



FAQs for Parents About Exploring New Horizons at Pigeon Point

Accommodations

1. What are the sleeping arrangements like?

Students sleep in dorm rooms with wooden bunk beds with a memory foam mattress with a plastic cover. There are 3 rooms per house and the number of houses each class uses depends on the number of students in the class.

2. How warm are the dorms?

The dorms are heated and kept cozy and warm day and night. Extra blankets are available if they are needed.

3. Is there an adult in every house?

Yes, there is an adult chaperone and/or teacher in every house. They will sleep in the rooms with students or in a room next to students depending on the number of adult chaperones attending and the needs of each individual class

4. Where are the bathrooms?

There are 2 full bathrooms in each house right next to the bedrooms.

5. What are the showering accommodations like?

Each bathroom has a toilet, sink, and shower. There is hot and cold water. The bathrooms are single occupancy and have locking doors. Students will be able to shower and change privately in the bathroom.

6. How many people will be in each dorm?

Each house holds up to 14 people total, but depending on the number of students and adults attending not all of these beds will be occupied.

7. Will there be other people on site?

We will have exclusive use of the houses that we occupy. The houses are managed by Hostelling International but we will not be sharing accommodations with anyone else.

8. Who will be sleeping in the dorms with the students?

Students will always have a teacher or adult chaperone in each house. In some, but not all cases adult chaperones will sleep in the dorms with students.

9. How do you ensure the safety of students on site?

Each night, the houses are locked and each window is closed. During the day, students may be only where there is an adult chaperone, naturalist or teacher and must always abide by the "rule of three."

Food

1. What food will be served?

Please visit [our website](#) for our menu and ingredient list. We will also be serving snacks throughout the day.

2. How can you accommodate my child's food allergies or a special diet?

Please include any food allergies or dietary needs on your child's medical form. Your child's teacher will share this with you with plenty of time prior to their trip. We review the class medical forms before the student's arrival so we can make necessary adjustments to the menu for your child. Please call the Pigeon Point office at (650) 879-1835 if you have any specific questions or need more details.

3. Should I pack snacks for my child?

Please do not pack any additional food or snacks for your child besides their lunch for the first day. We do not permit food in the dorm rooms so we do not attract ants and other critters.

Special Needs

1. What if my child has special medical or behavioral needs?

If your child has special medical or behavioral needs, please include this on your child's medical form. Additionally, please contact the Exploring New Horizons at Pigeon Point office at (650) 879-1835 at least 2 weeks prior to your child's visit so we can discuss best practices to ensure a safe and positive experience for them.

2. What if my child wets the bed?

If your child occasionally or frequently wets the bed, please indicate so on their medical form. Please talk to your child and make sure that they know that they should tell an adult if they wet the bed so we can discreetly wash their bedding and clean their mattress. We will tell the class this when they arrive as well. If your child wears pull ups, they have a private bathroom where they can make sure their privacy is protected.

3. What if my child is nervous about spending the night?

If this is your child's first time staying away from home, we encourage arranging a sleep over prior to their trip. They will see a student presentation video in their class to help get them ready and can ask their teacher questions. If they need extra reassurance, you can also arrange for a site visit to meet some of the staff and see where they will stay. This can help alleviate some of their fears about staying at an unfamiliar place.

Activities

1. What will be the daily schedule?

Each program session will have a slightly different schedule based on the tides, requests from the classroom teacher, and the needs of the class. There is a sample schedule on [our website](#), but this is an example and each schedule will be different and include different times and activities.

2. Will my child be swimming?

Students will not be swimming at Pigeon Point. If they are going tidepooling they may get their shoes wet and should bring extra shoes. There is a detailed packing list on [our website](#). If conditions are safe students may be able to get their feet wet on the sandy beach but only to their ankles and swimming is not permitted.

Environmental Factors

1. Are there ticks?

There can be ticks at some of our teaching locations, especially in the spring when they are in season. We teach students about best practices for staying on the trail to avoid contact with ticks. Also, we give self-tick-check instructions to every student and encourage them to do self-tick checks after activities and before they shower. If a student discovers a tick, Exploring New Horizons staff will remove it, save it and send it home with the student. We will also notify parents.

2. Is there poison oak?

Poison oak exists near and along some of our hiking trails. We encourage students to stay on trail and teach them how to identify it so they can avoid touching it. Naturalists survey all areas before allowing students to go off trail for exploration. All students are required to shower after our hike at Ano Nuevo State Park or Memorial County Park. If your child is highly allergic to poison oak, please indicate so on their medical form.

3. What do you do if it rains?

We will go on our hikes and proceed with our activities, rain or shine! Please pack a poncho in your child's backpack in case of rain. In the case of light-medium rain, we put on our ponchos or rain coats and hit the trail! In the case of inclement weather (heavy/sustained rains, high winds, storms, etc) we modify our activities to include indoor lessons as needed to keep the students safe.

Communication with your Child

1. Can my child call home?

We do not provide students with the opportunity to call home. It is logistically difficult in the short time we have with them and it detracts from their engagement and involvement with the Outdoor School experience. In extremely unusual circumstances, phone calls can be arranged. The decisions in this case are made by the Program Director and the classroom teacher.

2. Can my child bring a cell phone?

We do not get cell reception at Pigeon Point. Our goal is to provide an unplugged experience for our students. Cell phones, kindles, smart watches, and other electronics are not allowed. Cameras, watches and flashlights are the only exception.

3. Can I write letters? Can my child write letters?

Writing and receiving letters help students feel connected to home. Students will have some free time when they can write home if they would like. If you would like your child to write home, please send your child with envelopes and stamps. If you would like to send a letter to your child, please hand it to the teacher before your child gets on the bus.

4. Can I visit the site and see the accommodations?

We invite parents (and anxious students) to set up a tour to visit the Outdoor School site before your child's school is scheduled to attend. To set up a tour, please call the Exploring New Horizons at Pigeon Point office at (650) 879-1835.