



Teacher's Planning Packet

2025-26

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 Teachers,

We are so excited that you have chosen The Outdoor School for your trip this year! We are looking forward to meeting you and your students.

This packet is designed to help you plan your trip. There is a "Quick Checklist Guide" for you to help you know what is due to us and when and each of those items are explained in the pages following the checklist. We know that there is a LOT to do in preparing for this trip, but we do ask that you please get all information to us by the required date so that we can plan your trip as efficiently as possible.

If you have any questions, please call or e-mail... we will be happy to work with you in any way that we can to create the perfect program for you and your students.

Please contact the person who e-mailed you originally as they will be the one scheduling your trip. If you have not yet received an e-mail from us, please contact me and I'll get you in touch with the correct Program Coordinator.

Thanks, and we'll see you soon!

Laura Arrington, Executive Director

laura@outdoorschool.com

830-598-6282 x226

Quick Checklist Guide



Due Date	Action Item	Completed
6 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send e-mail link for the Student Packet to parents/guardians. Forms are digital. • Send e-mail link for the Chaperone Packet to each adult attending (teachers and parent chaperones) • Request payment check from bookkeeper • Reserve transportation • Secure nurse (if you're bringing one) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin discussing activity choices with your team. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Activity Choice Form (<i>online form</i>) • Submit approximate student numbers 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Sales Tax Exemption Form (<i>if applicable</i>) • Submit Hotel Tax Exemption Form (<i>if applicable</i>) • Submit Certificate of Liability Insurance Form • Approve Preliminary Schedule (<i>we'll send this to you for approval</i>) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin working on team and cabin rosters (<i>we'll send you a template</i>) 	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 weeks out:: (date: -----)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Team Roster • Submit Cabin Assignments • Have students make Journal folders (<i>if applicable</i>) • Secure the trip payment from your bookkeeper • Secure a first aid kit from your school nurse • Remind students to bring sack lunches for the first day (<i>if applicable</i>) 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Arrival Day:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Journal folders quickly accessible on arrival, preferably grouped by team (<i>if applicable</i>) • Have cabin list quickly accessible • Have trip payment in hand 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

6 weeks before your trip:

You should have been contacted by one of our schedulers by this point.

If not, please contact us at 830-598-6282.

PAPERWORK:



- Our forms and Packets are digital. Please make sure each student's parent has the link. Please set a deadline for getting those forms completed by parents as **we REQUIRE that we have them in-hand one week prior to your arrival.**
- Make sure each chaperone attending (teacher AND parent) has the link to the Chaperone Packet. **All chaperones must also turn in the forms.**

BILLING:



Please arrive with a check in hand. If your bookkeeper needs time to process the check request, you may need to start that process now. The preliminary invoice was attached to the initial e-mail you received from your scheduler... please let them know if you need anything adjusted on that invoice. .

- If you would like to swim in our pool, there is an additional charge of \$125 for each swim session. This has not been included on your preliminary invoice (the lake is free).
- We allow one free chaperone for every 10 students that come. **All additional chaperones will pay the full contracted fee per person.**



TRANSPORTATION:

- If you are using district buses, please confirm with your bus barn on your arrival and departure times and make sure that they correlate with the times on your contract.
- If you are using parent drivers in multiple cars, please have an accurate count of how many cars will be driven so that we know when all students have arrived.
- If you are coming by bus (school bus or charter) we ask that you bring at least one separate car for any emergencies that may arise. Please do not bring an electric vehicle as we do not have charging stations.

MEDICAL CARE:



Our staff is certified in both First Aid and CPR and most (if not all) are certified lifeguards. We do not have a nurse on staff and we strongly encourage you to bring one if at all possible, especially if your group is large.

CAMP STORE OPTIONS:

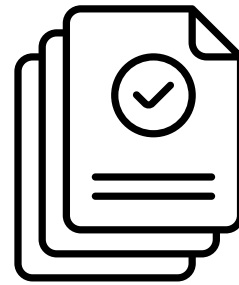


- Option 1: Students can pre-order and pay for merchandise on our camp store website (www.kneemanmarkus.com). We will pull the items and pass them out during your trip.
- Option 2: We can also build time into your schedule for additional store time if you would like.
- Option 3: If you would like to only offer TOS apparel to your students, please 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! Simply take that page out of the Student Packet altogether!

5 weeks before your trip:

PAPERWORK:

Remind students to have their parent/guardian fill out the Medical Form and Visitor's Agreement Form online via the link you provided.



ACTIVITIES:

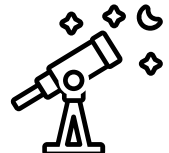
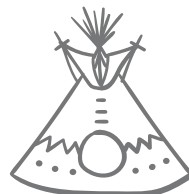
Your Activity Choices are due next Monday, so begin talking with your teaching team to decide what you would like your students to participate in.

1. Activity Choices

- **One night overnight trip:** You will have time for 4 daytime activities and 1 evening activity. No free time is given for this quick trip. If you would like to have that as an activity period, please let us know. Swimming CAN be one of your activity periods. (**NOTE:** If your trip is after Daylight Savings Time in November, the number of activities will change due to early darkness. We will discuss this with you prior to your trip).
- **Two night overnight trip:** You will have time for 7 daytime activities and 2 evening activities. There is a free time period each day. If you choose to swim (pool or lake) this will be during that free time period.
- **Swimming:** We do not swim after Daylight Savings time ends in November.

2. Activity Descriptions

- Descriptions of all activities can be found on our website. Each activity period is 90 minutes long.



3. Age Requirements

- Please check the age requirements for activities before you pick them.

4. First-Come-First-Served

- Please note that there will be other schools here the same time as you and a few of our classes (such as the Pirate Ship and the Screamin' Eagle) are both group-size restrictive and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

5. NOTE: If you are bringing students in 6th grade or older...

Because of the popularity of both the Screamin' Eagle and the Pirate Ship Ropes Course, and because these activities are group-size restrictive, you may choose ONLY ONE of these activities. If your choice has already been chosen by another school, we will automatically give you the other activity. Thank you for understanding that these activities are in high demand and that we want to share our facilities equally with all.



4 weeks before your trip:

ITEMS DUE:

1. **Activity Choices** are due to us. Please fill out the online form.

2. **Approximate student numbers**

We must have this to begin planning your schedule. We will let you know how many teams you will have based on this number. We will also send a template two weeks out for you to plug in your student names by team. For your reference, we plan for 15 students per team.



THE NEXT THINGS TO DO:

1. **Documents**

Next week we will need you or your secretary to send us 3 documents if we do not already have them on file (your scheduler will let you know if we do or do not have these forms.):

- Sales Tax Exemption Form - if your school is exempt from sales tax.
- Hotel Tax Exemption Form - if your school is exempt from hotel tax. **NOTE:** This exemption is ONLY valid for STATE hotel tax. NO ONE is exempt from COUNTY hotel tax, so know that this will be included on your invoice.
- Certificate of Liability Insurance Form (or COI)

If you are a public school, these forms will be from your District, not your individual school. If your secretary does not know what one or more of these forms are, please have him/her contact us and we can provide examples.

2. **Paperwork**

Remind students to have their parent/guardian fill out the Medical Form and Visitor's Agreement Form online via the link you provided.



3 weeks before your trip:

ITEMS DUE::

1. School Information Form Due

Fill out the online form. Once we receive this document we will send you templates for your team roster and your cabin assignments.

2. Other Documents Due

- Sales Tax Exemption Form
- Hotel Tax Exemption Form
- Certificate of Liability Form



3. Preliminary Schedule

We will send you a preliminary schedule this week. Please look it over and let us know if you see any mistakes. THIS is when we need to fix them, not once you arrive.

THE NEXT THINGS TO DO:

1. Paperwork

Team Roster: Begin putting your students into their teams (your scheduler will let you know how many teams you will have). Make sure all students are included on this list. We will send you a template.

2. Student Medication

The Outdoor School staff does not handle student medication at all. You will need to collect it and determine the best method for handing out the medication for your students. If you are not bringing a nurse with you, your school nurse will be invaluable in guiding you through this procedure.



2 weeks before your trip:

THE NEXT THINGS TO DO:

1. Team Assignments

Fill in the team assignment template that we send you. Please list students by **first name first** and not by last name (for example: John Smith rather than Smith, John).

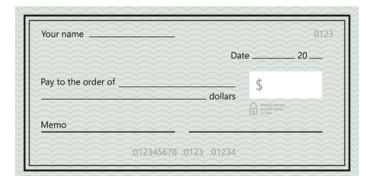
2. Cabin Assignments

Fill in the cabin assignment template that we send you. We cannot send this to you until we have the School Information form and know how many of each gender you have coming. Please note that not all of our cabins have the same number of beds. So look carefully at the template we send you and make sure you're not over-filling cabins!



3. Check Requested

Make sure you have a check request submitted so that you can bring the check with you.

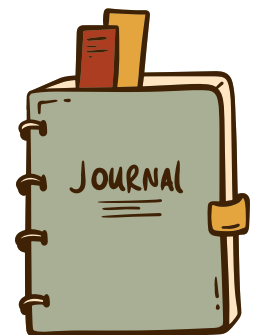


4. Make Journal folders (if applicable)

Have your students make journals. We require that each student have a Nature Journal upon arrival unless:

- You are doing only teambuilding and high ropes/climbing wall.
- You are taking primarily adventure courses rather than academic courses.
- You have discussed with your scheduler that you do not wish to use them.

Please call or email your scheduler if you are unsure if your students need a journal.



5. First Aid Kit

Have your school nurse put together a first aid kit for your trip.

- Note: We have first aid items here, but we do not have ingestibles (Aspirin, Pepto Bismol, etc.). So we suggest you bring those with you if you are allowed to dispense OTC medicines.
- If a child becomes ill during the trip, we ask that they be sent home. We do not have an infirmary or appropriate, designated space to isolate any sick guests.



1 week before your trip:

ITEMS DUE:

1. **Medical and Visitor Agreement Forms:**

These should be submitted by this point.

2. **Cabin Assignments**

Send us the cabin assignments on the template that we e-mailed you.

3. **Team Roster**

Send us the team roster on the template that we e-mailed you.

4. **Check**

Make sure you have a check to bring with you for payment.

5. **Sack Lunch**

Remind students that they need to bring a sack lunch for that first day (unless we have specifically discussed otherwise with you).

6. **Journals** (if applicable)

Students should have a journal for their trip. Please bring them in a collective box rather than having each student responsible for bringing their own journals. It is tremendously helpful to us if they are grouped together by team instead of by homeroom.

7. **First Aid Kit**

Have your school nurse put together a first aid kit for you.

8. **Emergency Vehicle**

Don't forget to bring an emergency vehicle with you if you are arriving by bus. This vehicle needs to stay on camp. Make sure it's not an electric vehicle as we do not have charging stations.



Arrival Day!

Please have the following items easily accessible as soon as you arrive:

1. Sack Lunch

Your students will be eating their sack lunches upon arrival so make sure they have this at their fingertips. Time for this IS built into the schedule, so please do not plan on arriving early!

2. Cabin Assignments

You will be moving into your cabins right after eating your sack lunches, so have this list easily accessible.

3. Journal folders (if applicable)

We will place our journal pages into the folders while your students are moving into their cabins.

4. Check

We will collect this from you right away and put it in our safe so that you do not have to carry it around with you any longer than necessary!



Teacher/Chaperone's Role at The Outdoor School

Please make sure your teaching team understands the following:

Teachers/chaperones in cabins:

Your school must provide the chaperones for the cabins. We recommend bringing school personnel as chaperones, but understand that sometimes a parent needs to come to fill a chaperone spot for a cabin.

Teachers/chaperones in classes:

We do not require you to attend our activities; the rationale is that you are in the cabins with the kids at night and probably not as well rested as you would like to be! If you need a break during the day, please feel free to take it. We have a teachers' lounge set up for just for this purpose. However, we will encourage you to attend our classes if you can. Feedback is very important to us as that is how we maintain a strong program, and you can only give us feedback if you've been to the activities. We do all the teaching, but if you have additional information, we'd love for you to share! If there are any disciplinary issues, we will ask a teacher to stay with that particular team of students.



Teachers/chaperones supervising students:

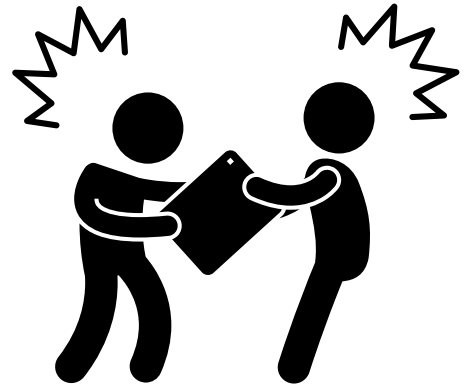
For most of the day the students are kept very busy and are supervised by Outdoor School staff. However, there are times that you will need to supervise:

- Showers and cabin time - we are not around these areas at all unless something needs repair.
- Breaks between activities - this is time for students to use the bathroom and re-fill water bottles and it is for us as well. Please watch your students during these transition times.
- Free time - if your school chooses swim time, we will lifeguard. However, if your school chooses free time or if you have any students that opt to not swim, we will need you to supervise during this period.
- Night Activities - we request your presence during this time as more eyes are always better in the dark!



Behavior:

The Outdoor School staff likes to handle minor disciplinary issues as it gives us more credibility with your students. However, we are never offended if you would like to jump in. Because teacher expectations for behavior and/or disciplinary policies vary with each school that attends, we don't know those specific expectations or policies unless you tell us. We rely on you to let us know if the students are not behaving to the level that you expect.



ESL/ELL:

Please know that it is not a requirement for our instructors to be multi-lingual. Because of this there are a few things for you to take into consideration for your students (and perhaps chaperones):

1. Please feel free to make sure that you have a student (or chaperone) in teams who can (and will) translate for the ESL/ELL students if necessary.
2. If you choose activities that have higher safety concerns (archery, Pirate Ship) you MUST have a chaperone there (preferably a teacher) who can translate those safety issues to the students.
3. It is tremendously helpful if all of your chaperones speak English; however, we realize that schools sometimes need to bring a chaperone who's first language is not English. If you bring ESL/ELL chaperones, you will need another chaperone to translate what we're saying during the Chaperone Orientation so that they will know what they need to do as a chaperone. Please make sure that they have received a copy of the Chaperone Packet in Spanish.
4. During large group announcements (arrival, after meals, before bed) please have a chaperone who can translate those announcements to the ESL/ELL students. We want to make sure all students (and chaperones!) know what is happening, where they need to be and when.
5. Translation helps with behavior management. If students know what we are saying to them, they know what is expected of them. Please feel free to jump in at any time to help clarify or help in this vein.
6. All of our teaching posters and journal pages are in English. This gives students the opportunity to really focus on their English language skills and vocabulary while here. So again, if you would like a student to translate for them, that is perfectly fine.

Thank you for all your help with our ESL/ELL students (and chaperones!)



Making a Nature Journal

Because a trip to The Outdoor School can be so meaningful to your students, we have a Nature Journal as an option for your trip. Each of our classes has a section built in that utilizes the journal and we have found it to be an invaluable part of our curriculum. We provide the pages, so we just need you to provide the folders. Several of our schools take their journals to the next level and have their own reflection pages in addition to the pages we provide. If you choose to utilize the Nature Journal, we ask that each student have one upon arrival.

We begin using the journals early on in the students' TOS experience so we do ask that time be made before arrival to The Outdoor School to create them. Making the journal is a great art project for your class, but we understand that classroom time is valuable, so if that is the case, a plain folder works just as well.

The most important thing is that the students have a folder that the pages can be easily inserted. A folders with 3 brads works best as our pages are hole-punched. Please do not provide folders with only pockets and no brads as the loose pages blow away in the ever-present wind.

The *Before You Come* page really helps to set student expectations about their trip, specifically that they are coming to The Outdoor School and not summer camp!

Below are simple directions for decorating your journals, but again, they can just be plain folders. Do not feel that you need to spend extra money on the decoration!

Materials:

Per Student:

- 8 1/2 x11 folder with built-in brads. Pockets are not necessary but brads ARE.
- Worksheet pages that are included in this packet.
- Extra paper or pages if you would like to include it.

General supplies:

- Masking tape (at least 1 inch in width... 2 inch works better)
- Brown shoe polish (the sponge-on kind)

Procedure:

1. Rip pieces of masking tape one to two inches long and randomly cover the outside of the covers.
2. Rub shoe polish over the masking tape to give your journal covers an old, weathered, tree bark look. Let covers dry for 5-10 minutes. Add extra coats for a darker finish.
3. Insert worksheet pages and extra pages between the two covers.
4. Write your name on the OUTSIDE of the journal. Decorate further if desired!

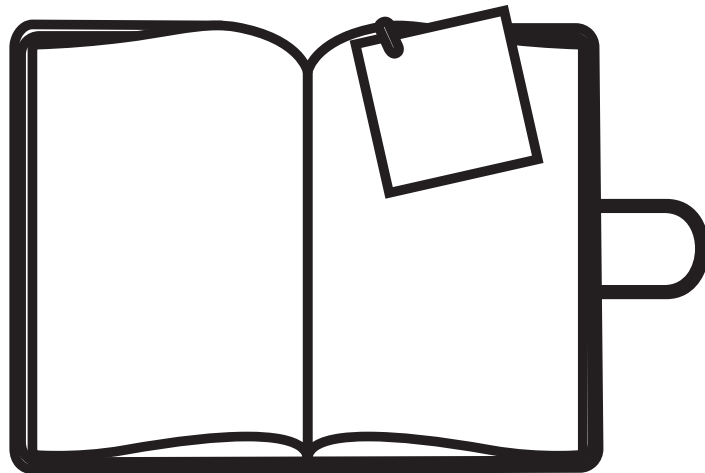


The Outdoor School



Name: _____

Team #: _____



BEFORE YOU COME...

Hey Students! What do you think you're going to do at The Outdoor School?

Set three goals for yourself while you are at The Outdoor School.

Goal #1:

Goal #2:

Goal #3:

What classes are you taking at The Outdoor School?

field trip

