



for CHAPERONES

What is MCDOWELL?

McDowell Environmental Center (MEC), a residential hands-on science center, is located on Highway 195, about 13 miles north of Jasper. The Environmental Center has been in operation over 12 years at this location. Camp McDowell, an Episcopal summer camp since 1947, has hosted more than 100,000 children over the years. The environmental program is completely nonsectarian and is offered to all students regardless of race, religion, ability or gender.

It is the philosophy of the MEC that experiencing nature first-hand can lead to a lifelong awareness and understanding of the natural world. At the McDowell Environmental Center, our professional instructors share a love of Nature with students in outdoor classrooms. The ratio of one Instructor for every twelve students promises safety as well as a personalized learning experience - with plenty of fun, adventure and confidence building. By working together in their field groups, cabin groups and in the Dining Hall, students also learn about living in a community. Our classes provide opportunities for self esteem building, as students have new experiences and successes.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Environmental Center are to:

- Increase student's awareness and understanding of the environment.
- Encourage a sense of responsibility for the environment.
- Foster cooperation and a community feeling.

HELPFUL HINTS:

Talk with the students to build rapport. Ask them about what they have been doing, and show interest in them. If you have built a strong rapport, they will be more likely to listen to you if later you need to correct their behavior.

We will provide supervision by MEC Instructors during classes and activities. The chaperones will be responsible for supervision of students at all other times. Each school must bring at least one adult to cover each field and/or cabin group.

Be aware of the students in your cabin or field group who take routine medications, and discretely remind them to visit the nurse.

CABINS:

Each cabin is a sturdy, clean, and well-maintained cement-block cabin with about 11 single beds (no bunk beds). The cabins hold about 9-10 students and 1-2 adults are heated and have an attic fan in the bathroom for cooling. Each cabin has a bathroom with 2 sinks, 2 toilets, and 2 individual showers. Three cabins are larger and have 14 beds.

Establish guidelines for the students about what you expect of them: shower times, lights out time, no raiding, respecting other students' belongings, keeping their area clean, etc.

In the evening, students are not allowed to leave the cabin. They will be tired, so encourage them to go to bed early and get plenty of rest.

Encourage students to dress appropriately for the weather when they leave the cabin and be prepared for cooler afternoon and evening temperatures. Also be sure they always have their water bottles during class and activity time.

Remind students to pack up their belongings, sweep out the cabin and move their luggage to the appropriate pick-up area on the morning before breakfast of the final day.

FOOD and MEALS:

Meal times are also educational opportunities at McDowell. We stress the importance of no food waste and using good manners by eating family-style. Our Dining Hall serves nutritious, kid-friendly meals. **We ask that you do not bring any additional food** which might attract “critters” to the cabins.

Sit at a table with the students and encourage good table manners. We serve meals family style.

Let the students do most of the work at the table. It encourages responsibility.

Only one student should be up from the table at a time, so help keep order by helping enforce this rule.

Be a role model during announcements by listening and encouraging students to be quiet and listen as well.

SAFETY AND MEDICATIONS:

The safety of the students is paramount at McDowell. A registered nurse lives on-site and our Health Hut is equipped to handle first aid and other routine health care needs. All of our instructors are certified in First Aid and CPR. In the event of an emergency, school and McDowell personnel will make the decision to transport a student to the regional hospital in Jasper, 15 miles away. We monitor the weather closely with weather radios, by computer or by television. During severe weather, we have an emergency plan that includes tornado shelters.

Please send ALL medications in their original containers. All medications will be kept and dispensed by the nurse unless your school has made other arrangements. The exceptions are inhalers and bee sting allergy kits, which should be kept by the student. Adult chaperones should not keep medicines in their cabins. You may be expected to carry benadryl for a child with a history of allergic reaction if they are placed in your group.

CLASSES:

We offer 20 different classes here at the Environmental Center. The teacher from your child’s school has chosen the classes all students will be taking, based on their goals for the visit. All classes are correlated with the Alabama Course of Study for Science and Social Studies.

We ask that you actively participate in the classes. **Your interest and enthusiasm can often motivate students!** Our Instructors will do most of the discipline required during classes. But, if a student is being particularly disruptive, we ask that you stand near the student and help him/her refocus.

Please contribute any particular information that pertains to your home community. You are a valuable resource! Please do not use your cell phone during class time.

Be careful not to get caught up in conversation with the other adults in your field group.

CANTEEN / RECREATION:

Keep tabs on your Field Group during canteen time. At 4:30, make sure everyone in your group is in the Rec Hall. Unless they have special permission, students are not allowed to go back to their cabins during canteen, as they might miss the recreation options. All students are to participate in Recreation.

Assist with a rec activity either the first or the second afternoon of your stay. One chaperone is required for activities. Additional chaperones are needed for large group activities. Our staff cannot leave with students unless accompanied by a chaperone from the school.

Typical SCHEDULE for at 3 day stay:

| <u>Day One</u> | | <u>Day Two</u> | | <u>Day Three</u> | |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 10:00 | Arrive, settle into cabins | 7:55 | Breakfast | 7:30 | Cabin Clean-up |
| 10:45 | Welcome Meeting | 8:45 | Morning Class | 7:55 | Breakfast |
| 11:45 | Lunch | noon | Lunch | 8:45 | Morning Class |
| 1:00 | Afternoon Class | 1:00 | Afternoon Class | noon | Lunch |

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| 4:10 | Canteen | 4:10 | Canteen | 11:15 | Sharing Circle |
| 4:30 | Recreation Time | 4:30 | Recreation Time | 1:00 | Depart |
| 5:40 | Dinner | 5:40 | Dinner | | |
| 7:15 | Evening Program | 7:00 | Evening Program | | |
| 8:30 | Snack | 8:30 | Snack | | |
| 10:00 | Suggested Lights Out | 10:00 | Suggested Lights Out | | |