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Dear Chaperone,

Thank you for volunteering to participate in overnight outdoor school program at Mount Rainier Institute. 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.

The program begins immediately after the students have unloaded their baggage from the bus. Following an opening activity, students are oriented to the program and to the rules that will be in place while they are at the Mount Rainier Institute. Teachers and chaperones have a separate orientation that is focused on program logistics and general Mount Rainier Institute information. The Mount Rainier Institute 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 of the following program specifics.

- 1) You will be responsible for supervision of students in the cabins. Gentle discipline of students will sometimes be required of you during the program and during the evening hours when Mount Rainier Institute staff are not be available. If you are prepared, 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. Also refer to the MRI Code of Conduct.
- 2) Safety procedures in case of emergency are discussed during the adult orientation meeting. Should you need them, emergency services are available 24 hours per day through the Pierce Co. Emergency services located within 6 miles of the Mount Rainier Institute's main campus at Pack Forest.
- 3) Your enthusiastic participation throughout the program is essential to its success. We hope to both learn and have fun. 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. If you have any questions, please contact the school or the Mount Rainier Institute at (253) 692-4161. The staff of Mount Rainier Institute is looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

John Hayes
Director

Guidelines for Chaperones

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:

Students are to be supervised by an adult at all times. It is also imperative that you are never alone with a student.

You may want to call a student meeting with your cabin at the first opportunity to meet the students and go over do's and don'ts. This is a good time to talk with your cabin about cabin time and free time. Be aware of other rules as indicated in the Student Expectations +

Cabin Time

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

Lights must be out and the cabin quiet from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Don't let students stay up later or get up earlier for any reasons other than to use restrooms.

Food is not allowed in the cabins to discourage rodents and other unwanted guests. Food can be stored in Pack Hall.

For safety concerns, do not permit rough play, running, rowdy behavior, or more than one person on the top bunk in the cabins.

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 should not need to enter any cabins they are not staying in; if a situation requires an exception to this rule, the student should be invited in by that cabin's residents and an adult should be present.

Camp "pranks," knocking other cabin windows at night, etc. usually do not end well and often result in disciplinary issues. Please do not encourage this behavior.

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.

Be mindful of students sharing ghost stories or other scary stories. These can work against our goals and reinforce unhealthy fears and anxieties.

Please nominate and remind students who are scheduled for Kitchen Patrol (KP) to meet their leaders 10 minutes before each meal at the dining hall.

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

General Guidelines

Your group may find it helpful to create a group chat with all teachers and chaperones attending MRI to facilitate communication when you are on site.

Cell phones are to be used by adults only. Do not let students call home unless approval has been given by your school's leader or a Mount Rainier Institute staff member. Our experience is that a student calling home is disruptive and not helpful.

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

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

If you have problems with the facility, please notify Mount Rainier Institute 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.

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 Mount Rainier Institute.

Only one person may be up from the table at a time. If someone else is up, wait until they return. The adult at the table should remind students of good manners, and keep conversation and behavior appropriate to mealtime. Also encourage students to thoroughly clean up and regulate the amount of students up from the table during this time.

We have a food waste program at Mount Rainier Institute. This program is in place to create more awareness around how much food initially goes onto your plate. This is not a competition but simply a mindful activity to draw attention to ways we can have less impact on the earth by creating less waste.

Discipline

Mount Rainier Institute 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:

Warning 1-Mount Rainier Institute staff or teacher or adult chaperone talks to student

Warning 2-The student and the adult issuing the strike talks to the lead teacher and Mount Rainier Institute's Director. The parent/guardian of the student is phoned at this time to make them aware of the issue.

Warning 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 warning policy is Mount Rainier Institute'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 Mount Rainier Institute.

Teachers, please review this policy with parents, chaperones and students before attending Mount Rainier Institute.

It is the guardians and/or school's responsibility to arrange for transportation for students that are sent home from Mount Rainier Institute.

Health, Safety, and Emergency Care Procedures

Mount Rainier Institute responsibilities:

The health and safety of our participants is the number one priority of Mount Rainier Institute staff. Our staff receives training and certification in basic first aid and CPR. During the program, Mount Rainier Institute staff will carry cellular phones, radios, and first aid kits. We also have a landline accessible 24/7 to your group in case you need to contact EMS. Please be sure to have information about any further insurance coverage required by your school system. Safety procedures in case of an emergency will be discussed during the adult orientation meeting. Should you need them, emergency services are available 24 hours a day through Pierce County EMS. They are located within 6 miles of Mount Rainier Institute's main campus at Pack Forest.

School/Group responsibilities:

- **Have at least one vehicle on-site for emergency use at all times.**
- **Assign one adult to coordinate and supervise medications needed by the students.**
- **Have one copy of the STUDENT HEALTH AND PERMISSION FORM prepared for each participant. This form MUST be completed and SIGNED upon arrival at the Mount Rainier Institute for each participant.**
- **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.**

Chaperone Packing List

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 Mount Rainier region.

Remember that you will be carrying your own luggage, so do not bring more items than you can carry. It is suggested to pack your backpack and luggage as follows;

BACKPACK

- 1 – 2 plastic 1-liter water bottles
- Rain coat and pants
- Sunscreen
- Sack lunch for the first day**

- Winter coat if appropriate
- Lip protectant (optional)

OTHER

- Bag for dirty clothes
- Plastic bag for wet shoes
- Travel coffee/tea mug**-We serve coffee, but want to limit the use of paper cups.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Binoculars
- Camera
- Flashlight
- Reading books

LUGGAGE/DUFFLE BAG

BEDDING AND HYGIENE

- Pillow
- Sleeping bag or blankets (a window may be left open for air circulation. Consider bringing extra warm sleeping bags or blankets).
- 1 Bath towel and washcloth
- Comb or brush
- Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste

- Shower shoes *Optional*

- Bug spray *Optional*

CLOTHING

- 5 - 6 Pairs of underwear
- 5 – 6 Pairs of socks

- 3 - 4 Shirts, at least one long-sleeved
- 2 Extra sweaters or sweatshirts
- 3 Pairs of long pants
- 2 Pairs of shorts (if appropriate for season)
- Pajamas
- 1 Hat (appropriate for season)
- Warm gloves, scarf, etc. for cooler temperatures

FOOTWEAR

- 1 Pair of shoes/boots that can get muddy (Waterproof is preferred but not required)
- Extra shoes

NOTE ABOUT FOOTWEAR: We will be hiking each day at Mount Rainier Institute. Please bring boots or sturdy shoes that can get wet or muddy. These shoes should have been previously broken in by the wearer and have decent foot and ankle support. This will help us greatly in avoiding blisters.

Top Ten Tips for MRI Chaperones

1. Ask questions and take care of yourself! This program doesn't work without chaperones like you; MRI staff are happy to answer questions and help make your trip to MRI a positive experience for everyone.
2. Establish a group chat with the parents and teachers chaperoning your trip. This is an easy way to communicate with all the adults from your school at once.
3. Introduce yourself to the chaperones from the other group. We may have multiple schools at MRI simultaneously. In this case, they will have free time and meals together. MRI will work to share contact information and introduce the lead teachers from each school, but knowing who's who in the other group is always helpful.
4. Know where chaperones are needed. We'll cover this in adult orientation on-site, but as long as students aren't invited to spend free time in their cabins it is unlikely that all chaperones need to supervise free time. Depending on the particulars of your program, there may be other times when we do not need every chaperone to be "on." MRI staff and your school's lead teacher can provide more guidance while you are staying at Pack Forest.
5. Know when you can get a break. Related to number 4, there may be times when we don't need every chaperone actively supervising students. This can be a great opportunity for you to take a break and decompress.
6. Have a conversation with your trail group leader early. MRI strives to ensure that all of our instructors are experienced and excellent, but they may have different styles of teaching or expectations for their group. Talking with your trail group leader about how you can support each other and ensure that your trail group has a successful visit to MRI. If you have any experiences that you think may be relevant to the curriculum that you would be willing to share (for example, some chaperones work in forestry), this is also a great time to let the instructor know so they can determine where that experience best fits into the flow of their lesson plans.
7. Hold a cabin meeting on day 1. This can happen during free time, or at 9pm after evening program. By outlining the expectations set by MRI and your school, students will have a better idea of how they should and shouldn't act when they are in or around the cabins.
8. Communicate any changes to MRI Coordinators. Sometimes a situation will arise during a time when the school group is supervising students that leads to a student sitting out a lesson or going home early (such as a student getting sick). Communicating these changes to MRI Coordinators is key: we can communicate this information to MRI instructors and provide any support your school needs to address the situation.
9. Check in with your lead teacher daily. Sometimes teachers may request small adjustments to the program once they arrive on site. Your schoolteachers can also be a great resource to pull in to any conflict in your cabin or during times you are supervising students.
10. Pay attention to where students are and who's supervising them. MRI has observed that most conflict between students occurs during free time or when students are getting ready for bed after evening program. These are times when a large number of students are in the same space and the program is less structured. Ensuring that an adult from your school is near any groups of students helps minimize the chance of conflict occurring.