



Exploring New Horizons at Sempervirens
www.exploringnewhorizons.org
(831) 252 - 7868

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A letter from our Program Director

Dear Families,

We are looking forward to your child's upcoming visit to Exploring New Horizons at Sempervirens. Exploring New Horizons Outdoor Schools (ENH) is a nonprofit that has engaged over 200,000 students in residential outdoor education programs since 1979. Your child will be attending either a 4- or 5-day program at our Sempervirens Site in Scotts Valley. Below is some information I would like to highlight for all families to best prepare your child for their adventure. After that, our Frequently Asked Questions section provides further details about our program. Please read it and contact us if you have any questions.

Clothing: Your child will be hiking on uneven terrain and the weather can be variable with sunny days, chilly evenings, and rain. Please ensure that your child comes well prepared for all types of weather with clothing that is comfortable, warm, functional, and labeled with their first and last name. You do not need to purchase new items. Electronics, cell phones, money, and any valuables should be left at home. Please consult our website for our packing list.

Safety & Medications: Keeping your child safe and healthy is our top priority. Our staff is trained in First Aid and CPR and provides structure to keep students safe during all activities. Please do not send a child that has had a fever or illness in the past 48 hours or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. If an accident should occur, or your child is not feeling well, you will be notified. If your child takes medications, please see our packing list (website) for instructions on sending those medications. Students keep emergency medications with them including inhalers and epi-pens. All other medication is given to students by our staff when prescribed. We have a first aid facility which has over-the-counter medications. If you give consent on the online medical form, your child can be given any of these over-the-counter medications by our Health Care Staff as needed so please do not send them. Talk with your child about basic hygiene, such as washing their hands before meals and after they use the restroom. If your child has specific health or behavioral needs, please include them on the online medical form. Contact us if you have questions or concerns.

Missing home: It is normal for students to miss home or to be nervous before attending outdoor school! Our staff is experienced at helping students through this challenge. Please set your child up for success by focusing on all the fun they will have and how proud they will be of themselves. Encourage them to speak to their classroom teacher or ENH staff if they are having

an issue so that we can support them. Your child will be busy and engaged their entire time at outdoor School and they will not be able to call you or take calls. You are welcome to write them a letter and give it to their classroom teacher.

Discipline: ENH uses a 5-step Check System to help students understand the school rules and learn how their actions impact others.

- **1st Check:** a documented warning
- **2nd Check:** The student will be checked in with by an adult about the action/behavior for 15 minutes of recreation time
- **3rd Check:** The student will lose 30 minutes and work with our staff to fill out a Behavior Contract
- **4th Check:** The student will sit out for all of recreation time have a conference with the Principal and their classroom teacher and call the student's parent or guardian to talk with their child about their child's behavior
- **5th Check:** The student will be removed from the program and the parent or guardian will be called and notified that they need to come to outdoor school, pick up their child, and take them home.

Thank you for taking the time to prepare your child for outdoor school! We look forward to hosting them and providing them with a wonderful and memorable outdoor experience.

Sincerely,

Katherine Monroe, Program Director

Frequently Asked Questions

Accommodations

1. What are the sleeping arrangements like?

Students sleep in cabins with bunk beds with a mattress with a plastic cover. Cabin groups are assigned by classroom teachers. Students should bring pillows, and sheets and blankets or sleeping bags.

2. How warm are the cabins?

The cabins have heating and are warm. Extra blankets are available if needed.

3. Is there an adult in every cabin?

There is a high school or adult cabin leader in every cabin who stays overnight with the students.

4. Where are the bathrooms and showers?

Each cabin has its own bathroom, with 2 toilet stalls, 2 sinks, and 2 individual showers with changing rooms. There is hot and cold water. Students will be able to shower and change privately in the bathroom.

5. How many people will be in each cabin?

Each cabin holds 10 to 12 people total, but depending on the number of students and cabin leaders attending not all of these beds will be occupied. Depending on cabin group size, additional beds in adjacent rooms may be used as necessary.

6. Who will be sleeping on site with the students?

Students will always have a high school or adult cabin leader in each cabin. Additionally, there is always an Exploring New Horizons staff member on site overnight in case of emergencies. Classroom teachers sleep in their own cabin on site.

Food

1. What food will be served?

You can find the menu on our [website](#). Breakfast and dinner is served family style in the dining hall, and lunches are eaten on trail.

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 Sempervirens Health Office at 831-461-2020 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. Food is not allowed in the cabins so we do not attract ants or other animals.

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 Sempervirens office at 831-252-7868 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.

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 sleepover with a friend 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. Please know that many students feel nervous before coming to outdoor school! Our staff is experienced at helping students overcome their fears and build confidence here.

Activities

1. What will be the daily schedule?

Each program session will have a slightly different schedule based on the weather, requests from the classroom teacher, and the needs of the class. There is a sample schedule on [our website](#), and each hike will include a variety of activities with the naturalist.

2. Will my child be swimming?

Students will not be swimming at outdoor school. If they are going tidepooling they might get their shoes wet and should bring extra shoes. There is a detailed packing list that your teacher will share with you. 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 in a ziploc bag so that you can test the tick if you desire. 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. 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 or raincoat 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. We also have extra ponchos to lend to students as needed.

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, which can lead to homesickness. 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 have limited cell reception at Sempervirens. 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 encouraged.

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 or mail it at least one week before your child's first day at camp.