

# Outdoor Education at Camp Ocean Pines

## A Teacher's Guide, Winter/Spring 2022

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We are so excited and honored that you have chosen Camp Ocean Pines for your group's science camp experience! We will be working together closely in the coming months to get everything ready to go for camp. Consider this packet an introduction to the science camp experience - in it, you will find information about medications, parent chaperones, camp policies, etc. We hope that it will answer most of the questions that you may have.

Contact us anytime with any additional questions or concerns. Staying in touch with our teachers is a top priority and we take it very seriously! You are our partners in putting together a fantastic experience for every student, and we want you to feel confident that you are bringing your students to an excellent facility with a staff that cares about your concerns.



**The mission of Camp Ocean Pines is to foster enjoyment and appreciation of the natural world among people of all ages through creative activities in a residential camp setting.**

## **Science Camp Rules: The FACTS of Life!**

We cannot explain *every* rule for *every* situation. Students should understand that this is a school experience, and if something is not okay at school it's probably not okay at Camp. We want kids to make smart, responsible choices. Everyone boils down to five simple things, so please review these **F.A.C.T.S.** with your students before they arrive.

**Fun** = What am I doing to ensure that I, all my friends, and all the adults are having fun?

**Attitude** = Am I choosing to be positive, helpful, and respectful? To do the right thing? Am I helping others to stay positive, and to always be excited to be at Camp?

**Community** = How am I making this community better? Am I looking out for my friends? Keeping my cabin clean? Am I sharing food at the table? Am I treating the animals with kindness and respect?

**Try New Things** = Am I willing to do stuff that I've never done before? Do I encourage and support others to try new things, too?

**Safety** = How do I keep myself and other people safe? Am I getting enough sleep, and drinking water? Do I help my friends up a steep hill? Do I keep my eyes open when I'm near the ocean?

## **Naturalist Staff**

We've got some of the brightest minds on our staff. Naturalists receive training in environmental education methods, local ecology, social-emotional learning, California science standards, and more. Naturalists love sharing their enthusiasm, knowledge and love of nature with thousands of students from diverse backgrounds. All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR & carry first aid kits at all times.

## **Chaperones**

We require each of our groups to bring along adult chaperones to supervise the students overnight. In some cases, we have allowed schools to bring high school chaperones; if you are interested in discussing this, please contact us in advance. We allow each school to bring free chaperones at a ratio of one adult for every eight students. We always round up and may allow a school to bring additional chaperones for free if the gender breakdown of the students requires it or if one or more students has serious medical needs.

Chaperones are required to stay with their cabin group during all meals, free time blocks, and overnight. Good chaperones are important for a successful science camp. An engaged, energetic cabin chaperone can support their student group throughout their camp experience, helping them to navigate homesickness, loneliness, and the nervousness that comes from trying new things in a new environment. A sleep-deprived, grumpy chaperone can ruin a child's entire camp experience. With that in mind, we give adult chaperones breaks during planned lessons to take a nap, have a shower, or just relax with a cup of coffee. You will receive a Chaperone Orientation Packet with a list of specific responsibilities, guidelines for how to interact with groups of students, and other information.

## Medical Information

All of our staff members are First Aid/CPR certified. We encourage each school to send a first aid kit that can be kept in the teacher cabin in case any first aid is needed overnight. We are happy to provide first-aid for general cuts, scrapes, and bruises ***but any medical treatment beyond that, including the handing out of prescription and over-the-counter medications, is the responsibility of the teachers.***

The American Camp Association (ACA) requires that we collect a copy of each student's medical form to keep on file.

Children requiring an EpiPen or inhaler must carry it with them at all times. If the school or parent is not comfortable with this, please assign an adult that will be with this student to carry the item(s).

## Food Service

With advanced notice the camp kitchen is happy to provide meals that are vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy-free, etc. We ask that schools send dietary information to the camp at least 3 weeks prior to arrival. Participants with extreme allergies or medical conditions are asked to bring their own food which we are glad to store in our kitchen facilities.

All meals are served in the Dining Hall. In order to minimize the possibility of outdoor creatures and rodents being attracted to the cabins, no eating or drinking is allowed in the cabins. Help us avoid problems with animals by not allowing students to bring any food, snacks, or treats with them to camp.

## COVID Guidelines

All staff, including Naturalists, are fully vaccinated. All adults attending science camp are required to show proof of either full vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours prior to the start of the program. Everyone is required to wear masks when in close contact.

## Other Concerns

We welcome all students at Camp Ocean Pines! If you have a student(s) with a special need (sleepwalking, bedwetting, snoring, health condition, in a wheelchair, etc.) please let us know in advance so that we can work with you to ensure that they have a positive camp experience.

## Electronics Policy

Camp Ocean Pines is a place to celebrate and enjoy the great outdoors—to take a break from everyday life and electronics. For this reason, please don't allow students to bring cell phones, tablets, computers, or any other electronics. (E-readers are welcome!) Cell phones and other electronics brought by students will immediately be collected and given to the teachers to return at week's end. Teachers and adult chaperones are of course allowed to bring electronics to camp.



## A Typical Day at Camp

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 8:00  | Breakfast  |
| 9:00  | First 3-hour lesson block (or two 1.5 hour lesson blocks)                              |
| 12:00 | Cabin time - for students to change, grab anything that they forgot at the cabin, etc. |
| 12:30 | Lunch  |
| 1:30  | Rec field time   |
| 2:00  | Afternoon lesson block (1.5 hour)  |
| 3:30  | Student choice activity block (1 hour)   |
| 4:30  | Cabin time for students to shower, take a nap, etc.                                    |
| 5:30  | Dinner   |
| 6:30  | Rec field time   |
| 7:00  | 1.5-hour evening activity block  |
| 8:30  | Evening announcements  |
| 9:30  | Lights out   |

On off-site days, we will pack a lunch after breakfast and leave camp around 9:15am. We usually return to camp between 3-3:30pm for cabin time.



## Activity Options

Please let us know which lessons you would like us to focus on during your trip to Camp Ocean Pines. Read the descriptions on the next few pages, and complete the Program Request Form and return it to us two weeks in advance of your visit.

### Double Lesson Blocks (3 hours)

**Forest Exploration Hike** - Just like our city communities, the forest is alive and bustling. What sounds do you hear? What neighbors do you see? From solo hikes to climbing trees, this is a very hands-on lesson that will allow students to fully experience life in a coastal forest.

**Tide Pool Exploration** In this lesson, students will take a short walk to our local tide pools, where they'll search for sea stars, crabs, and other intriguing invertebrates. They'll investigate tidepool interactions and zonation along with the unique adaptations that allow certain animals to thrive in the tough tide pool environment. *(This lesson is tide dependent!)*



## Single Lesson Blocks (1.5 hours)

**Animal Adaptations** How are different animals suited for their different environments? In this lesson students will be able to get up close and personal with a raptor, a snake, and a rabbit so that they will be able to see how vastly different animals each fill their unique roles in their ecosystems.

**Forest Ecology** What makes a forest a forest? Is it just trees, or is it more? Students will put on their naturalist hats and see how the different components of a forest work together to make a community. Let us know if you would like your students to plant a tree as a service project!

**Marine Lab** In this lesson we do a deep dive into ocean life. We will look at different invertebrates, get some hands-on experience with different algae and kelps, and even design and perform an experiment oriented around tegula snails.

**Native Cultures** Through Native stories and games, students will engage with each other and their landscape, discovering entertainment that is unplugged. Ultimately, students will gain an understanding of the hunter/gatherer lifestyle and an appreciation for what life was like here before the arrival of the Spanish.

**Nature Art** How does nature influence art? What are the ways you can connect to nature using art? Students will open their creative minds and learn about nature through art-focused activities.

**Target Sports** More than just trying to hit a bullseye, shooting a bow and tossing an axe are actually teaching skills related to perseverance and focus. And they're really fun, too!

**Team Building** Team building can be a great bonding experience, while also encouraging students to use communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. During this block, instructors will use our portable initiatives as well as our permanent low ropes elements (no harnesses are involved and students are never more than a few feet off of the ground) to present your students with fun challenges to overcome as a group.

## Student Choice Activities (1 hour)

We are excited to offer students a chance to choose activities they want to experience while at camp. Some of the possible choice time activities are listed below; however, choices will vary throughout the season.

**Arts & Crafts** In this activity block, students will get to create projects on a whole new level. From working with glass to painting true works of art, students will be able to challenge their artistic abilities and possibly even learn some engineering skills along the way.

**Bouldering** In this activity block the students will have the opportunity to climb on the bouldering wall. They will learn climbing techniques, safety practices, and a few fun challenges to do on the wall.

**Outdoor Living Skills** What should you bring with you on a hike? How do fires work? How do I use a compass? This activity block teaches kids some of the most crucial skills they will need to be prepared

to spend time outside. They will build shelters and fires, and spend time in the forest to become more comfortable with connecting with nature.

**Reading in Hammocks** Do you love to read? Have you ever sat in a hammock? This activity block will allow students to experience both. We have just remodeled our naturalist library, and will have books for students to learn all about the natural world around them. We also welcome students to read books from the classroom or home.

## Evening Activities

**Astronomy** How does the cosmos affect the natural world? What is the science behind a star and what constellations can we see here in California? In this evening lesson students will learn about the celestial bodies that make up our night sky and how they affect the animals and plants found on the central coast. They will have a chance to design their very own constellation and come up with a creative backstory to explain its existence, just as early civilizations did.

**Crepuscular Avengers + Campfire** A trip highlight for students and chaperones alike! Taking place at dusk, Crepuscular Avengers pits predators (teachers and adult chaperones) against prey (students) as they attempt to make it from the dining hall up to the cabin area without being eaten (tagged with a soft foam ball). Afterwards, instructors debrief the game by helping the students make connections between their own actions and the actions of actual prey animals. And what is camp without the campfire?! Each cabin has a chance to come up with a song, story, or skit to share and our naturalists fill in with performances of their own. We'll end the night with s'mores under the stars.



**Night Adaptations** How do nocturnal creatures survive in the darkness? How have we humans adapted to the dark? In this lesson, students will discover many of the challenges and some of the extraordinary solutions that nocturnal animals have developed to be successful in the dark. They will investigate how our own eyes respond to darkness and use each of their senses to find their way through the forest at night during a short flashlight-free night hike.

**Owl Pellet Dissection** What exactly is an owl pellet? Students will discover the answer as they pair up to dissect a real owl pellet. Each pellet contains fur and bones from rodents, snakes, and/or small birds. Students will have the opportunity to try and identify the bones they find, and to build their own creative animal skeleton.

**Squid Dissection** Why do squid look so weird? In this lab, students will answer this question and investigate the amazing anatomy of the Pacific coast squid, *Loligo opalescens*, through cephalopod stories, molluscan games, and hands-on dissection! Each student will partner with a classmate to dissect their very own squid.

### **Off Site Trips (additional fees; please contact us for details)**

**Morro Bay Kayaking** Students will have a first hand introduction to estuary ecology while cruising in two-man kayaks throughout Morro Bay's mudflats, sand dunes, and waterways. During their adventure, they will learn about the various marine life that has found refuge in the estuary and the adaptations needed for survival. Students will also have the opportunity to get their hands dirty while discovering Morro Bay's sand dunes and mud flats, learning about the creatures that live in these communities and their role in the estuary.

**San Simeon Beach + Elephant Seal Rookery** - From giant elephant seals to tiny sand crabs, students will observe and investigate the interactions of the beach community and discover the ocean forces that drive and define them. At the elephant seal colony, students will have the chance to observe and sketch these magnificent mammals as they interact on their mating grounds at Piedras Blancas. At San Simeon State Beach, students will learn about sandy shore ecology by digging through beach wrack and collecting live mole crabs. A sand castle building activity will tie in the concept of erosion to some fun on the beach!

