



The Role of Teachers and Parent Chaperones at Ozark Natural Science Center

Thank you for serving as a chaperone in Ozark Natural Science Centers school-based programming! Whether you are a teacher bringing your class or a parent volunteer, we appreciate your commitment. Please read the following guidelines for our visiting teachers and parent chaperones before your visit. Our program is most successful when our field instructors can focus on delivering program content. Therefore, we ask that teachers and parents serve primarily to supervise and maintain good behavior among students during the visit.

If you have any questions or concerns about the following guidelines, please contact us at 479-789-2754.

General Guidelines

- Safety is our top concern. Please enforce the “no running” rule and keep students on the trails at all times (unless led off trail by field staff). Discourage rough play in the dorms, and never allow the students to go anywhere unattended.
- Medications will be kept in a locked drawer with the exception of rescue inhalers. Teachers assume responsibility for distributing medications to students while at ONSC.
- Assist field instructors on hikes, at mealtime, and during indoor activities – we need full cooperation and engagement of chaperones and teachers to maintain an enjoyable and educational visit for the students.
- Remind students to have appropriate clothing and equipment when leaving dorms.
- Please set a good example in everything you do while at ONSC. Remember that your enthusiasm is contagious. Students thrive when the adults convey a positive attitude.
- Tobacco products are prohibited on trails or during classes. A smoker’s area is located in the parking lot for use when you are not needed for program activities.
- Encourage students to respect themselves, respect others, and respect the environment.
- At the meeting spots before and after activities, please make sure the students are following staff directions and then wait quietly for your field instructor. Field staff may be making last-minute preparations for activities and will arrive shortly.
- Please feel free to ask questions or add to discussions during program activities, but please do not contradict field staff. If you disagree with something, please raise your concern away from students.
- Please refrain from using cellular phones or other electronic devices during programming.

An outline of responsibilities by activity for a typical 2-day visit follows.

Arrival

Students will be excited and a little bit overwhelmed when they first arrive at ONSC. Please help them unload from the buses and be seated in the pavilion. Encourage them to wait quietly for directions.

Move into dorms

Field instructors will discuss dorm rules, schedules, and expectations. Note supplies and protocol for cleanup of body fluids under the vanity in chaperone's room. Read instructions for the use of intercoms and radios (radio checks will be conducted immediately after returning to lodges for the evening – please be prepared to respond).

Mealtime Responsibilities

Adults sit with the students at each meal. Field instructors will give instructions regarding serving and cleanup. Listen to the instructions as they are given and make sure children seated at your table understand them. Encourage them to take their time; they will have at least 45 minutes to eat at each meal, as opposed to the more rushed mealtime routines at school. Encourage students to:

- Students should seat themselves to ensure all tables are mixed-gender.
- Use proper table manners and encourage them to thank ONSC's hard-working kitchen staff.
- Avoid food waste! Our mealtime motto is, "Take what you need, and eat what you take".
- Drink a full glass of water at each meal to stay hydrated.
- Use a new, clean plate for each visit to the salad bar.

Field Investigations

Help your assigned field instructor prepare students for the long afternoon hike. Students need backpacks, rain gear, field journals, pencils, jackets (in season), and full water bottles. On the trail, assist the instructor in maintaining discipline and encourage participation. Follow the field group and make certain that students remain on the trails and adhere to safety guidelines. After breaks or when leaving an area, please scan the ground for personal belongings.

Dinner

Follow meal procedures listed above.

Afternoon and Evening Classes

Please supervise your assigned field group as they participate in the evening classes. Mingle with the students and assist them with the activities, but don't give them the answers! You may take some time to relax during one of the evening programs, but please make sure there are enough other adults with each group. Please avoid distracting conversations in or near ongoing classes.

Oral Traditions and Campfire Program

Assist field instructors with "crowd control" during this large-group activity. Students will be tempted to pick up gravel or wood chips and throw them; please discourage this behavior.

Night Hike

Field instructors and chaperones/teachers will carry provided flashlights and scan the trails for hazards. Assist the field instructor with any concerns or questions from the students. Scaring others is absolutely prohibited and will result in termination of the hike. Please help the field instructor with periodic head-counts.

Return to Dorms/Bedtime

Make certain that each student takes a quick shower (hot water is limited). Allow students to read or visit before bed if you wish, but please enforce lights out and no noise shortly after showers are completed. Listen for and respond to the radio check as soon as students return to the lodges.

Day 2:

Dorm Check Out

By 7:15 am, drop off all luggage and personal belongings at the pavilion. Be sure to check rooms for overlooked belongings. Please remain at the pavilion until all students and adults are present and then proceed as a group to the Ewing Centre for breakfast.

Breakfast

Follow normal mealtime procedures listed above.

Morning Field Investigations

Follow procedures for Field Investigations above. This hike may include a discussion on stewardship and conservation while on the trail. Please help students think of ways they can conserve natural resources and make a difference in their school and daily lives.

Program Evaluations

You will be asked to complete an evaluation of the program and field staff at ONSC. Please take the time to complete this survey and provide as much input as you can. We take these evaluations seriously; if there is something we want to visit with you about, you will be contacted before departure whenever possible to discuss your ideas. Your feedback helps us to continually improve our programming.

Lunch

Please follow normal mealtime procedures listed above. At the end of the final lunch, teachers should empty the medication drawer before proceeding to the buses. Also, look for *Lost and Found* items that may be placed on the glass display cases in the Ewing Centre.

Group Photo and Departure

Help ONSC field instructors to assemble students and other adults for a group photo in the pavilion. This photo is a record of attendance and must include all present adults and field instructors. The photo will also be sent via email to the teachers for dispersal to students and their families.

Students must be on the bus by 12:50. Please assist with the departure process.

Again, thank you for volunteering your time and energy as a chaperone! Our programs would not be possible without the help of committed parents and teachers like you!