



# Camper Handbook



[www.NevadaOutdoorSchool.org](http://www.NevadaOutdoorSchool.org)

## 2024 Camper Handbook

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## Welcome to Nevada Outdoor School Camp!

Whether you are 8 or 88, we are glad you are joining us for an outdoor recreation experience! We look forward to getting to know you better!

This Camp Handbook will help you prepare yourself, or your loved one, for the upcoming camp experience. We understand how exciting camp can be, and our goal is to be safe while having a whole-lot-of-fun in the outdoors.

Thank you for doing your part to be prepared!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Outdoor Educator or to any NOS Staff Member.

Elko Office: 775-777-0814

Winnemucca Office: 775-623-5656

## 1.0 Communication with Your Camper

### Phone Calls

In all camp experiences, homesickness is exacerbated when students call home, therefore we do not allow campers to call home without prior arrangements being made. Plan on **not hearing** from your camper, we operate under the pretense that “no news is good news!”. However, we will not hesitate to get in contact with you if behavioral, medical, or other issues warrant it.

Each camp does have access to a satellite phone for emergency communications.

One exception to this rule is a phone call home on a camper’s birthday. If their birthday happens while they are at camp, please indicate it on their Camper Questionnaire, and let us know a good time and number to reach you and we will arrange a phone call.

## Family Emergencies

If a family emergency arises and requires you to pick up your camper early from camp, please contact your local (Elko or Winnemucca) NOS office immediately. They will contact the Camp Coordinator and work with you to schedule a time for your camper to be picked up.

Elko Office: 775-777-0814

Winnemucca Office: 775-623-5656

## **2.0 What to Bring**

### **Packing for Day Camp**

Participants need to pack a backpack for daily activities throughout camp. In this backpack, participants should include:

- Required:
- a filled and reusable water bottle,
  - a sack lunch (if required)
  - sunscreen
  - small bottle of hand sanitizer
  - a hat
  - layers to accommodate changing weather (sweatshirt, raingear or a light jacket)

### **Packing for Overnight Camping**

Each participant should arrive at the campout with these five items (and no more!):

1. A backpack with their daily activity supplies (see above).
2. A single duffel bag or backpack that holds all their personal items listed on the clothing and equipment list provided to you by your Outdoor Educator
3. A sleeping bag
4. A sleeping pad
5. A pillow

Everything except the day pack (duffle, sleeping bag, pad, pillow) will be stored in the truck throughout the first day. Please be considerate and pack within a reasonable size, think carry-on size for an airplane. Please help your participant to pack efficiently. If possible, pack the sleeping bag, pad, and pillow into as little of a package as possible. Be sure all personal items are clearly labeled with the participant name.

### **Clothing & Equipment List**

The Clothing/Equipment list provided by your Outdoor Educator outlines what participants should bring to camp. Please bring what is on the list and nothing more. The point of this list is to provide a guide to what will make your child most comfortable at camp; it is not intended for parents to buy new





equipment prior to camp. If your family does not have some of the listed items, please contact Nevada Outdoor School and we can discuss alternatives.

## Labeling Clothes and Equipment

Please put your child's name on **everything** they bring to camp. And we mean everything! (towels, socks, sunglasses, backpack, shoes, etc.) Use full names and avoid initials so that our sorting of lost and found items—which we do every night—can be efficiently completed.

## What Not to Bring

As important as knowing what to bring is, it is also important to know what NOT to bring! **A good rule of thumb is that if an item is so valuable or irreplaceable that you or your participant would be terribly disappointed to lose it or to have it broken, please do not send them to camp with it!** Leave the favorite stuffed animals and blankets at home. We cannot control all things that happen at camp, therefore do not bring things that need to be treated with extra-special care or concern.

For your participant's protection – and for the well-being of all at camp – please note that the following items are **not** allowed and will be confiscated (and may result in dismissal) if they are discovered:

- Weapons: Guns, nunchucks, tasers, etc...
- Knives: Multi-tools, Bowie knife, Swiss Army, etc...
- Electronics: Hand-held electronic games, televisions (including Watchmen), **cell phones**, computers, laser pointers, i-Pods, etc. (film and digital cameras are ok).
- Medication: Any medication that has not been registered with the camp coordinator. This includes over the counter medication such as ibuprofen, Tylenol or allergy medicine.
- Ignition Devices: Matches/candles/incense/lighters.
- Money: We will provide treats and snacks for the kids at breaks along the trip. Your participant will **not** need money while at our camp.
- Aerosol spray cans.
- Food and beverages (excluding your sack lunch and filled water bottles): NOS provides tasty and healthy food and drink at meal and snack times. Please do not allow your child to bring any additional food or drink of any kind to camp—including candy and gum.

## 3.0 Behavior Expectations

Nevada Outdoor School has adopted a behavior and discipline policy that emphasizes physical and emotional safety for all program staff and participants. Positive discipline, clear expectations, and appropriate consequences are at the foundation of our Behavior Management Policy.



At NOS we practice teamwork, cooperation, positive problem solving, kindness, and respect for ourselves and others.

All NOS program expectations and behavior management processes will be delivered and implemented with kindness. NOS staff will never use verbal, physical or emotional punishments or attacks (yelling, cursing, hitting, belittling, etc.). Program expectations and behavior management will be applied to individual programs and participants in an equitable manner, recognizing that equitable does not mean “the same for all”. Individual considerations must be taken into consideration for both the program, as well as the individuals participating in each program. When there is an exceptional situation with a program or an individual, utilize your supervisor to help navigate that situation.

## Overarching Behavior Management Principles

At NOS, we work with people in a variety of settings. Behavior management strategies and techniques may change depending on the setting, type of programming, and ages of participants. Solid behavior management techniques can be adapted to all ages, including adults.

The overarching behavior management principles that NOS subscribes to are:

- \* **Respect for self**
- \* **Respect for others**
- \* **Respect for the environment and equipment**

These are referred to as “The 3 R’s.”

NOS follows and utilizes the 3 R’s at all times: in the office, administering youth programs, training, and during community events. During staff onboarding and prior to any NOS program, the 3 R’s are shared and expectations are to be discussed, in a program-relevant manner.

In addition to The 3 R’s, NOS’s Outdoor Ethics Philosophy helps guide behavior expectations and management. Our Outdoor Ethics Philosophy fits not only outdoor recreation ethics (behavior), but also interactions with peers, parents, and other people. NOS’s Outdoor Ethics Philosophy is broken down into 3 parts:

- \* **Analyze Actions**
- \* **Evaluate Impacts**
- \* **Choose Wisely**

This is the Action. Impact. Choice. Model or “The AIC Model”.



With guidance and support, participants learn to analyze their actions, evaluate the impacts those actions have, and choose wisely to minimize negative impacts.

When it is observed that The 3 R's are not being attended to the AIC Model can be used to help guide and manage situational awareness and reinforce positive behavior expectations.

Specific considerations and examples for each of The 3 R's are listed below to guide the discussion and set clear expectations. These are not exhaustive lists. For each event or experience the leaders will need to pre-plan and consider program-relevant and specific expectations.

### RESPECT FOR SELF

Because I respect myself, I will:

- remain with adults so that I am safe
- act in a safe manner for the environment I am in
- participate in activities so I can learn and grow
- not bring dangerous substances to camp, including knives
- self-monitor for the need for water, sunscreen, or a bathroom break
- alert NOS staff of any injuries, illnesses or needs as they arise

#### *Example of AIC Model to help manage behavior associated with Respect for Self:*

If a camper consistently is running through the campground, the Outdoor Educator can pull that camper aside and ask the camper if they are respecting themselves by making choices that will keep themselves and others safe. They can discuss the action (running in an inappropriate setting), potential negative impact (injury to themselves or fellow campers), and then choose wisely to walk through the campground.

### RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Because I respect others, I will:

- watch out for my friends and fellow participants to help keep them safe
- encourage others to participate in a kind and compassionate way
- not bring dangerous substances to camp, including knives
- be kind and considerate of others (not push and shove in line or crowd people) when getting materials or equipment
- be on time
- follow directions and follow through on my actions

#### *Example of AIC Model to help manage behavior associated with Respect for Others:*

If a camper is being mean or picking on another camper (name calling, bullying, etc.), the leader will pull that camper aside and ask the camper if they are respecting others by talking poorly to their colleague. They can discuss the action (disrespectful words), potential impact it is having (harm to the other camper's feelings, self-esteem and experience), and then discuss alternatives, and choose wisely to always speak with kindness and respect.



## RESPECT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND EQUIPMENT

Because I respect the environment and the equipment I use, I will:

- practice responsible recreation (Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace) principles that are taught to me
- leave the area better than we found it, whenever possible
  - pick-up trash
  - put things away neatly
  - wipe down tables
- listen for instructions before using equipment
- take care of (use gently) any equipment assigned to me or my group
- clean and organize equipment before putting it away

*Example of AIC Model to help manage behavior associated with Respect for Environment and Equipment:*

If a camper is being irresponsible on the trail (feeding wildlife, littering, trampling vegetation, etc.) the leader will pull that participant aside and ask if they are respecting the environment through their actions. They can discuss the specific action (ex- feeding wildlife) and the potential negative impacts (wildlife getting sick, altering behavior, etc.), and then discuss how the participant can choose wisely to avoid feeding wildlife in the future.

## **4.0 Behavior Management Process - Poor Choice Consequences**

Through this handbook and the Parent Meeting, all participants and parents/guardians are aware of the NOS Behavior Management Principles. Once the Camp Agreement (see below) has been established, it is the responsibility of the Outdoor Educator to review the NOS Behavior Management Principles and Process so campers fully understand the consequences of choosing to behave (action) outside the bounds of the Camp Agreement.



1. Verbal warning – when you observe something that is outside The 3 R's, immediately pull the participant aside and utilize the AIC Model to analyze the action, impact and choices for moving forward. Record this interaction in the Discipline Log.

2. Written warning – if the behavior continues and needs to be addressed again, pull the participant aside and fill in the written “The 3 R Contract.” (Some participants need this formality to help them process what is occurring). The 3 R Contract states the action, the impact, and how the camper is going to choose to behave from this point forward. Keep the 3 R Contract in your camp binder. If needed, implement an appropriate consequence, like sitting out until the next activity so the

camper has time to process things, cool off and change their behavior. Record this written warning in the Discipline Log.

3. Call Home – If the negative behavior persists, pull the participant aside and review The 3 R Contract. At this point, discuss the agreed upon solution for the problem and update/come up with a new solution if needed. This second written warning/conversation needs to be recorded on the Discipline Log. Let the camper know that it is time to call their parent/adult.

With the participant present, have the participant call their parent/adult and explain the situation using the 3 R Contract as a template for what information needs to be conveyed. Be objective and share only facts. After the participant has shared with the parent/guardian, the Outdoor Educator will speak with them reviewing: “This is what’s happening and why it’s a problem, this was the solution we agreed upon, it continued to happen, we reviewed/updated our solution, if this happens again, you will need to come pick up [camper] from camp.”

- o At this point you need to call your supervisor and inform them of the situation. If you cannot get in touch with a parent/adult (make sure to call all numbers you have - there should be an emergency contact number to call as well), make sure to let your supervisor know that they may need to help out.
4. Removal from the program – isolate the camper aside and call the parent/guardian. Inform them what has occurred and tell them that unfortunately, they need to come get their child. Have the camper “sit out” while waiting for their parent/adult. An Outdoor Educator will be with this camper at all times. When a parent/adult arrives, have the camper tell their parent/adult what has transpired using The 3 R Contract as the basis. Answer any questions and say good-bye. If the parent has any questions or is upset, have them go to or call the NOS office.

PLEASE NOTE: The decision to send a student home will be made by the Outdoor Educator working closely with the Programs Coordinators, Associate Director, or Executive Director. Whether a student is sent home at this time depends upon the nature of the behavior that resulted in the warnings, the attitude of the student, the student’s home situation, and the time until the end of the program. The student may be isolated from other students by staying with a person from the Nevada Outdoor School staff for the remainder of the program.



## Zero-Tolerance Actions

At NOS, the health and safety of all program participants and Staff is a top priority. For this reason, there are Zero Tolerance Policies for specific situations where such behaviors and actions will result in

immediate removal from the program. The Zero Tolerance Policy is to be clearly communicated to all parents/guardians and program participants **PRIOR** to the program via the Parent Meeting and the Camper Handbook.

Zero Tolerance Behaviors and Actions are:

- Behaviors or actions that put themselves, other participants, or a staff member intentionally in harm's way
- Stealing, harming, or destroying property or facilities that do not belong to them
- Possession of
  - Weapons
  - Knives
  - Illegal drugs
- Possession of any prescription or non-prescription medicines in the sleeping area (**all** medications must be kept and dispensed by Nevada Outdoor School staff).

## **5.0 Camp Agreements**

At camp everyone is part of a team. We will all be learning and having fun together in a supportive, positive environment. We have learned through experience that children best abide by rules and guidelines they create for themselves. This is why at the very beginning of camp, they will work together to come up with their own team contract of guidelines and expected behaviors.

Please explain to your child the importance of speaking up if they have an idea, a question, request, or problem. Self-advocacy is a great skill to learn and practice at camp, and it starts with the Camp Agreement.



Each Camp Agreement is different; however below are a few guidelines we find consistent across all Camp Agreements:

- Go out of your way to be nice. Being nice is “cool” at camp. Teasing and bullying is not “cool.”
- Try something new every day. There is so much to do at camp that we want everyone to go out of their way to try new things! And don’t worry about not being great at something; nobody is great at everything, especially their first time around.
- Support someone else when they try something new. At camp we support others just like we want to be supported.
- Respect other people, their opinions and possessions. The “Golden Rule” is in full effect at camp.

- Be enthusiastic and have fun! At camp, we want you to show some emotion! Cheer at events! Sing loudly! Laugh at our jokes (even when they are silly.) Camp should always be fun!

The most important thing that we want students to take away from the Camp Agreement are actions that demonstrate respect for ourselves, each other, and the environment and equipment.

## **6.0 Health and Medical Considerations**

### **Mandatory Health History Form**

All medical forms must be completed by a parent or legal guardian and returned to Nevada Outdoor School on or before the first day of camp. We do not require a doctor to sign-off on the Health Form. Please ensure that the medical form and enrollment application are completed honestly and thoroughly. Include information on issues such as sleepwalking, bedwetting, car sickness, etc. Failure to provide relevant physical and mental health information could result in your child not having the best experience possible at camp.

### **Medication**

**If your child is on prescription medication, that medication should be sent in the original bottle with the Doctor's name, dosage, and usage instruction on the bottle.**

No medications of any kind are allowed to be kept with a camper in their sleeping area. This includes prescription drugs and over the counter items such as Tylenol, Advil, Sudafed, and Robitussin. All medications that are sent with the student must be given to the Outdoor Educator as part of the camp check-in.



An exception to this rule is for inhalers for campers with asthma, Epi-Pens for campers with life-threatening food or insect allergies, and insulin pumps and snacks for campers with diabetes. If your participant has something that needs to be considered as an exception, please discuss with the Outdoor Educator prior to camp.

Please put all medications in a clear zip lock bag with your child's name and instructions for administration on it. The Outdoor Educators will assist your child with their medication as directed by your instructions.



## **Permission to Treat**

By signing the medical form, Nevada Outdoor School's trained and qualified staff are given permission to provide campers routine health care, administer prescribed over-the-counter medications (that have been sent by the family), and provide emergency medical assistance.

If any treatment beyond simple first-aid is administered or if your participant becomes ill, the Outdoor Educator will call the contact listed on the Health Form.

## **Arriving in Good Health**

To ensure the safety of your camper as well as everyone else at camp: If your child has a fever on opening day, or has been exposed to a contagious illness, **please do not send them to camp!** If you find yourself in this situation, please contact the Nevada Outdoor School to discuss options for late arrival.

## **Health Insurance**

Parents must provide their own coverage for illness, accident, and dental occurrences that require medical intervention.

# **7.0 General Camp Information**

## **Tent Assignments**

Participants will be staying in multi person tents. Please make sure to indicate on the Camper Questionnaire if your participant would like to request a tent-mate. We will do our best to accommodate participants, however, due to the size of the group we cannot guarantee that all requests can be accommodated.

## **Birthdays**

Camper birthdays taking place during the session will be celebrated by the whole camp with a special treat and a song. If your camper's birthday is during camp, we will arrange ahead of time a time to call you so you can wish your camper Happy Birthday! Please indicate on the Camper Questionnaire if your child will be having their birthday while at camp.

# **8.0 Evaluations**

We value your feedback! Nevada Outdoor School is always working to improve our programs and we also receive funding each year to provide our camps at the lowest cost possible to participants in rural Nevada. In order to continue this level of funding, we need your assistance in conducting evaluations of the effectiveness of our programs. Surveys will be administered to parents before and/or after the completion of camp. Watch for emails for this important opportunity!