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Dear Chaperone,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in The Frog in the Bog residential environmental education program at Dunes Learning Center. Without your support, enthusiasm, and participation, this program would not be possible. This letter, along with information provided by the school you will be working with, will help you to prepare for your experience at Dunes Learning Center.

The program begins immediately after the students have unloaded their baggage from the bus on which they arrive. Following an opening activity, students are oriented to the program and to the rules that will be in place while they are at the Dunes Learning Center. Teachers and chaperones have a separate orientation that is focused on program logistics and general Dunes Learning Center information. The Dunes Learning Center recognizes that each school works with its chaperones in different ways. If you have questions or concerns, this orientation is the ideal time to voice them.

You should be aware are the following program specifics.

- 1) You will be responsible for supervision of students in the cabins and on trails. Gentle discipline of students will sometimes be required of you during the program and during the evening hours when Dunes Learning Center staff will not be available. If you are prepared for this it is generally easy to prevent any problems before they start. Discipline procedures are clearly defined in the orientation meetings so that there should be no disagreement about what constitutes appropriate or inappropriate behavior.
- 2) Safety procedures in case of emergency will be discussed during the adult orientation meeting. Should you need them, emergency services are available 24 hours per day through the National Park Service. Emergency services are located within two miles of the Dunes Learning Center. When students are in residence at the Dunes Learning Center the facility is given top priority by National Park Service rangers. Instructions for what to do in case of emergency are clearly posted in each cabin and in the Cowles Lodge.
- 3) Your enthusiastic participation throughout the program is essential to its success. Immersion in the Dunes ecosystems will allow the students to absorb an amazing amount of information and to have fun while doing it. Your encouragement and assistance of the students in this experience will help them to get the most out of the program.

Once again, thank you very much for your generosity with your time. If you have any questions please contact the school or the Dunes Learning Center at (219) 395-9555. The staff of Dunes Learning Center is looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

John Hayes  
Executive Director

## **Guidelines For Chaperones**

Thank you so much for volunteering to supervise students at Dunes Learning Center. Without your commitment and effort, we would not be able to offer this learning opportunity to your children. Below you will find guidelines that we hope will make your job much easier. These guidelines are designed to keep students safe, secure, and add to their learning experience:

### **Children are to be supervised by an adult at all times.**

You may want to call a student meeting in your cabin at the first opportunity to go over do's and don'ts. This is a good time to talk with students about issues like shower time, and medication procedures.

For safety concerns, do not permit rough play, running, or rowdy behavior in the cabins.

Food is not allowed in the cabins in order to discourage rodents and other unwanted guests.

Please help us keep the students from writing or carving on beds, walls, or dressers. The cost of any damage will be passed on to your school or to the student's family.

Students are expected to respect other people's belongings and materials. Make sure there is no fighting or hitting. Students should stay in their own cabin and never enter the cabins or rooms of the opposite sex unless invited and have an adult present.

Students should enter and exit cabins only through the front door. Please have students remove soiled boots and shoes in this area. All other doors are for emergency use only and should not be used by students.

Do not tell or let other students share ghost stories or other scary stories. These work against our goals and reinforce unhealthy fears and anxieties.

Lights must be out and the cabin quiet from 10:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Don't let students stay up later or get up earlier for any reasons. Groups should never leave the cabin during these hours even if an adult is with them.

Be aware of other rules as indicated in the Student Expectations and your school's administration.

Help us conserve energy by turning down thermostat during when we are not in the cabins, and making certain all lights are off when cabins are not in use.

Telephones are to be used by adults only. Instructions and emergency numbers are posted by each phone. Do not let students call home, unless approval has been given by your school's leader or an Dunes Learning Center staff member. Our experience indicates that a student calling home is disruptive and not helpful.

Each morning before breakfast, students will be asked to do some housekeeping chores to keep their cabins clean. Brooms can be found in the cleaning closet of each cabin.

*(continued on next page...)*

*(Guidelines for Cabin Supervisors continued...)*

Please remind students who are scheduled for table or weather helper to meet their leaders 15 minutes before each meal.

Assign children who have problems with sleep walking and bed-wetting to lower bunks. Note: the school leader may have done this already.)

Remember to bring an alarm clock (cell phones can be used for this purpose).

Evening supervisors who aren't staying for the daytime program should arrive by 6:30 p.m. and stay until 8:00 a.m.

All medications for adults and students must be stored in first aid room.

Smoking is not permitted inside any building or in the presence of students. Smoking is allowed only designated areas. Please clean up after yourself.

If you have problems with the facility, please notify Dunes Learning Center staff.

Leave your car parked in the designated lot unless you are loading or unloading. Cars that are not parked appropriately are subject to ticketing by the National Park Service Law Enforcement Rangers.

## Meal Procedures

*We appreciate your assistance in making meals a pleasant time for everyone. Your help in facilitating these procedures with the students will do much to enhance your group's experience at Dunes Learning Center*

1. At least one adult should be at each table.
2. **Nothing is served (including drinks) until after announcements are made by Dunes Learning Center staff.**
3. Announcements, a special reading or quote, and a moment of silence precede each meal.
4. Once permission is given, the adult at the table may excuse one the table to bring serving dishes to the table.
5. **Only one person may be up from the table at a time.** If someone else is up, wait until they return.
6. The adult at the table should facilitate passing platters, remind students of good manners, and keep conversation and behavior appropriate to mealtime.
7. **Food on the serving platter needs to make it all the way around the table in the first round.** There is plenty of food. Please take small portions and feel free to have several helpings, rather than taking large portions all at once. The adult at the table should supervise and help students cooperate with this.
8. **Students should check other tables for additional servings before approaching the serving window.** If no other table has servings left in the platter, feel free to ask for more from the kitchen. *We have plenty of food, but we want to minimize waste.*
9. Please remind students to show respect and courtesy to the kitchen staff.
10. Once the meal is finished, all serving dishes should be returned to the kitchen window. Dishes should be scraped. Food and liquid waste should be disposed of in appropriate buckets - no other trash goes in these buckets. Dishes and silverware should be stacked in appropriate bussing tubs. Cloth napkins need to be unfolded and place in a bus tub. The table should be wiped with a sponge from the bus tub provided. Table helpers are chiefly responsible for the process, but may need some help and guidance
11. Once everyone at the table is finished with the main meal, Dunes Learning Center staff will announce when dessert is ready. The table helper will return serving platters to the window and bring dessert. There are no seconds on dessert.
12. At the end of each meal, food and liquid waste will be measured. Energy conservation is part of environmental awareness. Our staff will discuss with the students the energy used in creating a meal and how to conserve it through making wise dining choices.

**Thank you for your assistance!**

*(Guidelines for Cabin Supervisors continued...)*

## **Discipline**

Dunes Learning Center will work cooperatively with school professionals and Chaperones to insure a safe and positive learning environment for all students.

Any event of unacceptable behavior will result in the following:

**Strike 1**-Dunes Learning Center staff or teacher or adult chaperone talks to student

**Strike 2**-The student and the adult issuing the strike talks to teacher and Dunes Learning Center's Lead Naturalist or Education Director

**Strike 3**-The student is withdrawn from activities, asked to notify their parents or guardians to pick them up.

**Serious infractions such as fighting, having weapons, or illegal substances will result in immediate dismissal and possible prosecution.**

The strike policy is Dunes Learning Center's basic discipline policy. However, we advise all teachers and chaperones to develop a behavioral code of conduct agreement with students prior to visiting the Dunes Learning Center.

Teachers, please review this policy with parents, chaperones and students before attending Dunes Learning Center.

It is the school's responsibility to arrange for transportation for these students.

## **Health, Safety, and Emergency Care Procedures**

### **Dunes Learning Center responsibilities:**

The health and safety of our participants is the number one concern of Dunes Learning Center staff. Our staff receives training and certification in basic first aid and CPR. During the program, Dunes Learning Center staff will carry cellular phones and first aid kits. Please be sure to have information about any further insurance coverage required by your school system.

### **School/Group responsibilities:**

- **Have at least one vehicle on-site for emergency use.**
- **Assign one adult to coordinate and supervise medications needed by the students.**
- **Have TWO copies of the STUDENT HEALTH AND PERMISSION FORM prepared for each student. This form MUST be completed and SIGNED upon arrival at the Dunes Learning Center for each student.**
- **STUDENTS WITHOUT A COMPLETE AND SIGNED HEALTH AND PERMISSION FORM WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.**
- **Listen to health and safety information that will be given during the adult orientation meeting at the beginning of your stay.**
- **Distribute the "Letter to Parents/Guardians" with emergency phone numbers at Dunes Learning Center.**

# Chaperone What to Bring

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It is important to remember that you will be outdoors as much as possible during your stay at the center, so it is necessary that you come prepared. If you do not have some of the items **don't think that you need to buy them**; you should substitute, improvise, or talk to your teacher.

**Prepare for the weather; it can be warm, cold, windy, rainy, sunny, or snowy in the Dunes.**

Remember that you will be carrying your own luggage, so do not bring more items than you can carry.

- 1 small backpack
- 1 to 2 plastic 1-liter water bottles (can be emptied pop bottles)
- 1 poncho or raincoat (winter coat if appropriate)
- 1 hat (appropriate for season)
- warm gloves, scarf, etc. for cooler temperatures
- 4-5 pairs of socks
- 2 extra sweaters or sweatshirts
- 2-3 shirts, at least one long-sleeved
- 2 pairs long pants
- shoes that can get muddy
- extra shoes and a bag for the wet ones
- pajamas
- sunscreen
- bug spray
- lip protectant (ChapStick, Blistex, etc.)
- 1 towel and washcloth
- soap, toothbrush, toothpaste
- comb or brush
- drinking cup
- sleeping bag or rolled up blankets and pillow
- extra plastic bags for wet shoes and dirty clothes

## Optional Items

- camera
- binoculars
- reading books
- cabin games for kid