



April 11, 2011

Dear Sixth Grade Parents:

One of the most beneficial and memorable experiences in your child's middle school years is Outdoor Education. White Oak Middle School will attend Skycroft in Middletown, MD, on the following dates:

**Team Poplar (Mrs. Dickerson): Monday, May 23 – Wednesday May 25, 2011**

**Team Maple (Mrs. Ventura): Wednesday, May 25 – Friday May 27, 2011**

In the past, we have had many parents volunteer to help supervise the children. **This year we are again inviting parents to volunteer to help chaperone this trip.** It will be necessary for parents to spend the night and to share the cabins with the students. If you are interested in chaperoning this trip, please contact Mrs. Ventura (Maple Team) or Mrs. Dickerson (Poplar Team) at 301-989-5780.

While we will be working in all subject areas, we plan to emphasize science and social studies while doing out door activities that cannot be done in a regular classroom. The classroom teachers will be responsible for most instruction, but may be supported by parents and resource staff from Montgomery County.

Listed below are subjects your child may be studying that make the Outdoor Education Program so educational and memorable:

1. Predator Prey
2. Confidence Course
3. GPS Orienteering
4. Nature Walk/Writing Activity
5. Water Shed

Evenings will be devoted to topics such as astronomy, night hikes, storytelling, wildlife games, and sports. We believe that through a study of these subjects, we can achieve the following objectives:

1. To cultivate students' awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and concern for the natural environment.
2. To motivate students to develop positive attitudes toward learning through varied experiences in the natural environment.
3. To provide students with many direct experiences in using scientific processes, such as observing, measuring, classifying, hypothesizing, and predicting.
4. To make the students' school program more meaningful, by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to real-life situations beyond the classroom.

5. To help students learn to live democratically and responsibly for the welfare of the whole group.
6. To improve human relations among students and between children and adults.
7. To promote students' physical fitness.
8. To instill a sense of responsibility to the environment and promote positive actions toward it.

Your child's clothing and possessions should fit into one piece of luggage that he or she can carry. Each child will have his/her own bed, but should bring blankets, bedroll, or a sleeping bag which will be in addition to the suitcase or bag. All possessions should be clearly marked. It is not necessary to purchase new clothing. In fact, old clothing is more appropriate for outdoor activities. It is important that your child's clothing and other possessions are labeled.

The cost of the outdoor education program is **\$80.00** per child. Checks should be made out to White Oak Middle School. **Checks should be given to your child's first period teacher. Payment is due by Monday May 9, 2011.** \$76 of this fee covers renting the site, food service and evening snacks, paying a nurse or health technician, and securing medical reimbursement insurance. The remaining \$4 of the fee covers activities provided by White Oak staff for evening activities at Skycroft. If the fee is a financial hardship on any family, confidential arrangements can be made to vary the payment schedule by contacting Mrs. Angela Ventura, Maple Team Leader, Mrs. Dickerson, Poplar Team Leader, or Mr. McMillen, Counselor at 301-989-5780. Please contact Mrs. Ventura or Mrs. Dickerson with any other concerns or questions. **No child will be deprived of this valuable learning experience for financial reasons.**

**In order for us to plan, your child must have a permission slip and payment in by Monday May 9, 2011.**

Students should report to the White Oak MS cafeteria with their luggage at **8:45 a.m.** on the day they leave for camp. As soon as the buses arrive and are loaded, we will depart for the Smith Center. **Students can NOT ride the school bus to White Oak. There is no room for luggage and sleeping bags on the school bus.** Luggage will be transported directly to the outdoor education center on a separate bus. Students will leave their bus about one mile from the center and hike in. They should wear long pants and shoes or boots which are comfortable and sturdy. No shorts are to be worn for the hike in.

The first meal to be served at Skycroft will be dinner on the day of arrival. **Therefore, it is necessary for all students to bring a bag lunch with them on the day of departure from school. Names should be written on the bag as lunches will be boxed and transported on the luggage bus. Please indicate on the last page whether the school needs to provide lunch for your child.** The last meal will be lunch on the day of departure. We will arrive back to school at **1:00 p.m.** **Parents must arrange to have students picked up at this time. Students can NOT ride the school bus home. There is no room for luggage and sleeping bags on the school bus.**

If you write to your child while at the outdoor education center, the address for Skycroft is:

Skycroft Center  
Attention: White Oak Middle School  
9621 Frostown Rd.  
Middletown, MD 21769

As the mail is sometimes slow, and we are only at Skycroft for two and a half days, it may be a good idea to send mail to students a few days before your child is due to attend to ensure that it will arrive before your child arrives back home. Also, mail may be given to Mrs. Ventura or Mrs. Dickerson before the trip.

**Be sure to complete all information that applies to your child(ren) on the permission form(s)** and return it and the **code of behavior** with your payment. Thank you for your support of this important and rewarding activity.

Attached is a copy of the permission form that is required to accompany all doctor-prescribed medicine that your child may need to take while at camp. Please fill out this form, **have your physician sign it**, and return the form and the medicines to the school nurse at least one week prior to your child's trip. Additional copies of this form may be obtained from your child's team leader or the school nurse. **If medical forms are not turned in, medication can NOT be administered to your child.**

Sincerely,

Angela Ventura  
Maple Team Leader

Margie Dickerson  
Poplar Team Leader

Mrs. Virginia A. de los Santos

Principal

BELOW IS A LIST OF THINGS YOU SHOULD BRING AND A LIST OF THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND.

### **ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT**

1. Two pairs of jeans or slacks
  2. Heavy shirt(s).
  3. Light weight shirt(s).
  4. Warm jacket or warm sweater.
  5. Sturdy weatherproof or hiking shoes.
  6. One pair of pajamas.
  7. Eight pairs or more of heavy socks.
  8. Underwear.
  9. Rain gear or poncho.
  10. Plastic bag or laundry bag for dirty clothes.
  11. Toilet articles
    - A. Toothbrush and toothpaste
    - B. Soap and soap dish
    - C. Bath towel
    - D. Wash cloth
    - E. Comb or brush
  12. Sleeping bag or sheets and blankets
  13. Tennis shoes for indoor activities.
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### **OPTIONAL ITEMS**

14. Watch
15. Camera

### **UNACCEPTABLE**

1. Drugs, Alcohol, or Tobacco
2. Knives or weapons
3. Matches or lighters
4. Money
5. Flashlights
6. Electronics (cell phones, iPods, video games)

**Skycroft and White Oak staff cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items, and there is no place to secure valuable items at Skycroft.**

## CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Your behavior is appropriate as long as it does not:

1. Physically hurt you or others.
2. Psychologically hurt you or others.
3. Involve theft or destruction of property.
4. Interrupt the program.
5. Cause the group to do any of the above.

In order for all of us to avoid unpleasant experiences, here are some helpful hints about your behavior.

1. Do not go into your cabin or another cabin during the times when the group is not there.
2. Keep your schedule with you. You are expected to be on time and in the correct place.
3. Be prepared for your instructional activity.
4. Dress appropriately for the weather.
5. You must stay in your cabin until 7:40 a.m.
6. YOU MAY NOT DO THE FOLLOWING:
  - A. Pick up living plant material.
  - B. Pick up rocks.
  - C. Throw rocks.
  - D. Leave your part of the cabin in a messy condition.

Depending on the inappropriateness of a student's behavior, a warning phone call home **may** be made so that parents can encourage appropriate behavior from their child(ren). In cases of very inappropriate behavior **or** in the event a second phone call for behavior becomes necessary, parents will be expected to come to the Smith Center to pick up their child(ren) and take him/her home.

Please read this code carefully with your child. You and your child must sign it and return the bottom portion to Mrs. Ventura or Mrs. Dickerson. Bring the top portion with you to outdoor education.

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I have read these rules and agree to abide by them while I am at Skycroft during outdoor education.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

I have read the code of behavior. If my child does not abide by these rules and I am contacted, I agree to pick up my child and take him/her home.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Please check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ My child will bring a bag lunch

\_\_\_\_\_ My child needs the school to provide a bag lunch