



Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center

237 Camp Mikell Ct, Toccoa, GA 30577

706.886.7621

blueridge@windstream.net

www.blueridgeoec.com

Experiential Environmental Education

Dear Chaperone,

Thank you for agreeing to join your students on a fun and educational adventure! The following information is provided to help your stay at Blue Ridge be as safe and enjoyable as possible. Our program is designed to benefit all participants, so we encourage you to become involved with the classes and other activities. As much as we hope the time you spend with us is relaxing and fun, it is NOT a vacation. We will put you to work. Please read this letter carefully so that you understand your role and responsibilities in the Blue Ridge community. Also, since medical emergencies can happen to anyone, please fill out our medical form and give it to the lead teacher/trip leader.

CABIN SUPERVISION

One of the chaperone's main responsibilities is cabin supervision. You will be in charge of as many as twelve girls or boys in a cabin and will function as parent, police, and role model.

Please be sensitive to the needs of your children. Many of them may be away from home for the first time. Some may need definite limits set and enforced. Many of them will follow your example in their reaction to responsibilities such as cabin clean-up, quietness, or bedtime. Check with the teachers to learn of any special needs to consider in settling your group.

Do not allow reckless or irresponsible behavior in the cabin; people get hurt and facilities get damaged when children are rowdy and/or unsupervised.

Upon arrival, a staff member will lead all students and chaperones in a short dorm orientation talk. At the first opportunity, you should sit down with your cabin group and discuss various procedures. The more involved your students get in policy making, the more agreeable they are to those policies. The following is a list of suggested topics:

Introductions

Shower schedules

Morning clean-up

Storage of clothes and supplies

Lights out time

Appropriate behavior

It is mandatory that every cabin be supervised by an adult throughout the night. Chaperones also need to supervise during transition times, recreation time, and after the evening program. Chaperones are responsible for the safety of the children at these times.

Evening programs generally conclude ~9:15 p.m. Students and chaperones are to go back to their cabins at this time and prepare for bed. By 10:30 p.m., lights should be out and students should be quiet. The days will be packed with learning and they will need their rest.

Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center

ABOUT YOUR CABIN

- Each cabin has 13 single beds, a bathroom (with 2 sinks, 2 toilets, and 2 showers), and heat and fans.
- Students should not go to their cabin without a chaperone, and they should not go into cabins other than their own.
- There is no food, candy, or gum allowed in the cabins because these attract insects and animals as well as contribute to litter problems.
- Please be conscious of turning off lights and keeping the doors of the cabins shut. Some find it helpful to assign one student this duty. Please close all windows and doors before turning on heat. Only adults should adjust the thermostats. Please note -- there is only one thermostat for adjoining cabins.
- Nothing but toilet paper should be flushed, please! There are trash receptacles in the bathrooms.

OTHER SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Transition Time – After lunch and before and after dinner, we have time scheduled for students to use the bathrooms, wash hands, and if needed get clothes for an activity. It is essential that you both supervise and keep kids moving during these times so we can start our classes on time.

Dining Hall -- Unless otherwise stated, mealtimes are 8 a.m., 12:15 p.m., and 6 p.m. Fifteen minutes before the meal starts, students should line up on Wilkins porch at the top of the stairs and chaperones should report to the dining hall and find a table. Please sit one chaperone or teacher to each table to supervise and chat with the students. Proper manners should be emphasized.

Classes -- You are invited and encouraged to participate in all classes and activities. If you are a parent of a son or daughter on the trip, we ask that you NOT be placed in his or her field group. Please be aware that the students are looking to you to as an example of how to behave in classes. Your positive enthusiasm spills over to them!

Recreation Time – Chaperones are in charge of supervision during recreation time, which is after the afternoon class and before dinner. All students should remain in the courtyard area, unless being directly accompanied by a chaperone to and from their cabin.

CABIN CLEAN-UP

On the final morning, the following clean-up procedures should be done in the cabins by the students:

- Pack all belongings and carry luggage down to the parking lot.
- Sweep the cabin and bathroom floors.
- Wipe down the showers and sinks.
- Pick up any trash and put in the trash can. Tie trash bag and put it just inside the cabin door.
- Check for lost-and-found items.

If the entire group contributes, this task can be done in about 30 minutes, but your supervision is necessary.

Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center

OTHER BLUE RIDGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- No radios, electronic games or similar devices. Part of the Blue Ridge experience is to enjoy spending time with each other and the outdoors.
- Everyone must wear shoes at all times. Poison ivy, sharp rocks, snakes, and scorpions are a few of the hazards of bare feet. Shoes may be removed in the cabins.
- All medicines must be turned in to a designated teacher.
- The use of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are forbidden during a Blue Ridge program.
- Smoking is not allowed in any building at Blue Ridge, smoking areas all have receptacles for cigarette butts.
- Use of the phone by children is not allowed without permission from a school teacher or Blue Ridge director. Phones (phone card calls only!) are located in Walker Lodge and in the commons rooms of Claiborne and Stephens dorms. Also, please be aware that your cell phone will probably not get reception at Blue Ridge, and there are no computer facilities available for use. Please use cell phones only for emergencies, as they distract from class.

We hope your time at Blue Ridge will be enjoyable, educational, and a very rewarding experience. At any time during your stay here, please do not hesitate to approach any of our staff with a question or request for assistance. We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,
Matt Wagner
Program Director

Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center

Here is a copy of the packing list we sent out to students, so you are aware of what they should have with them and what they should not have:

PACKING CHECKLIST:

- _ 1 sleeping bag or bed roll (sheets and 2 blankets), pillow
- _ 1 pair of old jeans per day
- _ 1 pair of shorts per day
- _ 2 tee-shirts per day
- _ 1 heavy shirt (1 per day in cold weather)
- _ 1 sweater or sweatshirt
- _ 1 warm jacket (cold weather)
- _ 2 pairs of sneakers (one that can get wet)
- _ 1 change of underwear per day
- _ 2 pairs of socks per day
- _ **1 raincoat or poncho**
- _ 1 hat or cap
- _ 1 pair of pajamas
- _ toilet articles (soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, towel etc.)
- _ sunscreen
- _ **water bottle (a refillable, reusable bottle— not the throw-away kind)**
- _ plastic bag for dirty clothes
- _ pen and writing paper

OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- small day pack
- camera and film
- flashlight
- stamped, addressed envelopes

PLEASE DO NOT SEND:

- candy, gum, or food of any kind
- knives, hatchets, or any other weapon
- fireworks
- radio, CD player, electronic games, cell phones, or any other electronics.
- MONEY (except for Blue Ridge merchandise, if desired)

Make sure all items are marked with your child's name. Only old clothes are needed. New clothes may be ruined by heavy outdoor use.

The Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center is not responsible for articles left behind.