

Fifth Grade Outdoor Education Program



Counselor Handbook

**Harford County Public Schools
102 South Hickory Avenue
Bel Air, Maryland 21014**

2024-2025

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Congratulations! You have been selected to be a volunteer counselor for the Fifth Grade Outdoor Education Program. High school counselors add another layer of supervision and a healthy dose of fun! We are most appreciative of your efforts, loyalty, and the sacrifices you will make to be with us. We believe you will find the experience both rewarding and worthwhile.

Since we will not have a training day prior to your Harford Glen session, the information in this handbook should be helpful in preparing for this leadership opportunity. Please read this guide thoroughly before you arrive. We also hope that you will share and discuss the information in this handbook with your parents/guardians.

Please contact Harford Glen prior to your assigned session if you have any questions after you have read this handbook and the **Counselor Information and Required Forms** packet, which will be sent to you upon acceptance,

GOALS FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor Education is a program utilizing the natural environment to enable students to develop, through direct learning experiences, awareness and understanding of their interrelationship with the world around them. These experiences are designed to be an integral part of the total instructional program.

Outdoor Education will provide opportunities for students:

- 🌍 To become active stewards of the environment.
- 🌍 To promote teamwork and cooperation with students and adults.
- 🌍 To improve personal development and human relationships.
- 🌍 To express themselves creatively.
- 🌍 To develop an aesthetic appreciation for the natural environment.
- 🌍 To cultivate awareness, knowledge, appreciation, curiosity, and concern for the environment and the influence of people upon it.
- 🌍 To enhance their regular school program by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom to real-life situations.
- 🌍 To participate in hands-on experiences using scientific processes such as observing, measuring, classifying, hypothesizing, and evaluating.
- 🌍 To promote appropriate health and safety practices.

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REMEMBER, COUNSELOR

"WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ASPIRE TO BECOME WILL INFLUENCE THE CAMPER FAR MORE THAN ANYTHING YOU SAY TO HIM."

-AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION

Many of the following ideas have been taken from a publication of the American Camping Association. Their work represents a study done by a committee of camp directors from many camps with many years of experience.

As a counselor at Harford Glen, you have become the extra pair of eyes, ears, hands, and feet that make it possible for a lone classroom teacher to bring a group of students safely through the program. However, you are so much more than that! You will be an example and model to copy, follow, and quote (sometimes even misquote). You will, in effect, be a guide who will long be remembered. How do you want to be remembered?

Due to the camp environment and group situations, new and different behavior patterns may appear among students and others. Close relationships may develop between students, teachers, and you. These will have impact on all in our group. We hope the experience will bring out the best in all and create happier and more favorable student attitudes. The acquisition of skills and success in the program may enhance the children's feelings about themselves and their capabilities. Outdoor educational field experiences broaden social contacts and knowledge of people, as well as self.

Your position as a counselor volunteer is unique. You have neither the rights of a parent nor the responsibilities of the classroom teacher and Harford Glen leaders, yet you exert a tremendous influence on the students through your personal contacts with them. The example you set subtly reflects your own expectations, background, and training. It is of great importance because children tend to imitate their adult leaders. You must be aware of and sensitive to the students' needs and feelings.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

As a counselor you must remember to show responsible leadership skills in dealing with the students. The following suggestions should be helpful to you:

- 🌐 A good leader **shares** in all tasks. His or her purpose is not to give orders.
- 🌐 Complaining in front of students has no time or place. If complaints are in order, see a Harford Glen teacher at the earliest reasonable opportunity. Please do not desert your assigned activity unless the teacher you are assisting gives you permission.
- 🌐 Under no circumstances should a teacher be left with no other leader to help supervise the group.
- 🌐 Discussing your personal problems in front of or with students is highly inappropriate.
- 🌐 Watch your personal appearance. Students will follow your example, especially in your choice of clothing. Dress for the weather and follow HCPS guidelines.
- 🌐 Do not be partial to any one student. Show no favoritism. Work at the job of looking for something good in every student.
- 🌐 When a student breaks a rule, help the child understand why the rule was made and why it is important to follow it. Discuss the behavior with the classroom teacher.
- 🌐 Learn as much about each student as you can.
- 🌐 Try to talk to students on a level they can understand. "Big words" are often not understood.
- 🌐 Lead - Don't Boss!

The Boss:

Drives students
Counts on authority
Keeps students fearful, guessing
Talks about "I"
Makes learning drudgery
Directs and orders

The Leader:

Coaches students
Practices good will
Is enthusiastic and motivates
Talks about "We"
Makes learning fun
Suggests

OUR STUDENTS

Our fifth grade students come to us with a variety of needs:

Physiological needs for:

- 🌐 Food and drink
- 🌐 Rest and relaxation
- 🌐 Shelter and protection from the environment
- 🌐 Elimination of body waste

Social needs for:

- 🌐 Security and feelings of belonging
- 🌐 Status among their own age group
- 🌐 Recognition for achievement and accomplishment
- 🌐 Giving and receiving care and understanding
- 🌐 Self-esteem, self-respect, self-confidence
- 🌐 Self-fulfillment and self-expression
- 🌐 Fun and adventure
- 🌐 Growing independence and some freedom of thought and action

Keep in mind that each student is different and each one comes to us from varying backgrounds. Because of these many potential differences, we must be prepared to deal with the resulting individual behaviors.

Inherited

- 🌐 Physique
- 🌐 Emotional tendencies
- 🌐 Mental capacities

Family environment and influence

School experience

Religious training

Relationships with their own age group

Socio-economic status

Images of themselves as adequate or inadequate individuals

WORKING WITH THE CLASSROOM TEACHERS

You will work with all the teachers and their students in some way during your session. All teachers and counselors will have a brief meeting when the fifth-grade classes arrive on the first morning.

It is a good idea to establish a friendly relationship with the teachers. They will have some expectations of your role with their classes. Try to find out what they expect. Take some clues from the way they manage their students. Teachers also have different philosophies concerning the Harford Glen Fifth Grade Outdoor Education Program itself and how to do their jobs.

Remember, the teachers have taken on a great deal of responsibility in bringing their students to Harford Glen. They have to explain or answer for nearly everything that takes place. Parents may have questions concerning things their children say have happened. Some children do not always give accurate reports of what occurred. Your behavior is constantly being observed by someone, so be discreet. The teachers may be called upon to explain the behavior of a counselor after the session is over.

When working with a class, encourage the students to listen carefully. Set the example by being a good listener and participating. If you withdraw to the side and talk, the students will follow your lead.

Check your schedule ahead of time. Know what activity is coming and **be prepared** with equipment or materials needed. Find out what you will be expected to do. Ask questions **before** your group is ready to start. "How can I help?" is always a thing to ask at the beginning of every lesson and activity.

For some activities, it may seem you are not needed for a specific purpose. Please stay with your group unless your teacher tells you to take a break. Many teachers are so accustomed to having no help, they seem to forget you are available.

If you have a concern about any student, be sure to discuss it with the teacher. You may discover you are not the only one with a concern. The teacher may be able to give you some help in dealing with the matter. Also, please let the Harford Glen teachers know about any continuing problems.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DISCIPLINE, THREATEN OR DARE. Fifth graders will usually not back down. They have their peers to impress. Please discuss any problems immediately with your teacher.

In order to provide contractual planning time for the classroom teachers, you will be expected to help the Harford Glen teachers and volunteers supervise the children for some activities. Be sure to be on hand when those times come.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The procedure for handling any emergency while a class is at the Outdoor Education Program is the same as followed in any other school.

I. Medical

- A. The classroom teacher, counselor, and student are required to immediately report any accident or illness of serious nature to the nurse and a Harford Glen teacher.
- B. The Harford Glen teacher and nurse will assess the degree of the emergency and promptly and efficiently carry out the following procedures:
 - 1. Administer first aid.
 - 2. Determine if an ambulance or 911 should be called.
 - 3. Advise the parent/guardian promptly of the emergency and the recommended course of action.

II. Fire

- A. The fire alarm will sound at the first discovery of a fire.
- B. Immediately upon hearing the fire alarm, students, staff, and others in the building shall evacuate the building via a prearranged route.
- C. At the direction of teachers and counselors, students will assemble in the pavilion area to await further instruction. Attendance will be taken at this time by the classroom teachers. If the emergency is serious enough, the camp will be evacuated to Emmorton Elementary School and parents will be notified.

III. Storms

- A. Upon receipt of a severe weather watch, the nurse or Harford Glen teacher will notify each member of the staff by cellular phone so that he or she can be alerted to the situation and be prepared to act immediately upon receipt of a severe storm warning.
- B. The Harford Glen teacher will assess the situation and act accordingly for the safety and best interests of the students and staff. If the situation warrants, parents will be notified and the students will be evacuated to Emmorton Elementary School.

HEALTH EMERGENCIES

While all health or medical concerns should be routinely referred to the Harford Glen nurse, there are occasional emergency situations that demand the immediate assistance of one or more staff members and counselors. These may involve exposure to such possible contamination as blood, saliva, excreta, etc. To reduce the risk of infection to those in assistance, as well as to the patient, various safeguards need to be observed. Never touch any body fluids unless you are wearing vinyl gloves.

Instructions on proper hand washing as well as a demonstration of putting on and removing the vinyl gloves will be done by the nurse on the first morning of each session.

Procedures that should be followed in health emergencies are:

1. Notify the classroom teachers and/or Harford Glen staff immediately of any health emergency.
2. Follow their instructions.
3. Wear vinyl gloves if your assistance is needed.
4. After the patient's needs have been met, remove and discard gloves, place them in the plastic bag, tie it shut, and leave it in the waste can. The custodian/Harford Glen staff will be responsible for disinfecting the area and removing the plastic waste bag.
5. Wash your hands thoroughly and immediately with soap and warm water for at least twenty seconds. Any concerns, please see the Harford Glen nurse.

These supplies can be found in the lodges, classrooms and Chickadee counselor study area:

Facial tissues
Waste can with disposable plastic liner
Vinyl gloves

MEALS DURING THE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

- All fifth grade students, teachers and counselors will be offered breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks provided by the Harford County Public Schools Food and Nutrition department
- Harford County Public Schools will cover the cost of all counselor meals during the session
- Participants are welcome to bring their own meals and snacks to Harford Glen
- All meals will be eaten in the Dining Hall

MEALS DURING THE EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

- All fifth grade students, teachers and counselors will bring a lunch and beverage
- Students will be offered an afternoon snack. Harford County Public Schools will cover the cost of all counselor snacks during the session
- Participants are welcome to bring their own snacks to Harford Glen
- All meals will be eaten in the Dining Hall

Please socialize with the students during meals. They enjoy your attention. You will be seated with students at every meal.

STAY AT YOUR ASSIGNED TABLE DURING MEALS except in a true emergency or unless you have been asked to do something else.

Help the teachers maintain order and keep the noise level down. Watch and listen for announcements. Call students' attention to them when they occur.

Students will need your help and direction to get the tables cleared off after the meal. The Harford Glen teachers will show you how the clean-up stations work. Counselors and classroom teachers will assist with collection of reusable items, compost, recycling and trash.

LODGES (RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM ONLY)

- All fifth grade students and high school counselors will be assigned a bunk in one of the lodges for the duration of the session
- Lodging is established based on gender or gender identity.
- Counselors are expected to remain in the lodge from *Lights Out* at 9:30pm until the students leave the lodge at 7:30am - counselors are not permitted to gather in the hallway or restrooms after lights out
- Food and drinks (except water) are not permitted in the lodges
- High school counselors are the lodge leaders, however, a Harford County Public Schools employee will be present in each lodge Teacher's Room to assist the counselors as needed throughout the night

- Lodge doors will be locked at all times – teachers will have keys to gain access as needed

Please socialize with the students during evening lodge time. This is also the time of day when fifth grade students are showering and cleaning up for the day. At least one counselor must be in the restroom during shower time to assure the posted privacy and safety guidelines are being followed.

Each lodge resident is responsible for the neatness of his or her bunk and the tidiness of the lodge. Lodge expectations are posted in each building. They will be reviewed at the lodge meeting.

MEDICINES, INJURY, AND ILLNESS

Your high school nurse will make a copy of your *Discretionary Medication Form* that is already on file at your school. High School counselor volunteers that have medications and medication permission forms on file at school **do not need** additional forms completed by their physician. If this applies to you, please ask your school nurse to make copies of the school medication permission form so you can bring it with the medication to Harford Glen.

If you need to take **additional prescription or non-prescription** (over-the-counter) **medication or doses** while at Harford Glen, other than those on the *Discretionary Medication Form*, a **Harford Glen Medication Policy and Permission Form** for each medication must be completed by an authorized prescriber and signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/legal guardian. Only the needed doses of medication for the time spent at Harford Glen should be brought. Please bring only the medications that are absolutely necessary and make sure that the medication has not expired. Forms and medications should be turned in to the Harford Glen nurse as soon as you arrive on the first morning of your session.

Please consult with your school nurse if you may require permission to self-carry or administer medications such as an Epi-pen or an inhaler.

Fifth grade students also come with medical forms and medications that are reviewed by the Harford Glen nurse on arrival day. Children should not have their own medicines with them. Medications will be dispensed by the Harford Glen nurse or classroom teacher.

If a student or counselor becomes ill or injured, the teacher should be informed immediately. The teacher will contact the nurse by walkie-talkie or phone. The teacher and nurse will provide the most appropriate care. **TO PREVENT INJURY, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE A STUDENT WHO IS ILL OR INJURED.**

DELIVERIES

If you need to have someone bring you things while you are at Harford Glen, please let him or her know what to expect. The main gate on Wheel Road will be closed so the call box will need to be used to gain access to the property.

Visitors should come to the nurse's office to leave what they are delivering. We will see that you receive it. It is helpful if your name is on the package, bag, etc.

VALUABLES

It is rare for personal belongings to be lost at Harford Glen, but if you bring valuables such as a purse or wallet, cell phone, laptop, or graphing calculator, please bring them to the nurse's office so they may be locked in a safe place. You will have access to these items when needed.

PACKING GUIDELINES (RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM ONLY)

Harford Glen has adopted monitoring and packing guidelines to reduce the likelihood that pests are carried to and from our site.

- All Harford Glen buildings are continuously monitored for pests.
- All participants, including teachers, high school counselor volunteers, and fifth grade students, will pack their belongings in no more than two 13-gallon kitchen trash bags, clearly labeled with the person's name on the outside of the bags. Suitcases, duffel bags, and stuffed animals are prohibited.
- Upon arrival at Harford Glen, each participant will unpack his or her bags into a clear, lidded, plastic storage box that sits by each bunkbed.
- Backpacks will not be allowed in the lodges – they will be safely locked in the Dining Hall or classrooms each night.
- If you suspect that pests already inhabit your home, please contact the school nurse so appropriate measures can be taken to eliminate them from your belongings before the Harford Glen field trip. All communications will be strictly confidential and will enable the school to assist your family discreetly as you prepare for the field experience.

TELEPHONES

The telephone number at Harford Glen is (410) 638-3903. Your parents/guardians should have the number in case they need to reach you. There is no pay phone available.

Cell phones are not permitted to be used in the lodges and restrooms or during lessons or activities at Harford Glen. Cell phones will be turned off and stored in the Chickadee Room or locked in the nurse's office. You are welcome to use your phone during your free time or study time.

We will take messages and pass them along to you should you be called while you are on duty. In the event of a family emergency, the Harford Glen staff will find you immediately.

COUNSELOR SNACKS

In addition to your meals, you will probably wish to bring drinks and snacks with you. Please do not store or eat these additional snacks in front of the children. There is a refrigerator in the Chickadee study room and a shelf where counselors may leave snacks. It is a good idea to put your name on your drinks and snacks. We hope that everyone will respect each other's belongings, including snacks. Snacks and drinks, except water, are not permitted in the lodges.

COUNSELOR STUDY TIMES

It is important that you remember you are responsible for keeping up with the work your classes are doing back at school. It is your responsibility to see each of your teachers **at least one week before** coming to Harford Glen to get assignments.

Bring your books and materials with you. They may be left in the Chickadee Room. Remember, study times will be scheduled. Please do not ask teachers to excuse you from classes where your assistance is required.

If you miss an assigned study time because you have left Harford Glen for a school activity, we will not be able to reschedule more study time for you. Being a counselor is a job. We need you to be with the students as much as possible.

Your teachers expect your assignments to be complete when you return to your school. If there are things you cannot do while at Harford Glen, you must make arrangements to make up the work as soon as possible. You may want to complete some assignments before you arrive.

HCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Board of Education of Harford County is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, employees, and members of the school community. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Board of Education of Harford County prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or any other protected characteristic in any program or activity it operates. HCPS' non-discrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located at <https://www.hcps.org/Nondiscrimination.aspx>.