

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER
10160 South M-37 Highway
Dowling, Michigan 49050

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS – 5th GRADE SCHOOL CAMP PROGRAM
6th GRADE ADVENTURE PROGRAM**

Your child may have an opportunity to participate in the residential school camping program held at the Battle Creek Public Schools - Outdoor Education Center. The Battle Creek Public Schools have operated Clear Lake Camp at the Outdoor Education Center continuously since 1947 for the purpose of providing residential School Camp. This letter attempts to answer some of the questions parents may have.

WHAT IS OUTDOOR EDUCATION?

Outdoor Education is the use of the out-of-doors to facilitate the total education of children through experiences that cannot be easily conducted in the classroom.

Outdoor Education has four main purposes:

- (1) To fulfill specific portions of the science, health and physical education curriculum.
- (2) To enrich the regular education curriculum through outdoor experiences.
- (3) To develop social skills by living and working together in the dorms and dining hall.
- (4) To teach lifelong outdoor leisure skills.

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL CAMPING PROGRAM

Exposing children to the out-of-doors in the school setting develops an awareness and understanding of mankind's ultimate dependence upon our natural environment. The school camping program becomes an extension of the classroom where teachers and their students use the out-of-doors as a laboratory in which to study, explore in our natural environment. The experience also offers children the chance to develop skills and interests in outdoor recreation which will carry over into later life. This week in a camp setting offers children the opportunity to study, work, and live with other children and adults

It is all too common today that children spend very little time outdoors. New research shows that spending time in the outdoors enriches children's lives in a myriad of ways; enhancing imagination, cognitive development and problem solving skills. We've embraced the national movement for "No Child Left Inside". Additionally, having a safe, enjoyable, "away from parent" experience is a natural and healthy part of growing up.

PROGRAM:

Students in the 5th grade participate in a program with the emphasis on environmental impact. This program builds on their experience as Garden Guides in the 3rd and 4th grade. It takes place in the late fall or early winter. Students in the 6th grade participate

in the Adventure Program with an emphasis on team building and personal challenge. This program takes place in the fall.

OTHER INFORMATION:

LOCATION AND ADDRESS:

Clear Lake Camp is a part of the Outdoor Education Center located in Barry County on Clear Lake at 10160 South M-37 Highway, 13 miles north of Battle Creek (1 mile south of Dowling).

SUPERVISION PROVIDED:

Children are supervised 24 hours a day. In addition to the classroom teacher, there is a permanent camp staff of:

Director	The director is similar to a school principal.
Assistant Director	Acts as office manager and day time Health Officer.
Supervising Instructor / Counselor	This person supervises the total residential program.
Instructor / Counselors	Each classroom group of students is assigned two of these persons as their group leaders.
Dormitory counselors	Each dormitory is supervised by two full-time dormitory counselors whose prime responsibility is providing adequate supervision in the building during the evening and nighttime hours. The dorm doors are alarmed to indicate if a door has been opened and leaders make at least three camper counts during the evening.
Health service	The students' health needs of are covered 24 hours a day by two Health Officers. The Health Officers schedule medications, check on health and diet problems, provide care for students who become ill, and administer first aid. Call ahead about special problems and indicate these issues on the registration form.
Classroom Teacher	The classroom teacher also accompanies their class.

Additional Staff include: maintenance staff and cooks.

All staff and volunteers are cleared through school safety clearance protocols.

CLEAR LAKE CAMP FACILITIES:

Camp lodge: A dining hall: meals are prepared by the cooking staff and are served family style.

Meeting rooms: each class has their own meeting room where activities are planned and discussed.

Recreation room: this large room can be used for games, songs, stories, etc., or when the weather is not suitable for outside activity.

Store: students may purchase essential items (toothbrush, comb, etc. and some souvenir items (Teddy Bears, T-shirt, key chains, etc.).

Office: the Health Officer is on duty here.

Dormitories (one for boys and one for girls): Students live in comfortable, heated dormitories with modern conveniences: electricity, hot showers, and drying rooms for wet clothing. Each dormitory can house 76 students.

Grounds: Approximately 150 acres of mixed forest, fields, pond, and activity areas. Our main lodge is on the shore of Clear Lake.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE:

7:00 AM	Campers arise
7:30 AM	Dormitory cleanup, table setting
8:00 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Activity period
12:00 NOON	Lunch
1:00 PM	Activity period
4:30 PM	Rest time
5:30 PM	Supper
6:30 PM	Activity period
8:00 PM	showers, ready for bed
9:00 PM	Lights out and story

CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT:

The “What to Take” list will help determine what to bring to camp. One page is a checklist to help your child pack. We encourage you to make this their responsibility. The second page is to help you oversee the packing process. Remember that the students will be outside much of the time. Please send clothing that can get dirty. Please honor the “DO NOT BRING” portion of the list. Items from this list will be confiscated and given to the classroom teacher to be returned after camp. Disciplinary action may be taken.

REGISTRATION:

Parents must complete and sign our “Registration and Health Information Form”. If you are sending any medication, a **“Medication Permission Form” is required.** While a physical examination is not required, the Medication Permission Form does require a physician’s signature for the administration of any medication. [This information is not only required by State regulations, but is helpful to the camp staff in planning activities.] We do need to get these forms ahead of time and your teacher will let you know what the time table is for returning forms. The “Medication Information” sheet gives specific information about guidelines for medications.

VISITATION:

Parents are welcome to visit the Outdoor Education Center. However, it does interfere with the camp routine and may cause homesickness problems for all the children. We welcome and encourage pre visits, if a child is anxious and would like to see camp and meet staff ahead of time with their parents. Parents can call to arrange a time.

MAIL:

We encourage students to write home while they are away (Stamps may be purchased at the camp store). We also encourage parents to send mail to their children. Every student enjoys getting mail. Remember that they are only here for a few days, so write early. Mail can be sent ahead of time just indicate the child’s name and school. The address to use is on the first page.

HOMESICKNESS:

It can be difficult to think of your child as “suffering” with homesickness but it is a natural part of growing up. We deal with this issue on a weekly basis and feel that we are very successful in helping students have an enjoyable experience. If you behave as if your child will have a good time – they will! If parents feel that there may be a potential problem with homesickness, they can indicate this on their child’s Registration form. Knowing this ahead of time may help us take preventive measures before this becomes serious for a child. The final page of this pkt. has additional ideas for coping with homesickness.

FOOD ALLERGIES:

Food allergies have become a major concern for many parents. There is a place for parents to indicate any allergies (cats, dust, food) on the Registration Form. It is important to complete this portion of the form and to indicate the severity of the allergy. We do have a protocol to help us deal with allergic students. We encourage parents to contact us directly and we can discuss proper care procedures in this situation.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

We try to accommodate all children's needs; physical, mental or emotional. We are very adaptable. Please call ahead and indicate this on the registration form so we can work out a plan to insure that your child has a great week.

HEALTH ISSUES:

If your child becomes ill at camp, we will care for your child to the best of our skill level. Keep in mind that we cannot administer any medication, unless you provide it and it is accompanied by a properly filled out "Medication Permission Form". If the Health Officers determine that your child needs to go home, you will be responsible for transporting them from camp. If there is any question about a health issue that arises at camp, our health officers will call to inform you and discuss what actions you would like us to take. The camp fee will be pro-rated in our bill to the school. See the school secretary for any reimbursements.

BEHAVIOR:

Your child's participation in this program is considered part of school. We have the same expectations that the school has for behavior. The OEC has a 4 level discipline system. A parent will be notified when the child reaches the 3rd level. At the 4th level, a student who cannot meet these expectations will be dismissed from camp. The parent will be responsible for transportation and the camp fee is not refunded. The school principal will determine if any further discipline action will occur.

ARE YOU HOMESICK?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, almost everyone experiences homesickness in their lifetime. A report written by Christopher Thurber, PhD, and Edward Walton, MD, suggests ways to prevent homesickness and ways to cope with it. Following are some suggestions for campers:

Ways to Prevent Homesickness

- Talk with kids about the upcoming separation.
 - Don't put the thought in their head but if they say they may feel homesick, tell kids that it is normal.
- Send kids on a practice trip, such as a few days at a friend's or relative's house.
- Have kids practice writing letters before leaving.
 - Give kids pre stamped, pre addressed envelopes and paper to pack.
- Encourage kids to make friends & seek support from trusted adults when they're gone.
- Be enthusiastic and optimistic about your child's camping experience.
 - Nix negativity. Don't say things like, "I hope you'll be okay."
 - Don't say, "I am really, really going to miss you!" Instead Let them know you want them to have a wonderful experience to share when they come home.
 - Send letters that are upbeat and positive - ask what they are doing, who they bunk with, hope you are having fun, etc.
- Involve kids in decisions about camp, ie. what to pack, who to bunk with, etc.
- Don't make deals: encourage them to try their best.
 - No promises of daily phone calls- they will only miss you more.
 - No promises of picking them up anytime -It gives an excuse not to try.
- Don't use the experience as a drug holiday for kids on medications.
- If kids have special needs, call us to make arrangements and inform them of the plan.

Ways to Cope With Homesickness

- Do something fun, like bunking with your best friend and staying involved in activities.
- Do something to feel closer to home. Write a letter home. Draw pictures or keep a journal about the fun things at camp.
- Find someone to talk to; Camp staff, teacher or friend.
- Think about getting through short periods of time - like the next activity - not days of time.
- Don't dwell on thoughts of home. Stay in the present, try to have fun with what you are doing.
- Think about what a loved one would say to you to make you feel better.

Trust that your child can handle it. If a child can cope with homesickness, it will empower them to handle other difficult situations in their lives.

WHAT-TO-TAKE CHECK LIST FOR SCHOOL CAMP

Dear Camper,

This list will help you to remember what to take to Clear lake Camp and what to bring home. Use the list to check off your belongings as you pack them at home. Bring this list with you to camp to check off these articles when you pack to go home.

BASIC CLOTHING

- sweatshirt or long sleeve shirt
- jeans or pants, 3 pair
- shoes (with laces)
- underwear, 5 pair
- socks, 5 pairs (over the ankle)
- shirts, 5 (no sleeveless)

SLEEP TIME

- sheets & blanket or
- sleeping bag
- pillow & pillow case
- sleepwear
- stuffed animal

TOILETRIES

- 2 towels & 1 facecloth
- soap & shampoo
- comb/hairbrush
- toothbrush, toothpaste
- chap stick
- Kleenex
- insect repellent lotion

SEASON FALL/SPRING

- rain coat/poncho
- waterproof footwear
- hat (for sun protection)
- sunscreen
- warm coat

SEASONAL WINTER

- winter coat
- winter boots
- winter hat
- mittens/gloves
- heavy sweater
- wool socks
- long underwear
- snow pants

OPTIONAL

- slippers
- robe
- reading material
- quiet game/cards
- camera
- writing material
- store money in an envelope
- hair dryer
- water bottle

DO NOT BRING

Flashlights - Candy, soda, gum, or food - Knives or other weapons - Radios - Cell phones - MP3 players - Electronic Games - Matches or lighters - Watches - Jewelry - Curling irons - Aerosol cans - Other valuables

BE SURE ALL ITEMS ARE MARKED WITH YOUR FULL NAME

Dear parent,

This is a brief explanation of how to choose What-To-Take when packing.

IMPORTANT: Mark your child's name on every item including boots and shoes.

Everyday Clothing: Most activities are very active and take place out-of-doors. Do not send fancy or new clothing. Comfortable fitting clothing that may get a little dirty is the best clothing to wear. Because of the amount of climbing and walking in the woods, shoes should be well fitting. You should not need to purchase any clothing for camp. Typical school dress codes are maintained at camp. ***Sandals and shorts are not allowed for all outdoor activities.***

Dormitory Items: The camp provides comfortable beds in heated dormitories. Your child needs to bring their own sleep gear (sheets, pillow, sleeping bag, etc.) and toiletries (towels, soap, toothpaste, tooth brush, etc.) Daily showers are taken to ensure proper hygiene.

Miscellaneous Items: There are many items that will enrich your child's experience, but are not required such as a drawing pad, book, letter paper and envelopes, camera, etc. These items will help your child remember the experience and give them something to do during rest time.

Spending Money: The camp operates a small store where students may purchase stamps, postcards, combs, tooth brushes, etc. or souvenirs, such as T-shirts, Teddy Bears, key chains, etc. We suggest \$2.00 to \$10.00, but it is not required that your child bring any money. All money is collected and deposited in each student's account on Monday. The unused portion is returned to the student on Friday.

Do Not Bring Items: Those items on the "do not to bring" list appear there because they are items that detract from the camp experience. Any item on that portion of the list will be confiscated and given to the student's teacher. Other discipline action may occur. We appreciate your support on this in order that we can maintain the high quality experience for all the children.

Luggage: This should be limited to one container (suitcase, duffle bag, gym bag, sturdy garbage bag) for their clothing and toiletries and a water proof container for their bedroll or sleeping bag and their pillow.

Rainy Day Clothing: It is essential that each child be prepared for damp days at Clear Lake Camp. Many of the activities take place in the out-of-doors, even if it rains. Water-resistant outer clothing, hats, and footwear will help keep your child comfortable.

Cold Weather Clothing: Each child should bring adequate clothing for cold days. During the week, the weather can change significantly. Outdoor activities are usually not canceled on cold days. Warm clothing, such as long sleeve shirts, sweatshirts, and knit hats, will allow your child to participate comfortably.