



Chaperone's Pre-Packet

2025-26

(All adults attending - both teachers and parents)

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." It is so wonderful to see them learn and grow and explore.

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. 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! 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. Since 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. 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 them, so we ask that you do not do those things here as they 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 their primary caregivers. 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.

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!



Your Role:

Chaperone!

- You should be the last one out of the cabin, always. We will get the students lined up and ready for activities, but we need your help in making sure they are all there. So please make sure all of your students are on their way to their meeting spot, Fillin' Station, pool or lake before you leave.
- Monitor your students in and around the cabin areas and bathrooms. This is your domain. Kids sometimes forget common sense when they are at camp so your presence is crucial. We advise always having a chaperone in or by the bathrooms to make sure students aren't scaring each other by pulling stall doors open. If you are sharing a side of camp with another school, make sure your students aren't near their bathrooms or cabins... even if their cabins have the "cooler toys" by them.
- Listen to announcements. Any time we do group announcements we're letting both the students and you know where to be, when to be there, and what to have.
- After meals, we do announcements and then dismiss. Please leave with your students. If you're not watching them, no one is.
- Help us help your students to be successful learners. We need your help with behavior management because you know the students better than we do and you know what behaviors to expect and the best techniques to use with a particular child.



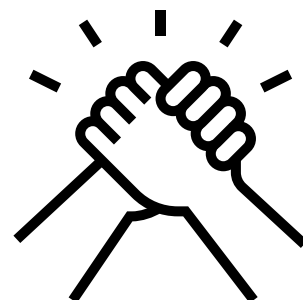
Attending classes:

We encourage you to go to activities, but also realize that you are in the cabins at night and you may very well need a break. That's why we have a teachers' lounge for you! 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:

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.



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! Don't forget to take care of yourself as well. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate!

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.

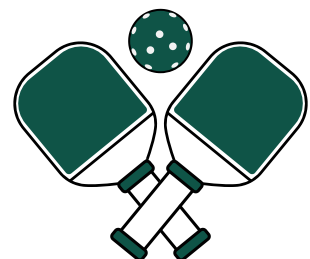
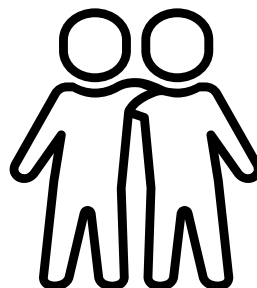
Free Time & Swimming:

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 | • Gaga |
| • Volleyball | • Pickleball |
| • Soccer | • Tennis |
| • Football | • Sit and read or visit |

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 elect 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 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:

No cotton clothing is allowed in the pool. 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 and create a maintenance nightmare. Please understand our point-of-view and help us enforce that rule.



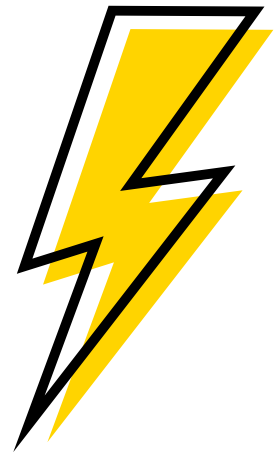
The Schedule:

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

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. Supervision of the students is the responsibility of the chaperones 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.



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.

Nametags & Beads:

Every student will receive a wooden nametag during orientation.

Each of our activities has a bead that corresponds to that activity. Students have the opportunity to earn those beads during their trip.



Chaperones:

We will ask you to make a nametag for security purposes once you arrive- 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. If you have a nametag from previous years at TOS, bring it... you'll get the special "I brought my nametag back" 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.

Bathrooms:

Bathrooms are not attached to the cabins but are just a short stroll away.

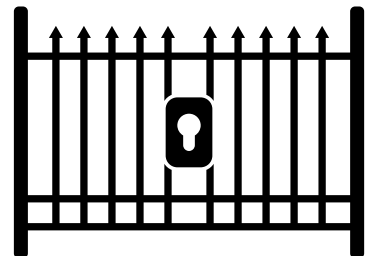


We are under Health Department regulations as to how hot we can have our water tanks and under TCEQ regulations as to how much flow we can have to our shower heads. That means that while you WILL have a hot shower it won't be steaming or powerful.

Safety & Security:

Front Gate:

Our front gate is open during the day, generally from 6am to dusk. Anyone needing to get onto the property while the gate is closed will need to utilize the keypad at the gate (not your cell phone). 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 before they find you.



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 Bismol 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.

Emergencies:

Phone: 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.

Vehicle: Because we do not have permission to transport students in our camp vehicles we ask that schools bring a vehicle for any issues that may arise. Please do not bring an electric vehicle as we do not have charging stations.

Facilities: 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).

Severe Weather:

We pay VERY close attention to the weather and are acutely aware when storms draw near. We constantly monitor the radar so we know when and where the weather will strike.

We will communicate with the lead teacher as much as possible during a storm so that they are always aware of what we are doing or about to do in order to keep you and your students safe. The lead teacher will then communicate with all chaperones about the plans.



All the Random Bits Left Over:

Cell Phones:

We recognize that you are still working and so do not restrict chaperones from bringing cell phones. We do ask that you not use it in front of the students unless you are authorized to take pictures.

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.



Camp Store:

Your lead teacher will 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, they will choose one of the following options:

- Option 1: Students can 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: Time can be built into your schedule for the camp store.
- Option 3: The TOS tee as the only option. If this is the case, we ask that teachers collect the name, color, and size of the tee as well as the money and give all of that to us at arrival. There is a picture of the tee as well as the price in the Student Packet.



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 or San Antonio (especially at night) so make sure you pack warm enough clothing.

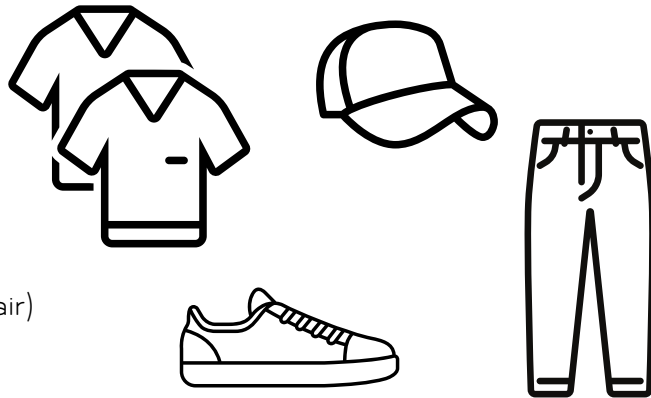
Mark ALL of your belongings with your name.

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 repellant



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 (32 oz recommended)



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 goodies - 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

