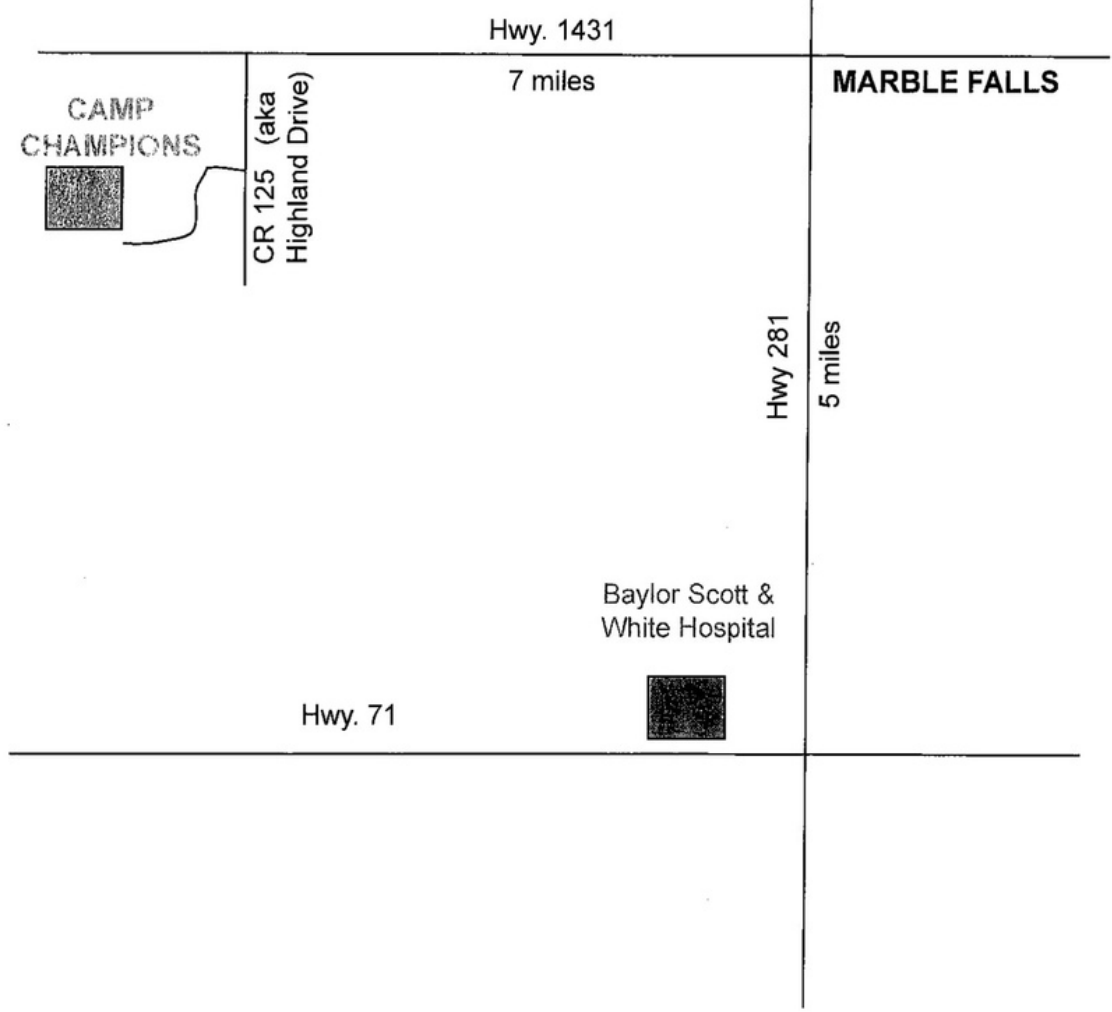
Camp Champions
775 Camp Road
Marble Falls TX 78654
830-598-6282 (day) or 512-755-5378 (night)

Marble Falls Minor Emergency -- 21 minutes
1701 N. US Highway 281 13.8 miles
Marble Falls TX 78654
830-798-1122

Scott & White Hospital -- 22 minutes
810 West Hwy 71 14.3 miles
Marble Falls, TX. 78654
830-201-8000

 Marble Falls
Minor Emergency

Marble Heights Drive



map of camp

map of wilderness property