

Volcano Outdoor School



Chaperone Letter

Dear Chaperone,

Thank you so much for participating in your group's Volcano Outdoor School program as a chaperone! We are excited that your group is joining us to explore Mount St. Helens through hands-on, inquiry-based learning that supports Next Generation Science Standards. Your support, positive attitude, and active involvement are crucial for a successful, safe, and fun learning experience for all.

Please note that you must complete an online Participant Registration Form NO LATER THAN 2 weeks before the program, which will include information about yourself 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 in this letter.

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

The Mount St. Helens Institute Education Staff



WHO'S WHO: ADULT ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Group Coordinator

The Group Coordinator is the adult who is in charge of organizing their group's trip to Mount St. Helens. They will work with parents to arrange payment, arrange transportation, arrange chaperone support, gather and administer participant medications for the trip, distributing registration information and waivers to participants, and confirming the participant roster. They also are responsible for answering questions parents may have. They will be the person who is in direct contact with the Mount St. Helens Institute staff to work out the details of the program. While the Group Coordinator does not have to accompany the group on the trip, they need to ensure that the chaperones are prepared for the program.

Adult Chaperones

Chaperones will be actively involved in the Volcano Outdoor School experience. Volcano Outdoor School requires a 1:5 chaperone-to-student ratio. Contact us about alternative ratios. Chaperones are responsible for supervising the youth at all times and ensuring that participants are following the [Code of Conduct](#). Chaperones need to reinforce Volcano Outdoor School educator's instructions to students about proper behavior and packing. Duties chaperones may be asked to take on or supervise include hike/activity support, activity setup and cleanup. Chaperones are required to sleep in the SLC (or at field camp) with the youth.

- Review the [Code of Conduct](#). Encourage and enforce this Code of Conduct in Volcano Outdoor School participants.
- Please be on time for activities, but remember to be flexible.
- We'll be depending on you for group management.
- Be prepared to get the kids to help clean up if necessary.
- Fill out teacher/chaperone evaluation form at the end of your visit.
- Enjoy your time at Mount St. Helens!
- If at the Science & Learning Center, please stay out of "Staff Only" rooms. MSHI staff will inform you which rooms are off-limits at the start of your program.
- Encourage students to participate and think on their own. We encourage you to participate and ask questions!

MSHI Staff

MSHI staff are professional and caring individuals who are passionate about Mount St. Helens and youth education. All staff undergo a criminal background check and extensive training. All MSHI staff at your program will be certified in First Aid & CPR. You can expect the following from MSHI staff:

- Most Volcano Outdoor School programs will be staffed by 2-3 people.
- MSHI will facilitate fun and educational activities!

EMERGENCY CONTACT & PHONE SERVICE

- In the case of an emergency, parent/guardians may reach the group in the evening at the Science & Learning Center's landline at (360) 274-2114. If no one answers, please leave a message; voicemail will be checked.
- All participants should plan on having limited or no cell phone coverage during Volcano Outdoor School. Approaching the SLC on SR 504, most people lose cell phone coverage at Elk Rock (mile marker 37).

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.

PARTICIPANT PACKING LIST

- ☐ Sturdy shoes or tennis shoes (No open-toed shoes, no Keds/Converse)
- ☐ Lunch (if not provided by the school)
- ☐ Day pack or bookbag
- ☐ Water bottle(s); please bring water bottles that can hold a total of 2 liters.
- ☐ Rain jacket (especially in spring and fall)
- ☐ **Warm clothing (it gets cold near the volcano especially during the spring and fall)**
- ☐ Sun hat (especially in the summer)
- ☐ Warm hat (especially in the spring and fall)
- ☐ Sunscreen (especially in the summer)
- ☐ Extra pair of socks
- ☐ Gloves & scarf (especially in the fall)

* 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, camera (optional; phone cameras will be allowed at specific times), binoculars, journal, pencil

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

DRIVING & GATE DIRECTIONS

To the Science and Learning Center at Coldwater

- From I-5, take Exit #49 Castle Rock (SR 504)
- Head east on SR 504 (Spirit Lake Memorial Highway)
- Travel approximately 43 miles to the Science and Learning Center at Coldwater
- You do NOT need a parking pass.

*Please note that there are no signs for the Science and Learning Center. Once you enter the Monument, you will travel east on Hwy. 504. After mile marker 42, you will encounter a fork in the road. Stay left at the fork in the road (DO NOT veer right to go to the Johnston Ridge Observatory). You will soon reach a closed gate at the Science & Learning Center that is unlocked but looks locked. **Follow the directions on the map on the next page to open the gate.** See Google Map [here](#).*

To the Hummocks Trail Head

- From I-5, take Exit #49 Castle Rock (SR 504)
- Head east on SR 504 (Spirit Lake Memorial Highway)
- At approximately 43 miles veer right at the fork in the road, heading down hill toward Coldwater Lake and Johnston Ridge Observatory Visitor Center
- After about 2 miles, the Hummocks Trail Head will be on your right.
- You do NOT need a parking pass.
- See Google Map [here](#).

To Coldwater Lake Picnic Area

- From I-5, take Exit #49 Castle Rock (SR 504)
- Head east on SR 504 (Spirit Lake Memorial Highway)
- At approximately 43 miles veer right at the fork in the road, heading down hill toward Coldwater Lake and Johnston Ridge Observatory Visitor Center
- After about 2 miles, turn left for the Coldwater Lake picnic area.
- You do NOT need a parking pass.
- See Google Map [here](#).



From I-5 take exit 49: WA-504 E/Mt St Helens Way NE

Remember to gas up your vehicle in Castle Rock or Toutle! It is 40+ mile uphill drive. The closest gas to the SLC/JRO is at Drew's Grocery in Toutle: 5304 Spirit Lake Highway.

Around mile marker 43, the speed limit goes to 25 mph and the road forks.

TO GO TO:

Science and Learning Center (SLC)

LEFT at fork.

Stay straight to open and go through gate (see bottom of page for instructions on how to open gate). Close gate. The road will turn right, continue straight downhill to the parking lot.

Coldwater Lake Picnic Area, Hummocks Trail, or Johnston Ridge Observatory (JRO)

RIGHT at fork.

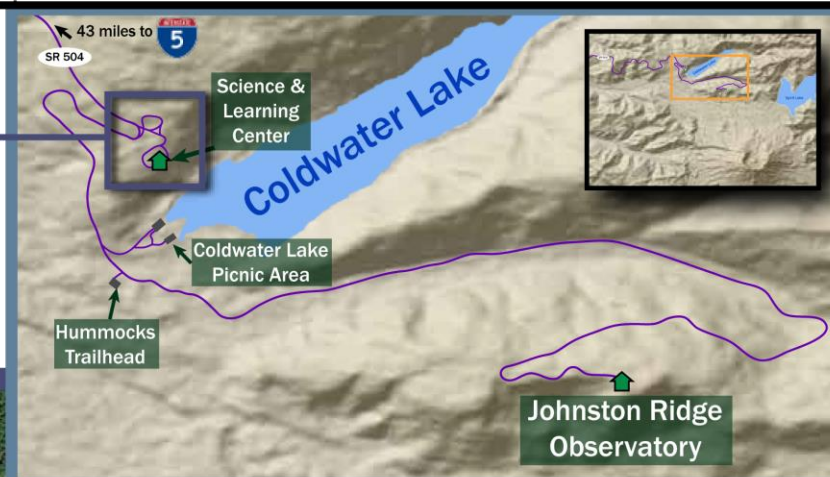
Follow the road downhill and follow signage.

Coldwater Lake Picnic Area- 1.5 miles, turn L
Hummocks Trail- 2 miles, turn R
Johnston Ridge Observatory- 9 miles, end of road

TRAVEL DISTANCES

	I-5 exit 49	SLC	Coldwater Lake Picnic Area	Hummocks Trailhead	JRO
I-5 exit 49		43 miles	45 miles	45 miles	52 miles
SLC	43 miles		2 miles	2 miles	9 miles
Coldwater Lake Picnic Area	45 miles	2 miles		<1 mile	7 miles
Hummocks Trailhead	45 miles	2 miles	<1 mile		7 miles
JRO	52 miles	9 miles	7 miles	7 miles	

MOUNT ST. HELENS AREA MAPS



Contact
learn@mshinstitute.org
for instructions on how to open the gate.