



Cuyamaca Outdoor School



For Parents, Students & Teachers

General Information

Where is the camp located?

We are in the middle of the beautiful 25,000-acre Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. We have miles and miles of trails that the students can experience – right from our 25-acre campus. Cuyamaca Outdoor School has been on the same site since 1946. Luckily, the buildings are newer than that!

Who are your staff and what are your staff requirements?

Our staff work for the San Diego County Office of Education in permanent positions. We are all fingerprinted through the FBI and DOJ, CPR/First Aid certified, TB tested, and college-educated. Some of our staff have worked here more than 25 years!

We have a Principal, Greg Schuett. He started out in Orange County Outdoor Ed, and has been at Cuyamaca Outdoor School for 26 years.

During the day, each village is supervised by a credentialed Head Teacher (HT). The Oak Village HT is Susanne Beattie. She has worked at camp for 22 years, first as a Specialist and then as a HT. Doug Connor heads the Cedar Village and has been in Outdoor Ed for more than a decade. Susan Powell runs the Pine Village and has been in Outdoor Ed for more than 26 years. Scott Riddick is the administrator on duty at night, and has been in Outdoor Ed for more than 26 years.

Please note: During the fall of 2016, we will be running two villages instead of three.

We have 16 permanent Outdoor Ed Program Specialists. These talented people have been working at camp from 2 to 25+ years!

Our Program Assistant, Dawn Molitor, worked 12 years as a Specialist and has been running the office for the past 4 years.

During the night, each cabin has a Cabin Assistant. This will be the same person every night.

We have a maintenance team lead by Maintenance Engineer Dino Stavros.

We have 2 cooks, 4 food service workers and a Child Nutrition Supervisor, Kim McAlexander. Every week we get rave reviews from visiting teachers and students about the quality of our food and the care that they get from our kitchen staff.

We also have an RN and two Health Techs (see next question).

Is there a full-time nurse present at the site?

We have a Registered Nurse and a Health Tech in the Health Center during the day. Sue Whitaker is our RN. She has previous hospital experience. Cindy Gross, aka Mama Bear, is our Health Tech. Cindy has worked at camp for more than 25 years, previously as a Specialist. She has EMT and wilderness first aid experience.

There is a Health Tech available all night for student needs.

The Health Center is open 24 hours a day when students are present. We are equipped for emergencies, including an AED and an oxygen tank.

What if my child takes medication or has health needs?

For more information, see "[Frequently Asked Questions: Cuyamaca Outdoor School Health Services](#)" below.

Students that bring medication to camp check in with the RN and Health Tech on Monday afternoon to review their medications.

We also have OTC meds if the parent checks on the back of the Student Health Form that it is okay for the student to take them (e.g., Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.). Please note that if the OTC medication is not checked, we cannot provide it to the student.

Each cabin has a medical documentation list, as do the Head Teachers, of the students that need to take medications. If the student does *not* show up, they are sought out and brought to the Health Center. The Medical Authorization Forms for prescription medications are online: [Medical Authorization Form](#).

We are HIPAA-sensitive.

What type of food will be served?

It varies each day. *The foods below are only a sample.* Breakfast food items include cereal (Monday through Thursday), plus either pancakes or scrambled eggs. Friday is build-your-own breakfast burritos day. Lunch might be corn dogs, spaghetti, tostadas, or chicken sliders. Dinner includes chicken fajitas, burgers, pizza, hot dogs, or baked chicken. We eat family style, so food is passed around the table. The student chooses what to eat and can have seconds, too.

What if a student has special dietary needs (vegetarian, food allergies, etc...)?

We can accommodate dietary needs. Vegetarian and lactose intolerant students simply need to note this on the pink health form. Anything else (like gluten-free, very picky, peanut allergies, etc.) need to contact the Child Nutrition Supervisor **2 weeks in advance**. These special meal accommodations require a physician-signed [Special Meal Accommodations Form](#). Instructions can be found on our website: [Camp Forms](#).

We are a tree nut and peanut-free facility.

How many students per cabin?

Up to 72 students sleep in a cabin (gender specific!). Campus-wide, we have three villages. Each village has two cabins (a boy and a girl cabin). Each village is supervised by a credentialed Head Teacher, along with seven Outdoor Ed Program Specialists, who hike, teach and mentor the students. We will be running only two villages during fall 2016.

What are the cabins like inside?

There is a main center room and four "dens" that have nine bunk beds in each for a total of up to 18 students in each den. All of the cabins have heat, door locks, and alarms (for sleepwalkers). The bathrooms have been refinished recently. Each cabin has a disability-accessible toilet stall and shower. There are also bathrooms and drinking fountains in the Lodge, Assembly Halls, Health Center and Dining Hall.

What are the shower arrangements?

There are curtains and individual stalls. The students take showers Tuesday through Thursday. The showers are two minutes long. Yes, I said **two** minutes! Have you child practice at home on both taking short showers and changing their clothes discreetly (e.g., how we do at the beach or behind our towel).

Will an adult be present at all times in the cabin while students are sleeping?

Absolutely. There is *always* an adult in the cabin. Kids are not allowed into the cabin without an adult. The cabin leader room has an intercom, a radio, and administrative support.

Our night Cabin Assistants work Monday through Thursday in the cabin, so the students get accustomed to the same nighttime adult. There is also a credentialed Head Teacher and Health Tech during the night, available for issues.

What about your science curriculum?

- Our curriculum is correlated with the Next Generation Science Standards.

- We are participating in a Citizen Science study with UC Riverside regarding the Gold-Spotted Oak Borer beetle that is devastating oak trees in California. There are several other Citizen Science projects, as well.
- We just received ProScopes and iPads (as a donation) that are used in the field to explore on a “micro” level!
- We also incorporate concepts such as energy flow, cycles, interrelationships, changing of forms, botany, geology, etc., during our hikes.
- All students receive a beautiful field journal that they get to take home.

What type of activities will the students participate in?

During the week (daytime): Two Nature Studies (hiking and hands-on science activities); one All Day Adventure (like a nature study, but six hours in duration, eating lunch out in the field and being further from camp); a craft class (rock or wood); WRAP recreation class: rock climbing or archery (choice), geocaching, low elements challenge. Night time: Campfire, night hike or astronomy (depending on the time of year), Native American program, and Talent Show. Cabins: Storytelling and teambuilding activities. Also, if there is snow....snow play!

Note: on a 4-day week, we do not have one nature student, night hike, or WRAP.

What is a typical daily schedule for a student at camp?

See the bottom of this file for a sample of the “early” village. The later village starts ½ hour later.

How much luggage is allowed?

One sleeping bag and pillow (or sheets/blanket), and a duffel bag or rolling suitcase is fine. They can carry a backpack on the bus.

Will other school sites be at the camp site?

It depends on the size of your school. If you have less than 400 students, there will be other schools. You can call Dawn at 760-765-3000 to get a list of the schools coming your week.

Can students take their cell phone or other electronic devices to camp?

No. There is little to no cell service here, as we are in the State Park (adults can get service very close by or use our telephone). Additionally, students bring up expensive phones and they can get lost. We are not responsible for expensive equipment sent to camp.

What are “must haves” for the student up at camp?

- Disposable cameras for picture-taking purposes (two or three, if possible).
- Water bottle, preferably with a strap to use during hikes. Camelbacks are fine, too. We have good mountain water up here!
- Sunscreen & lip balm
- Hat
- Two pairs of close-toed shoes (not new!)
- Long pants (be prepared to get dirty!)
- Self-addressed, stamped envelopes or postcards
- Appropriate weather gear (swim suit in hot weather; jackets, gloves, hat, etc. in cold) Check NOAA before you come. We are at 4050’ and in the 91916 zip code.
NOAA: [Descanso weather](#)
- If the student forgets something like a pillow, toothbrush or jacket, rest assured we have items to borrow during their stay. Please tell your student that is “OK” to ask. (They can keep the toothbrush!)
- **Put your student’s name on ALL items that you wish to get back if they are lost.**

What is the method of communication between parents and the camp site?

They can call 760-765-3000 during the day. The phones will be forwarded to the Health Center after hours (their direct line is: 760-765-4110.) Someone will answer the phone 24 hours a day while the kids are here. As far as verbal communication between parents and students: we *discourage* the parents from speaking with the student (unless there are health issues, discipline, homesickness, etc.) due to logistical reasons (400+ students, different schedules) and it tends to make the students homesick. If there is an issue at camp with a child, we will call the parents.

Note: Our phone number may come up on your phone as unknown or blocked. If your student is at camp, please answer your phone. If you are going out of town, please pass this information on to your emergency contact.

Can parents write letters to their children?

They are welcome to send mail and have the kids mail them back (please provide your student with envelopes and stamps (or postcards); self-addressed is best!). Parents should mail their letter the Thursday *before* camp.

Good Information from the website:

Click here for our [website](#).

Camp Forms:

<http://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/outdoored/Pages/6th-grade-camp-forms.aspx>

Classroom Teacher Guide:

<http://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/outdoored/Documents/Classroom-teacher-guide.pdf>

Teacher Page:

<http://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/outdoored/Pages/teachers.aspx>

Parent Page (with a video):

<http://www.sdcoe.net/student-services/outdoored/Pages/videos.aspx>

Address and Phone Numbers:

Cuyamaca Outdoor School (aka Camp Cuyamaca and 6th Grade Camp)

12561 Hwy. 79 • Descanso, CA 91916

Office: 760-765-3000 (days)

Fax: 760-765-3001

Health Center: 760-765-3004 (24 hours a day when students are present)

Health Center: 760-765-4110

Kitchen/CNS: 760-765-4108

Contact Persons:

Dawn Molitor, Program Assistant (damolitor@sdcoe.net);

Greg Schuett, Principal (gschuett@sdcoe.net)

Sue Whitaker, RN, Nurse (susana.whitaker@sdcoe.net)

Kim McAlexander, Child Nutrition Supervisor (kmcalexander@sdcoe.net)

Kim Roberts, SDCOE Outdoor Ed billing and contract info: (kiroberts@sdcoe.net)

Frequently Asked Questions: Cuyamaca Outdoor School Health Services

My child has asthma and needs to carry his/her inhaler at all times. Is that okay?

We do not usually allow students to carry their inhalers, even if they do so at school. Our staff carry all inhalers in a medical kit (with the student's name) so they are not lost in the woods. Inhalers are picked up before each walk, and returned to the Health Center after each walk. The staff will notify the Health Center if the inhaler was used. However, if a parent insists – and they have physician-authorized permission to carry, in writing – they must send *two* inhalers to camp (in case one is lost).

My child has issues at night with bedwetting and is very afraid of the other kids finding out. Do you have a discreet plan if this occurs?

The student is asked to sleep on a bottom bunk, so they are accessible to wake in the night, if need be. The night staff will offer to wake them around 12 a.m. to remind them to use the bathroom. Please let your child know they are not the only one with this concern. Every cabin, both boys and girls, has students that have accidents in the night. Some students wear pull-ups they put on in their sleeping bag and wake early to remove. Some students take medication before bed. If an accident occurs, your student must discreetly let the night aide know, and they will take all students to breakfast, then come back down to the cabin and bring the soiled bag, PJ's, etc., to the Health Center to launder.

My child takes medication and does not want the other students to know. Are the medications given in a discreet manner?

Only the Health Center staff and your student know what type of medication they are on.

My child has never been away from home before. What is the procedure for calling home if he/she gets homesick?

A large percentage of our students have the same issue and have never been away from home. We will ask them to talk with their classroom teacher first. We can also counsel them in the Health Center, and have the student read a homesick journal with entries from other students that felt the same way and survived. We do not have them call home on the first night. If they are still feeling anxious the next morning, after talking with their teacher, we will call parents first and come up with a plan that might include the student calling you from the Health Center. *Please do not tell your child before camp that if they get homesick you will come pick them up.* They will give up too easily in that case.

My child has special dietary needs. Can I send food to camp?

No food may be sent to camp. Exceptions are only made in severe medical situations and with *prior approval* by the Child Nutrition Supervisor, Kim McAlexander, @ 760-765-4108 or kmcalexander@sdcoe.net

PARENTS: Help us to make your child's time at camp a happy and healthy one. Please remember:

- We need a California physician-signed [Medical Authorization Form](#) for ALL prescription AND over-the-counter (OTC) medication being sent to camp. This includes any cold/allergy medications, pain medications, vitamins, herbals, oils, holistic or homeopathic remedies, etc.
- EXCEPTION: If the OTC medication is listed on the back of the pink Student Health Form, then you simply need to check 'Yes' to give us permission to administer the OTC medication that we keep at camp. For example, you can check 'Yes' to Claritin, ibuprofen, cough drops, etc., and this is sufficient. Any medications **not** listed here, such as Dramamine, Nasonex, Flonase, Zyrtec, Melatonin, Naproxen sodium (Alleve), vitamins, etc., **must** be accompanied by a physician-signed [Medical Authorization Form](#).
- We cannot accept or administer any international medication.
- All medication, prescription and otherwise, must come in their original containers. No baggies, pill boxes, or Tupperware, please.
- Please do not send any medication in the student's luggage.
- All unauthorized medication will be returned to the school.
- Please use the pink [Student Health Form](#) to communicate any issues, health concerns, or information – the more we know, the better we can help your child. Please review the entire form for accuracy.

- Please do not send your child to camp sick. They must be free of fever or vomiting for 24 hours before they can come. It is okay for them to arrive a day or two late; they will have a much better time if they are feeling well.
- Crutches are not allowed at camp, please call us regarding accommodations.
- For your child's safety and comfort, long pants are required for hiking at camp; more than one pair is recommended. Capris, leggings, and tights are *not* appropriate for hiking.
- Please make sure your child brings a refillable water bottle to camp.
- The week before your child comes to camp, we start making phone calls if we have any questions. During camp, we will call immediately if your child becomes seriously ill or injured. We know that many people screen their calls or are reluctant to answer a call from an unknown number, but we would ask that during the week prior, and *especially* during the week of camp, please answer your phone, even if you don't recognize the number.

Thank you,

Cuyamaca Outdoor School Health Center Staff

Sue Whitaker, RN

susana.whitaker@sdcoe.net

Phone: 760-765-4110

Cindy Gross, Health Tech

cggross@sdcoe.net

FAX: 760-765-3001

Sample Student Schedule

Oak Monday

10:00-12:00 Student arrival, move in and orientation
 12:00-12:45 Lunch
 12:45-1:45 Finish orientation
 1:45-2:00 Fire Drill
 2:00-3:45 Welcome Walk
 3:45-4:00 Bathroom Break
 4:00-4:45 Recess
 4:45-5:00 Bathroom Break
 5:00-5:45 Dinner
 5:45-6:45 Craft prep and cabin time
 6:45-7:30 Campfire
 7:30-9:30 Cabin Activity Time
 9:30 Lights out

7:15-7:45 Breakfast
 7:45-8:00 Village meeting
 8:00-8:30 Students meet with classroom teachers
 8:30-9:00 Bathroom break and activity prep
 9:00-11:30 Crafts
 11:30-11:45 Bathroom break
 11:45-12:15 Lunch
 12:15-12:45 Bathroom break
 12:45-3:00 Nature Study
 3:00-3:15 Bathroom Break
 3:30-4:00 Recess / Talent Show Rehearsal
 4:00-5:00 Showers
 5:00-5:45 Dinner
 5:45-6:30 Cabin Time
 6:30-7:30 Talent Show
 7:30-9:30 Cabin activity time
 9:30 Lights out

Oak Tuesday

6:30-7:15 Wake up and get ready for breakfast
 7:15-7:45 Breakfast
 7:45-8:00 Village meeting
 8:00-8:30 Students meet with classroom teachers
 8:30-9:00 Bathroom break and activity prep
 9:00-3:00 All Day Adventure
 3:00-3:15 Bathroom Break
 3:15-3:45 Recess / Talent Show Rehearsal
 3:45-5:00 Showers
 5:00-5:45 Dinner
 5:45-6:30 Cabin Time
 6:30-7:30 Native American program
 7:30-9:30 Cabin Activity time
 9:30 Lights out

6:30-7:15 Wake up and luggage stack
 7:15-7:45 Breakfast
 7:45-8:15 Walk to Lodge
 8:15-8:45 Autograph signing
 8:45-9:00 Bathroom break
 9:00-9:45 Cuyamaca Quiz
 9:45-10:15 Slide show and poetry reading
 10:15-11:00 Snacks
 11:00-11:30 Departure

Oak Friday

Oak Wednesday

6:30-7:15 Wake up and get ready for breakfast
 7:15-7:45 Breakfast
 7:45-8:00 Village meeting
 8:00-8:30 Students meet with classroom teachers
 8:30-9:00 Bathroom break and activity prep
 9:00-11:30 WRAP or Nature Study
 11:30-11:45 Bathroom break
 11:45-12:15 Lunch
 12:15-12:45 Bathroom break
 12:45-3:00 WRAP or Nature Study
 3:00-3:15 Bathroom Break
 3:15-3:45 Recess / Talent Show Rehearsal
 3:45-5:00 Showers
 5:00-5:45 Dinner
 5:45-6:15 Cabin time
 6:15-7:30 Night Hike
 7:30-9:30 Cabin activity time
 9:30 Lights out

Oak Thursday

6:30-7:15 Wake up and get ready for breakfast