

# How to Choose a Cabin Leader!

## Cabin Leaders and Chaperones

Each school is required to recruit and select cabin leaders to provide overnight supervision in the cabins and support on trail.

Cabin leaders are volunteers who serve as role models for a group of about 8-12 attending students in their cabin. The quality of supervision by the cabin leaders will directly affect each student's experience. While cabin leaders will assist in trail supervision, they are primarily responsible during cabin times and at night. Cabin leaders receive only very short rest and shower breaks during the day and are expected to supervise the students at all other times.

Schools must provide cabin leaders to supervise the students in the cabins. Hike groups are composed of one (1) male identified and one (1) female identified cabin. Please try to keep the numbers in the hike groups even. Ideal sized groups are between 18 and 25 students. There are several good sources of cabin leaders including high school students (preferably juniors or seniors); college students; and guardians or relatives of students in your classroom may also serve as cabin leaders.

## High School and College Cabin Leaders

When properly selected, high school and college cabin leaders provide valuable positive leadership for the students. Often strong bonds develop between the cabin leader and their students. The energy level of student leaders helps them keep up with the pace of the program, and they benefit from the leadership training and experience. Many public and private high schools are willing to work with their feeder elementary schools to provide high quality cabin leaders. Many students can earn community service credits upon completion of a successful week.

We recommend that you establish contact with the high school or college at least three months in advance of your visit. Let them know what your cabin leader needs are. Two months before attending the Outdoor School you can do a recruiting presentation at the high school or college. Hand out application forms (if being used) at the presentation and give them a deadline for returning the forms. The students should also have had their absence approved (school and teacher) by the application deadline. Only select students that have been approved by their school. This will help to prevent you from depending on students that teachers later disqualify. Complete the interviews no later than four weeks before attending. Always recruit alternates to allow for those students who unexpectedly cannot attend.

## Adult Cabin Leaders

Guardians or relatives may serve as adult cabin leaders at the Outdoor School. Selecting the appropriate guardians for the job is important. They should be energetic, flexible, and open to guidance. If possible, choose guardians who are able to make a commitment for the full week.

## Cabin leader Training

The Outdoor School provides several hours of training for the cabin leaders once they arrive on site. Several weeks prior to your visit to the Ranch it is helpful to conduct a cabin leader orientation meeting. You can help to orient your cabin leaders by giving them a Cabin Leader Handbook (found on the Walker Creek Ranch website). This handbook is designed to be useful in a training workshop. Don't assume that college students or guardians will be successful Cabin Leaders without training.

Note: We recommend using fingerprinting services for adult chaperones. Schools should refer to their school/district policy regarding fingerprinting policy for adult volunteers.

# MARIN COUNTY OUTDOOR SCHOOL

## CABIN LEADER APPLICATION FORM

Trip Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Return forms by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City Zip

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number of Guardian or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you been a Cabin Leader and / or Counselor before? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If YES, When? \_\_\_\_\_ For what camp or school? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do you want to be a Cabin Leader at Outdoor School? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you think your greatest strengths as a leader are? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you able to be out of school for one week? Yes No

5. Do you understand that you will be responsible for making up missed school work? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What school clubs, sports, or community service have you been involved in? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Complete Reverse Side)

7. List any leadership experience and/or responsibilities you have had at school, or with any organizations. (i.e. clubs, sports, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is your experience working with children, especially 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does it mean to be a good role model for students? How will you be one for the students in your group? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you think the goal of outdoor school is? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Anything else you would like to tell us about yourself? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I HAVE READ THE "RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CABIN LEADER" FORM AND, IF SELECTED AS A CABIN LEADER, I AGREE TO COMPLETELY ABIDE BY THE STATED RESPONSIBILITIES.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Full Name**                      **Sign**                      **Date**

*\*PLEASE RETURN TO THE CAREER CENTER OR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COOORDITATOR BY ABOVE DUE DATE.*

# CABIN LEADER SCHOOL RELEASE FORM

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## Teachers of Cabin Leaders,

Your student has expressed an interest in serving as a Cabin Leader at the Marin County Outdoor School Program at Walker Creek Ranch.

The four-day program is a residential, outdoor educational experience for students that focuses on social emotional learning, nature connection and science education, and global awareness. Cabin Leader duties include supervising a cabin group and assisting instructional staff, serving as positive and caring role models, maintaining group safety, and teaching small instructional units. Cabin Leaders always work under the supervision of visiting classroom teachers and the outdoor education staff. The success of the program relies greatly on the effectiveness of the Cabin Leader.

As the Marin County Office of Education, we value academic success for high school students. This program offers valuable experiences not available in regular high school curriculum. Our program provides high school students with leadership training, the opportunity to work with educators, and experience working with youth. This opportunity may be valuable in achieving future career or educational goals.

This program is four days long and will necessitate the approval of all teachers of the participating student. **It is understood by the students involved that it is their responsibility to make up all regular classroom work that is missed.** It is the student's responsibility to schedule their schoolwork so that this experience will not interfere with their grades or attendance.

Your consideration of the release of this student is appreciated. Please contact the Career Center if you need more information. Thank you for your support and flexibility.

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## Request for Release from Classes

Student's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I request to be excused from the following classes for a period of one week, beginning \_\_\_\_\_ and ending, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to serve as a Cabin Leader at the Outdoor Education Program, sponsored by the Marin County Office of Education.

Attending with \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

I previously attended the Outdoor Education Program: ☐ No ☐ Yes (date) \_\_\_\_\_

**Class**

**Class Instructor's Signature**

Period I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period II \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period III \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period IV \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period V \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period VI \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period VII \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Conditions for making up work and tests will be identical to arrangements made for illness.

# **MARIN COUNTY OUTDOOR SCHOOL**

## **CABIN LEADER RESPONSIBILITY CONTRACT**

In requesting to serve as a Cabin Leader and/or Chaperone for the Marin County Outdoor School, I recognize and agree to the following:

1. I understand that I will be serving in a capacity of great responsibility and will be entrusted with the care of the students in my cabin.
2. I will always put the physical and emotional safety of the individual and collective members of my cabin group as my prime responsibility. I will know, follow, and enforce the Outdoor School Rules.
3. It is my responsibility to maintain open and respectful communication with the Outdoor Education staff and teachers while following their directions and guidance. I will ask for help when it is needed.
4. I will conduct myself in such a way that my personal behavior and appearance will serve as a model to all students.
5. I acknowledge that the students in my charge are very impressionable and must be protected from inappropriate language, jokes, or activities. I understand that derogatory discussions, remarks, or jokes about race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, physical or mental ability, medical conditions, veteran status, gender, sex, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated.
6. I will try to help each student be a positive part of the cabin group and the activities of Outdoor school. I will not intentionally embarrass or humiliate any member of the group. I will take care to treat all students with respect.
7. If an undesirable situation or problem arises that is beyond my ability or responsibility to handle, I will bring it to the attention of the Teachers, Naturalists and/or School Principal.
8. I understand that the Walker Creek Ranch Campus is a school campus. I agree not to use or possess alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or illegal substances or behave in any way to endanger the program or the welfare of the students.
9. I will always remain with the students unless it is my specified time off as assigned by the program.
10. I agree not to discuss, nor answer intimate questions about my personal life. I also agree not to share or discuss personal information such as phone numbers, email addresses, or websites with students.
11. I agree to not post any photos and/or videos of students at Walker Creek Ranch online using personal, social media or public websites, without obtaining prior written approval from parents or guardians.
12. I understand that any infraction of the above statements can result in my immediate dismissal.

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**Print Full Name**

**Sign**

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**Date**

**MARIN COUNTY OUTDOOR SCHOOL**

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CABIN LEADER**

**I. ESTABLISHING AN EARLY AND SMOOTH RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENTS**

- A. LEARN THEIR NAMES --- also, learn nicknames of your students.
- B. Show a friendly spirit and interest in each student.
- C. Be patient and understanding (especially with students that need more attention).
- D. Always praise within the group atmosphere; criticizing in front of others can embarrass a student.
- E. Remember that your students are adolescents and make mistakes. It can benefit you to keep an open mind about what they can do, or how they can change.
- F. Try to see the students' points of view. There is usually a reason why things happen.
- G. Kidding or horseplay with students can be easily misunderstood.
- H. Enter into one-on-one conversation with each student as early as possible. Make them feel like they are an important part of the group.
- I. Students appreciate a good sense of humor in their leaders.
- J. Being a good listener helps establish positive rapport with the students.
- K. Students like fairness, honesty, and clarity in their leaders.
- L. Encourage the student to gain confidence by sharing about themselves.

**II. HANDLING THE GROUP**

- A. Be polite and courteous to your students and expect the same from them.
- B. Do not engage in arguments with students.
- C. If you disagree with other leaders, discuss this away from the group when students are not present.
- D. Always use kind, non-judgmental, positive language when speaking to students.
- E. Be aware of personal prejudices, and work to give all students a chance to show you who they are.

- F. Help your group understand the reason for setting cabin standards. Try not to set down regulations without purpose.
- G. Be aware that students will hear what you say (even in casual situations). Keep all of your conversation appropriate.
- H. Be sure to only offer things to students if you are able to provide them within the rules of the Outdoor School.
- I. Be careful of teasing or kidding.

### III. BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

- A. Always be on the alert for behavior problems, but do not look for them.
- B. Establish standards when you first interact with the students. Do not wait for a problem to arise and then set the rule to meet the situation.
- C. If you are uncertain how to handle a problem, consult your Naturalist.
- D. Be careful how you discipline a student. Many hours of constructive work, particularly by the classroom teacher, may be ruined in one remark.
  - 1. Do not yell at a student.
  - 2. Do not intentionally embarrass a student in front of others.
  - 3. Be Honest and appropriate.
  - 4. Discipline students when you are not angry or irritated.
  - 5. Be patient.
- E. The following suggestions may be of help:
  - 1. Be careful of how you approach a student. Be courteous.
  - 2. Your job is to help the student, not to punish. Show them how they can improve.
  - 3. Reason with the student. Show the student their mistakes and how they are affecting the whole group.
  - 4. Admit your own mistakes.
  - 5. Give a person a chance to save face.
  - 6. Think, before you act; think how you might react in the offender's position.

## **Marin County Outdoor School at Walker Creek Ranch**

### **CABIN LEADER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Why would you like to be a cabin leader?
2. What do you think your responsibilities as a cabin leader will be?
3. Why do you think we have our students attend the Outdoor School?
4. What do you personally hope to gain from the experience?
5. How would you use your skills (mentioned on the application) at Outdoor School?
6. What is one thing you would like to have your students remember about you?
7. If you could teach your students one thing that they will remember forever, what would it be?
8. What adjectives would you use to describe a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade student?
9. What are your plans after you graduate from high school?
10. What advice would you give to a fellow student who has never been a cabin leader?
11. Can you give us a job description for a cabin leader?

### **Problem Scenarios**

1. Homesick student
2. Student who is always talking
3. Bed wetter/wet pants
4. Candy in cabins
5. Cabin raids
6. Two students against one or whole cabin against one student.
7. Clique(s)
8. Disrespectful students

**MARIN COUNTY OUTDOOR SCHOOL****CABIN LEADER INTERVIEWS****HIGH SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Maturity      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Communication      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Enthusiasm      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Good judgment      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Experience      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Ease/Comfort      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership style/general sense: \_\_\_\_\_

Logistical/scheduling info: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Male    Female    Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Maturity      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Communication      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Enthusiasm      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Good judgment      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Experience      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Ease/Comfort      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership style/general sense: \_\_\_\_\_

Logistical/scheduling info: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Maturity      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Communication      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Enthusiasm      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Good judgment      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Experience      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_ Ease/Comfort      1 2 3 4 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership style/general sense: \_\_\_\_\_

Logistical/scheduling info: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

