

Volcano Outdoor School



Parent/Guardian Information Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are excited that your child is coming on a field trip to Mount St. Helens with Volcano Outdoor School! This field trip will be a great way for your child to learn about the natural world in an amazing volcanic setting and to further develop his/her critical thinking skills.

Please note that you must complete an online Participant Registration Form for your child NO LATER THAN 2 weeks before the program, which will include information about the program participant such as allergies and dietary restrictions. Contact your Group Coordinator/lead teacher if you are unable to complete the online form.

Please carefully review all the materials at the end of this letter:

- 1. Participant Packing List**
- 2. Code of Conduct**

Other Helpful Information:

The Facility: Volcano Outdoor School activities take place at the [Science & Learning Center](#), the [Hummocks Trail](#), and/or the [Coldwater Lake Picnic Area](#) (links go to Google Map location). The Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center at Coldwater (SLC) is the base campus for Volcano Outdoor School and where your child will sleep, share meals and learn. The SLC is the repurposed Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center nestled on a ridge above Coldwater Lake in the heart of the blast zone. The SLC is a collaborative effort between the Mount St. Helens Institute and the USFS Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Together, our goal is to connect people with nature through science, the arts, and adventure recreation. Learn more about the SLC [here](#).

Meals: The Mount St. Helens Institute can accommodate most dietary restrictions and food allergies; please be sure the Group Coordinator/lead teacher knows about your child's needs.

What will we learn and do? While attending Volcano Outdoor School your child will be immersed in 10 hours of experiential, science-based instruction providing foundational knowledge, team building, interactive adventures and guided inquiry. All programs include outdoor exploration on Coldwater Ridge, at Coldwater Lake or at the nearby Hummocks Trail. Our lessons align with National Science Standards and the Mount St. Helens Institute works closely with teachers to modify and adapt programs as needed.

Staff and Supervision: MSHI staff are professional and caring individuals who are passionate about Mount St. Helens and youth education. During your child's visit, Mount St. Helens Institute staff will provide instruction, learning-based games and activities, and meals. All staff undergo a criminal background check and extensive training. All MSHI staff at your program will be certified in First Aid & CPR. Teachers and chaperones will be responsible for supervising students and managing behavior throughout the program.

Our expectations of participants: While at the Volcano Outdoor School we expect your child to:

- Actively participate in activities and lessons
- Follow instructions of adults
- Respect students, staff, chaperones, themselves, the building and the landscape
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner
- Arrive prepared for a range of activities both indoors and outdoors
- Come with open and curious mind

Please review the Participant Registration Form and the Participant Code of Conduct for grounds of dismissal.

Weather: Weather at Mount St. Helens is highly variable. The SLC located on a ridge at 3000 feet elevation. A 7-day weather forecast is available at www.weather.gov.

About Us: The Mount St. Helens Institute is private 501(c)3 organization dedicated to science, education and exploration of volcanic landscapes.

We offer activities for youth and adults all year long. We are proud to operate under a special use permit from the US Forest Service Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and are an equal opportunity provider. Learn more about the Mount St. Helens Institute and our programs including summer camps, field seminars, and guided hikes at www.mshinstitute.org.

Contact Information: In case of a family emergency while your child is at Mount St. Helens, parents/guardians may reach the group at the Science & Learning Center's landline at (360) 247-2114. If no one answers, please leave a message; voicemail will be checked. Please be aware that your group will not have cell phone coverage while at Volcano Outdoor School.

We look forward to meeting your child and having a wonderful learning adventure at Mount St. Helens!

The Mount St. Helens Institute Education Staff



Participant Packing List

Give to your Teacher/Group Coordinator:

- Personal prescription or over-the-counter medications
- Electronics and food

Pack and Bring With You:

Clothing

- Sturdy shoes or tennis shoes (No open-toed shoes, no Keds/Converse) (bring an extra pair if able)
- Long pants (2 pairs)*
- Shirts (2 pairs)*
- Sweater/sweatshirt (2)*
- Undergarments; during spring and fall we recommend long underwear
- Socks (2-3 pairs)*
- Rain jackets (especially in spring and fall)
- Sun hat (especially in the summer)
- Warm hat (especially in the spring and fall)
- Gloves & scarf (especially in the fall)
- Pajamas

Bedding

- Sleeping bag or blankets to sleep under
- Sleeping pad or blankets to sleep on
- Pillow

Gear

- Day backpack or book bag
- Water bottle(s); please bring water bottles that can hold a total of 2 liters.
- Toiletries (wash cloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, deodorant, etc.)
- Sunscreen (especially in the summer)

* In cold/rainy seasons avoid cotton if possible. Materials such as wool or polyester will keep the students much warmer and dryer.

OPTIONAL ITEMS: sunglasses, headlamp/flashlight, camera (optional; phone cameras will be allowed at specific times), bag for dirty clothes, slippers, binoculars, paper, journal, pencil, reading books, quiet games

DO NOT BRING: guns, knives, any other weapon, alcohol or drugs, radio, music players, electronic games or equipment including cell phones, aerosol products, animals

Code of Conduct

The Mount St. Helens Institute wants you to have a great time at Mount St. Helens! To make sure everyone's visit is a safe and enjoyable one, we expect all participants to honor the following:

1. Let's keep this a safe place where no one gets injured.

- Turn in all medications to your teachers.
- Wear proper footwear (tennis shoes or hiking boots) while outside.
- Abide by all safety instructions given by MSHI staff.
- Wear shoes at all times in the dining area.
- Do not run indoors or on the Science & Learning Center deck.
- Do not climb onto structures or lean over the railing on the Science & Learning Center deck.
- Please wash your hands before all meals. Use hot water and soap.

2. Let's treat this amazing place with respect and practice the principles of Leave No Trace.

- Stay on the established trails unless your instructor indicates otherwise.
- Pick up your trash and put it in the proper container.
- Leave sticks, stones, and plants in nature where they belong.
- Return all animals we are studying to their proper homes.
- Respect all living things.

3. Let's treat one another with care and respect.

- Encourage your peers and do not use "put downs" or inappropriate words, or tease others.
- Respect other people's belongings, materials, and personal space.
- Respect each other's privacy. Do not enter the bunkroom of the opposite gender.

4. Let's make this a fun and exciting learning experience.

- Follow all program schedules and do your best to be on time.
- If you brought something you should not have, give it to your teacher right away.
- Do not use electronics at Volcano Outdoor School except to take photos.
- Be curious! Mount St. Helens rocks!

5. Let's treat the Science & Learning Center with care and respect.

- Food is not allowed in the SLC bunkrooms. If your group or individuals brings snacks, they may store them in the kitchen area. Ask a MSHI staff member for assistance.
- Help us to keep the place neat and clean by picking up after yourself.
- Treat exhibits at the Science & Learning Center gently and with respect.
- MSHI staff will let you know which parts of the building are off-limits. Stay out of these areas to respect others that use and share space at the Science & Learning Center.