



# Community Manual

## 2022-2023

“Experiential education for young people promoting the natural world and the betterment of human character.”

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# WELCOME TO OA

Outdoor Academy students are challenged intellectually, physically, personally, and artistically over the course of a semester. Our days, evenings, and weekends are intentional, active, and rewarding. We strive to create and hold the space that allows for a transformative and experiential education. Within this manual you will find the information needed to successfully navigate the semester: information that expresses the school's philosophy and expectations for behavior as an individual and as part of The Outdoor Academy community. Please take time to read and understand what is written here before beginning the semester. We expect students to arrive at The Outdoor Academy well informed of our mission and ready to uphold our policies.

The Outdoor Academy (OA) is a part of Eagle's Nest Foundation (ENF), a collection of individuals, students, and teachers who form a school of experiential education. Throughout the year the Foundation promotes the natural world and the betterment of human character through OA, Eagle's Nest Camp, and Hante Adventures. For over 90 years, we have collectively formed an interesting and diverse community that facilitates our work and enriches our lives. The Outdoor Academy, founded in 1995, is an academic semester school that adheres firmly to the greater principles and policies of the Eagle's Nest Foundation.

The Outdoor Academy provides students with a versatile and valuable set of skills that prepares them to be resilient citizens of the 21st century. By taking ownership of their own experience and education, students will develop the character they need to feel empowered to create change in their own lives and communities. The education we offer at OA is an increasingly important resource in a changing world, and our educators are innovators in the field of experiential learning, creating engaged and influential environmental leaders.

The Outdoor Academy is built upon four cornerstones: **Intellect, Environment, Community, and Craft**. Intellectually, OA distinguishes students for college and lifelong learning. Through our rigorous and integrated academic curriculum, students are encouraged to come to know their own minds, take ownership of their education, and ask the questions that develop learning competencies in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. With an average class size of seven and a maximum of about 15, members of the OA faculty encourage and expect participation. We teach to rigorous standards, and we will challenge students in and out of the classroom.

The Outdoor Academy is accredited through Cognia and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Cognia certifies that the school meets curricular and institutional standards of excellence and that credits earned are honored at secondary schools and colleges throughout the country. We are proud of the experiential education that occurs during each semester and often hear from our alumni that their OA semester sparked an enthusiasm for them to become lifelong learners.

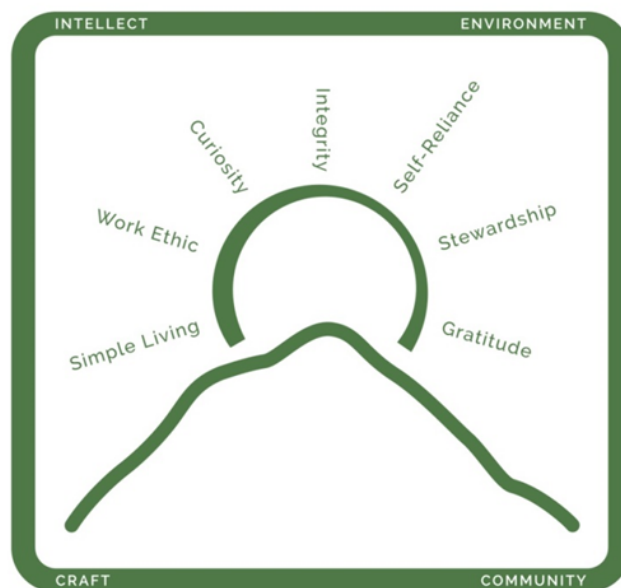
Our environmental education curriculum will empower students to find their place in the world, create practical, sustainable solutions, and effect positive change. The Outdoor Academy explores its setting in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina. Classes in English, mathematics, environmental science, history, world languages, traditional crafts, and health & wellness are taught both in

the classroom and in the forest. Our outdoor program teaches campcraft skills, backpacking, canoeing, and rock climbing as a vehicle for leadership development and promotion of a deeper appreciation for the natural world. Students learn gardening skills through classes and work in the garden to supply some of our seasonal produce. Our unique regional biome is our primary classroom and provides the solid ground from which all of our work grows.

By intentionally building the skills and personal responsibility necessary to create a close-knit community, The Outdoor Academy teaches students to live well together and be their best selves. We develop the character skills required for life-long success by practicing our seven principles: **simple living, work ethic, curiosity, integrity, stewardship, self-reliance, and gratitude.** Our culture of challenge and support builds the persistence and flexibility that will allow students to translate their skills to their sending schools and their home communities.

Throughout the semester, students will be challenged to mature personally and socially. We expect development and expansion in students' internal authority, as they become responsible for themselves and others. We will teach students how to be active and involved members of a community. We will ask students to both follow and lead in the classroom and in the wilderness. We will expect students to be responsible for daily chores, complete assigned weekly jobs, and volunteer when the need arises. We will ask students to live intentionally so that they are thoughtful and proud of their actions and choices and accountable for their shortcomings. In short, we will ask our students to grow into young adulthood.

Please know that as a small educational community, we are happy to speak with you at any time. Our small size is one of our defining assets, and we are committed to taking the time to discuss our students' experiences and progress. We know this will be an exciting time for both students and their families, as each of you discovers the many opportunities of our school. The information that follows in this Community Manual serves as a guide outlining the specifics of the structure, rules, and operation of OA. We hope that it is helpful to you in understanding The Outdoor Academy and its underlying ideals.



# **CAMPUS LOGISTICS**

## **TUITION, ROOM, BOARD, AND SCHOOL STORE ACCOUNT**

Tuition payment arrangements are handled by the Admissions Director and payments are recorded by the Registrar. We ask students to establish an additional school store account of \$150.00. This account covers expenses such as study and personal supplies. The school store account will also serve as a bank for our students. We ask that students deposit any personal cash into their school store account upon arrival to campus. Students can order needed personal and school supplies such as notebooks, paper, pens, art supplies, toothpaste, and shampoo, but it is more cost-efficient to bring the things that you need. We also have Outdoor Academy and Eagle's Nest logo T-shirts, Crazy Creek chairs, Nalgene water bottles, and other items for sale in the school store.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS AND PAPERWORK**

We encourage students to leave all valuables and technology devices at home. All plane tickets, cell phones, and wallets for travel, passports, legal documents, or medical records will be collected on Opening Day and kept in a locked cabinet. Expensive or dangerous items should not be brought to OA and will be sent home if they are brought to the school. OA and ENF are not responsible for the loss or theft of personal items. Musical instruments live in a temperature-controlled building, but note that it remains unlocked.

## **MAIL**

Our address is: The Outdoor Academy, 43 Hart Road Pisgah Forest, NC 28768.

Letters are essential for students' emotional well-being at The Outdoor Academy, and letters from family, extended family, and friends are greatly anticipated and appreciated. From our end, we will actively encourage students to write letters to family and friends.

## **TELEPHONE**

There is only one phone for all students. The student phone is in the Sun Lodge den, and the phone number is **(828) 877-5365**. The phone is intended for students to maintain communication with family members. Students are encouraged to stay in touch with friends by writing letters. Please remember that all students will be sharing one phone, and their time available for using the phone will be further limited by classes, mealtimes, weekend activities, and other programming. Please be patient as students work out their system for sharing this common resource. Students will not have access to the phone during the first week of the semester. A private space for calls of a sensitive nature can be arranged with the Dean of Students or the OA Director.

## **WHO TO CONTACT**

The Dean of Academics is your point person for any academic concerns. For all medical concerns, the OA Medical Coordinator is your point of contact. The Dean of Students is your point person for all student concerns that fall outside of the academic or medical realm. You can contact OA administrators by calling the office at (828) 877-4349 or by email.

## **BEING IN TOUCH WITH FACULTY**

The best way to be in touch with faculty and staff Monday through Friday is via their email addresses, which can be found on the "Meet the Faculty" page of the website or by calling the main office at (828) 877-4349. On the weekends, the main office is closed and Residents are with the students full time, so they won't have the ability to check email. Likewise, faculty members are not required to check email over the weekend. Faculty should return emails within one business day unless they are out in the field with students.

## **BEING IN TOUCH IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY**

If you are having a family emergency or have an urgent reason that you must be in touch over the weekend or outside of office hours, you may call our Emergency Phone, which is carried by the Administrator on Duty. The Emergency Phone number is **1-828-577-2080**. Please note: **It is essential that this number only be used in the case of emergencies.** It will weaken the efficacy of this as a tool in emergency situations if this phone is simply viewed as a way to be in touch.

## **EMAIL**

Our email is used primarily for business matters. School-related emails will be delivered promptly to students. Please do not send personal emails unless it is an emergency.

## **STUDENTS LEAVING THE FACILITIES**

Students are not allowed to leave campus without supervision for any reason. This absolute rule is for the safety of our students, and violation of it is one of the possible reasons for being expelled from school. We cannot accommodate students' personal vehicles at The Outdoor Academy.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

We ask that you adhere carefully to the OA packing list. Students will be active and outside every day and in all weather, so please select sensible, functional, appropriate clothing. The outdoor clothing and equipment included on the packing lists have been chosen to provide the necessary elements of a full outdoor adventure clothing system, so neglecting to bring items as noted could potentially compromise safety and comfort in the field. As part of our commitment to simple living, we expect students to embrace having the things that they need and not much more. We expect clothing to be presentable and respectful to others. For more information on what to bring, please refer to "The Outdoor Academy Dress Code."

## **TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICES**

Music and technology are valued at The Outdoor Academy. However, we do not wish to fill our campus with constant background music or the frequent distractions of technological entertainment. Open space is a prerequisite for the kind of learning and interpersonal relationships that we seek to cultivate at The Outdoor Academy. Learning to be present with intention in our daily life is an important facet of building community at OA, and many students see this as a chance to "unplug" for a semester and get away from the stress of their phones and the internet.

Therefore, personal electronic devices such as iPods, iPads, any electronic music players, cell phones, flash drives, computers, and e-readers such as Kindles are not allowed. Laptop computers are available at OA for students requiring accommodations or independent studies (must be pre-approved by OA administration). Students may bring digital cameras and/or Go-Pros, but are asked not to record and/or publish video footage of staff members or their peers unless they have permission for a video project from the Director

of The Outdoor Academy.

## **MUSIC**

Because we appreciate how fun and important it is to have some of your favorite music with you, we ask that each student compile a list of 15 songs that we will add to a cloud-based service to be played during meal preps and clean-ups and during cabin clean-up on Sundays. You will receive an email before the semester begins on how to create and share your playlist. Students can listen to their music during their meal clean-ups, cabin clean-up, and during free time at the listening station in Cheoah. We ask that these songs be free from profanity, misogyny, and inappropriate sexual and/or drug references. They should be appropriate to play in front of our entire community.

## **THE OUTDOOR ACADEMY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

- Students shall not post materials online that would represent Eagle's Nest Foundation in a distasteful, defaming, or slanderous way. For example, students should not use profanity in postings or messages about OA; and students should not post content (text, photos, video) from programs that are inappropriate per OA rules and policies.
- Students are discouraged from identifying by name ("tagging") any student under 18 years of age who appears in any photo or video posted on the Internet. **Respect the wishes of any student who expresses the desire to remain anonymous online.** ENF does not allow tags on its own site.
- Students are not to take or post on the Internet videos of students or staff at The Outdoor Academy. Students interested in doing video projects may do so by gaining approval from the Director of Outdoor Academy in advance, and then submitting approved projects to Eagle's Nest for posting on foundation-related sites, if the video meets certain standards.
- Students may not use the Eagle's Nest Camp, Hante Adventures, The Outdoor Academy or Eagle's Nest Foundation logo without express written permission. Students may not use the Eagle's Nest Camp, Hante Adventures, The Outdoor Academy, or Eagle's Nest Foundation name to identify a social media site, blog, photo or video gallery, or other internet site started or administrated by the student without written permission.
- Students may not initiate or administrate any social media site (blog, photo, video gallery, or other internet site) that takes Eagle's Nest Camp, Hante Adventures, The Outdoor Academy or Eagle's Nest Foundation as its primary subject matter without written consent by ENF.
- Students are respectfully asked to remove any photo or video at the foundation's request, or at the request of any person appearing in the photo or video or related family members.
- Students are never permitted to photograph another student engaged in any private activities: including sleeping, using the bathroom, or changing clothing.
- If a student reveals to an Employee—in person or on the Internet—any information that raises concerns for that student's safety, the employee is required to contact the OA Director immediately.

## **CARE PACKAGES**

While we recognize the value of care packages, we ask that you keep our principle of "simple living" in mind

when you choose to send a student additional items. Items such as cards, books, small games, craft supplies, etc. are welcome, but please do not send food, except for tea or decaffeinated coffee. Non-perishable food will be held for the student until a vacation period arrives. Please share our care package policy with relatives and friends who may want to send packages. Should a student have a birthday during the semester, it will be celebrated by the community, and a homemade dessert will be provided by our chef. You are welcome to send a birthday care package. All care packages will be opened in the presence of a staff member.

Additionally, we understand how easy it is to ship additional items through Amazon, but, we ask that you refrain from sending multiple Amazon packages throughout the semester. Not only does this go against our "simple living" principle and "Environment" cornerstone due to shipping costs to the environment, but there is not a lot of room for extra items in the cabins. It's an important experience for our students to experience the desire for a physical item but not the instant gratification in obtaining it, as then they can learn to differentiate "desire" from "need," as well as creatively problem solve and learn to be satisfied with what they have.

### **FAMILY VISITATION**

We ask that family and friends limit campus visits to Family Weekend and the two designated Sunday afternoons open for visits during the semester. That said, we understand that family events come up and exceptions sometimes need to be made, so please be in touch with the Dean of Students if you need to see your child outside of these designated times.

- **Family Weekend:** In the spring semester Family Day comes on the last day of Spring Break. In the fall, Family Day is part of Family Weekend, which comes in the first half of the semester. On Family Day, there will be time set aside for meetings with your child's advisor followed by a Family Meeting with the faculty. Exact times and details for Family Weekend/Family Day will be shared at the start of the semester. If you are not able to make it to Family Weekend in the fall semester, you will need to make arrangements for your child's supervision during this time. The Dean of Students can help facilitate arrangements with local families, so please be in touch if you need assistance in this realm.
- **Possible Sundays Open for Visits:** There will be two Sunday afternoons available during the semester for family visits, with visiting hours from noon until 4:45. You can remain on campus or sign your teen out with a staff member in the main office and go into town. Because the window for visiting is brief and the focus is on family time, we do not allow students to sign out with current OA students' families, even with your permission. If your teen's friends want to visit, we ask that they either be over 18 or accompanied by an adult with your permission. Visiting minors are the responsibility of their accompanying adult while on Eagle's Nest Property. Please be in touch with the Dean of Students by email one week prior if you do plan to visit your teen or if you wish to approve another family member or family friend to visit your teen. We understand that these brief visits are hard to accommodate for families who live far away, so be assured that those students whose families cannot come to visit will have a fun afternoon with the residential staff.

Whenever a student is off campus, they must be signed out with a staff person in the main office. This is to ensure that we have an accurate count of who is on campus in the event of an emergency.

### **THANKSGIVING AND SPRING BREAK TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**



If your child is flying home for Spring Break or Thanksgiving Break, please be in touch with the Dean of Students about shuttle options. We can drive students to the Asheville or Greenville Spartanburg airport if their flights fall within a certain window of time (to be announced at the beginning of the semester). We can securely store cell phones/chargers and wallets with travel money for students flying alone, so feel free to bring those to campus on Opening Day or during a visit if needed. Drop off and pick up for Spring Break and Thanksgiving Breaks are the only times we are able to offer an airport shuttle service to the Asheville or Greenville Spartanburg airport. You will receive a Parent/Student contact roster during the semester, so feel free to be in communication with other families from your area to arrange carpooling if you are within driving distance of campus.

### **ITEMS LEFT BEHIND**

Upon request, we will return any personal belongings that students leave on campus after the close of the semester. Please notify us within three weeks after the semester ends, and we will pack and ship the item(s) C.O.D. After three weeks, items left will be donated to a local charity.

### **ABSENCES**

Our school provides an integrated, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning experience for our students. Because of the interconnected nature of the school, from classroom to dorm life to outdoor programming, students are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the experience. Missing twenty percent or more days of the semester (including on-campus class days, outdoor programming, weekend programming, and work crews) can sometimes require a staffing need The Outdoor Academy is unable to accommodate, affect the integrity of the school for the rest of the student community, and negatively impact a student's experience while at The Outdoor Academy. Should a student reach this amount of missed days, a meeting between The Outdoor Academy administration and the student's family will be held to determine if a student is able to remain enrolled in school through the end of the semester, though the final decision remains at the discretion of OA administration. If unable to fully participate in school, including outdoor and weekend activities, a student may be eligible for a medical or mental health leave of absence in order to continue classwork and earn transcript credits.

# INTELLECTUAL LIFE

The academic environment at The Outdoor Academy incorporates a number of educational approaches in an effort to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of each student. Fundamentally, our academic program brings together experiential education and traditional instruction. Across our curriculum, experiential learning opportunities are incorporated to complement course content that may be initially presented through written texts or direct instruction. In the realm of both experiential teaching and direct instruction, our faculty attends to the different learning styles and multiple intelligences that exist in any diverse student body. Cooperative learning activities and small group work are common features, as is expecting students to take on teaching and leadership roles before their peers. Although experiential education activities can be more appealing, or “fun,” our students quickly learn that our classes are rigorous. At The Outdoor Academy, students need to enact the same kind of discipline and self-determination necessary to succeed in any school. Active participation in class discussions is an expectation of all students.

At OA, we strive to inspire the academic interest of our students so they excel in their studies, learn to become leaders, and give back to their community. The word “education” originates from the root *educ*: “to place before, to draw out, or to give opportunity.” The Outdoor Academy gives students the opportunity to discover a new way of learning: one that will benefit them throughout their life.

Each student’s schedule typically includes six academic courses plus Work Crew and Outdoor Education. The English and Natural Science curricula will be the same for all students. Math and Spanish will be determined by the student’s curricular needs and our course offerings. Students will select Environmental Seminar or World History. In Crafts classes, students will have the opportunity to learn a wide variety of skills, including woodcarving, blacksmithing, bookmaking, cooking, weaving, knitting, and more.

Students who enroll in The Outdoor Academy are expected to maintain a positive attitude toward their studies and extracurricular activities. As you will note under the “Major rules and reasons for being expelled” (see pages 12-13), violating the intellectual and community spirit of The Outdoor Academy is not tolerated. The Outdoor Academy is a school designed and run for students who value the opportunity to attend and who are ready to meet the expectations of the school. Skipping or being late to classes, being disruptive or disrespectful of others, consistently having a bad attitude, or failing to meet expectations of The Outdoor Academy are behaviors that indicate to the faculty and administration that a student does not want to be enrolled.

Students will be expected to maintain a high level of academic integrity and personal investment in their learning process while at The Outdoor Academy. Some of the academic challenges and benefits facing students are learning time management, enhancing study skills, and becoming full and active participants in the classroom. The school’s academic setting, both indoors and out, is creative, motivating, and inspiring. Students quickly realize that their success is determined by more than simply keeping up with homework and doing well on tests. They learn to become part of intellectual discussions and to fully engage in the learning process, which builds a new level of academic confidence.

## **COURSE COMPLETION AND TRANSCRIPTS**

Due to the curricular transition students experience at The Outdoor Academy, adjustments may be made to the course selection of a student after the start of the semester. A student may drop a class without penalty within 45 days of the beginning of the semester with the consent of their parents/guardians and in consultation with the sending school. After the 45-day period, all courses must be completed and will be reported on the official transcript issued from The Outdoor Academy. A student may enroll in an additional class at The Outdoor Academy for up to 20 days after the beginning of the semester with the consent of their parents/guardians.

After the close of the semester, students may receive unofficial copies of their academic transcripts and have official transcripts mailed to schools or colleges provided the student's record shows no financial indebtedness to The Outdoor Academy. No official or unofficial transcript will be issued until all tuition is paid in full. All transcripts include the student's entire academic record. No partial or incomplete transcripts will be issued. Students and parents/guardians should request transcripts at a reasonable time prior to an approaching deadline. Delays in issuing transcripts may occur immediately before or after a term break.

## **ADVISORS, GRADES, AND COMMENTS**

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor. Advisors will meet with their advisees on a weekly basis for informal discussions relating to their academic, social, emotional, and physical health, and their personal and community progress. Advisors will be in contact with their advisees' families throughout the semester on a monthly basis. Midterm reports are provided to students and parents/guardians approximately eight weeks into the semester. Midterm reports are not sent to the sending school unless requested. These reports will include a letter grade and short written comments by each student's teachers. Final transcripts will include a letter and number grade for each class as well as detailed comments from each teacher and will be sent to the sending school as well as to the student's family.

# COMMUNITY LIFE

At The Outdoor Academy, we believe that by learning to love, nurture, and care for ourselves we will be better able to function positively within the community. We seek to live with intention and to be mindful and present in our social interactions and learning.

The Outdoor Academy program is designed for students who see the value in attending. Each student must make an internal commitment that “I am going to have a meaningful experience this semester.” They will only reach that goal if they are ready to invest themselves in this community intellectually, physically, and emotionally. Above all, students must recognize that their attendance at The Outdoor Academy is a choice they have freely and independently made. Members of the OA community, both faculty and students, expect each other to be positive, grateful, and respectful of the opportunity to be here and do this work together.

Community building is our work in the world as citizens and leaders, and at The Outdoor Academy our students learn how to build and be a part of a community. We believe that self-discipline and mutual respect govern a functional community. We have a student-run community meeting every week where each member has an opportunity to add their voice to community decisions. However, please note that some community decisions will be made by the faculty and staff. All community members are expected to be respectful, tolerant, and non-disruptive. Respect includes being kind, compassionate, appreciative, non-comparative, tolerant of differences, and ready to learn more about others and ourselves.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Staff members provide supervision of students and will hold students accountable to the rules and expectations of our community and school. Because OA is designed for honest, motivated, and self-disciplined students, staff members do not provide direct supervision of all students at all times, though designated staff members are always on duty. During free periods and unscheduled time on the weekend, for example, students are free to take a nap, do laundry, pursue personal projects or engage in athletic activities. During these times students may not be under the immediate supervision of a staff member, though staff members are always on campus and available to students. Students are expected to uphold the rules and guidelines of our school whether a faculty member is present or not.

## **MAJOR RULES AND REASONS FOR BEING EXPELLED**

We are very serious about protecting the integrity of The Outdoor Academy by maintaining strict expectations for our students. Any student who chooses to violate any of the following will be held accountable and should expect to leave the school immediately. Parents/guardians and schools will be notified in the event of serious disciplinary action. We will discuss these issues as a community during orientation to make them perfectly clear, so if a violation occurs, it is already too late for a student to promise never to do it again. Make sure you are **very** clear on these expectations.

We have a commitment to our OA community, to parents/guardians, and to our sending schools that we will not tolerate the following actions:

- X Cheating, plagiarism, or dishonesty of any kind.
- X Stealing and/or the destruction of property.
- X Leaving campus without permission.
- X The use and/or possession of illegal drugs, drugs not prescribed to the student, drug paraphernalia, alcohol, tobacco, or e-cigarette products.
- X Harassment of any kind of individuals or groups.
- X Intimate sexual relationships or sexual activity of any kind.
- X Violating the intellectual and community spirit of The Outdoor Academy by repeatedly: expressing a desire to not be a part of The Outdoor Academy experience, having a negative attitude toward the school or its staff, or being disruptive, disrespectful, or unresponsive to Outdoor Academy students, faculty or administrators.

### **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Drugs, alcohol, or any substances that are illegal in society are illegal at The Outdoor Academy and any Eagle's Nest Foundation-related activity. **If a student brings alcohol, illegal substances, drug paraphernalia or uses illegal substances, or offers them to others at OA or ENF, they will be sent home immediately on the first offense.** This includes e-cigarettes, vaping devices, and marijuana pens. There are no gray areas in this issue.

### **HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

The Outdoor Academy will not tolerate from students or staff any form of harassment or bullying based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabling condition, or any characteristic protected by law. "Harassment" can take many forms, but would include offensive language, jokes, or actions relating to race, sex, national origin, gender, gender identity, transgender status, gender nonconforming status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or other characteristics protected by law that would:

- Make a reasonable person feel discomfort, or
- Interfere with a student or staff's work performance.

The following are further examples of inappropriate behavior that will not be tolerated:

- Sexually offensive jokes;
- Any sexual assault, contact, or touching;
- Any unwelcome contact or touching;
- A promise to give favorable treatment in exchange for a sexual favor;
- Exhibition of sexually-oriented material or information;
- Offensive statements based on gender or gender identity, including deliberately choosing not to use another student's affirmed name and/or pronouns.
- Retaliation because a person complained of sexual harassment.

The Outdoor Academy encourages any student who believes they are being harassed or bullied to report their concern to the Director, Dean of Students, or other administrative personnel immediately. The Outdoor Academy administration will promptly investigate such reports and will take corrective action, which may include the expulsion of a student or dismissal of an employee, and legal action when deemed appropriate. Absolutely no racial, religious, or cultural slurs, profanity, name-calling, or offensive sexual or racial behavior will be tolerated at this school. Actions that are offensive or hurtful (emotionally or physically) may result in dismissal.

## **SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Eagle's Nest has been open for all young people, regardless of gender, for over 80 years. We believe this is vital in helping young people learn to appreciate, respect, and value one another in a manner that leads to mature, responsible adulthood and ultimate happiness. We uphold a safe environment for young people to interact regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation. We work with our students to learn to appreciate, respect, and value one another and build close friendships.

We ask, however, that students not enter into intimate exclusive relationships while at OA, so that they can focus on building friendships within the entire community, and not focus all of their energy and time on just one person. Additionally, physically intimate relationships or sexual activity of any kind is not allowed. The risks of sexual activity, such as STIs, pregnancy, unwanted sexual advances, and sexual assault, and the effect on the community, are too great. This applies to students of any gender identity or sexual orientation. If a student's actions break Eagle's Nest policy, that student may be expelled.

## **HOUSING**

Students are housed on the top floor of the Sun Lodge and in two nearby winterized cabins. All dorms have electricity and are heated by wood stoves, which will be the students' responsibility to maintain. The bathrooms are modern with hot showers. Each student will have a bed, a set of shelves, and possibly a small amount of additional space for gear in a common storage area. Students can bring photos and small decorations to place on the wall in their bunk area. We suggest students pack clothes in a trunk or duffle bag, which can then serve as additional storage for personal things under the bed. There will be a check-in time every night after which you may not leave the building or use the phone. Our expectation is that cabins and possessions remain clean, neat, and tidy. Students can bring organizing cubes to help organize their shelves. We will conduct regular cabin inspections. One or two residents supervise each cabin.

## **GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER INCLUSION AT OA**

We recognize that gender exists along a spectrum and can change at any point in an individual's growth and development. In fact, research conducted on semester schools suggests that this educational model can play a powerful role in the process by which adolescents formulate their emerging sense of identity. This may include determining gender identity.

We accept and support students however they identify, as we believe that acceptance and support are crucial to a teen's development into adulthood. All students have a right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond with their gender identity regardless of the information the parent or guardian provides to us. In the event a student was known previously by a different name, all teachers and students at OA will be asked to use the student's preferred name and appropriate pronouns to empower teens and avoid the potential negative impacts that a young person can experience in the face of rejection of identity.

Note that we may utilize students' legal names for some documents, including transcripts, medical records, etc. In cases in which a student's gender assigned at birth and the gender with which they identify are different, the OA Administration will work closely with families to determine and assign the best possible arrangements for housing.

If a student is transitioning while at OA, the OA Director will work with the individual student to assess the modifications the student is seeking, including the use of a different name or pronoun as part of an individualized plan for how the student's authentic gender will be accounted for and supported at OA. The OA Director will also encourage the student to seek out support from their parent(s) or guardian(s) and assist the student in this process of determining the most appropriate way to communicate with family members. Working with the OA Director and other faculty they may identify as part of their support team, the student will have agency in determining if and how communication with their family will unfold. Other faculty and staff will not enter into these conversations with families independently, nor will the families of classmates be informed of transitions in a student's gender identity. If you have any relevant topics, questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact The Outdoor Academy Director. The Outdoor Academy considers this information to be private. Please know that any information you share with us will be treated with the utmost care.

We believe that these policies are in accordance with best practices in schools and Eagle's Nest Foundation's statement on nondiscrimination.

### **DISMISSAL OR WITHDRAWAL**

Dismissal or withdrawal from The Outdoor Academy can occur for a number of reasons, including medical, therapeutic, personal, or disciplinary situations. In the case of dismissal or withdrawal, the sending school will be notified that the student has not completed their semester's coursework and therefore will not receive credit from The Outdoor Academy. Any student dismissed from The Outdoor Academy will not be permitted to participate in the summer programs of Eagle's Nest Foundation during the following summer.

During the enrollment process, each student is enrolled in a tuition refund insurance policy with A.W.G. Dewar, Inc. (cost included in tuition). Parents/guardians and students are responsible for understanding the coverage provided by this policy and for contacting Dewar for additional information if needed. Please note that the policy does not guarantee redemption of tuition money under all circumstances.

### **OTHER RULES**

- **Campus Boundaries:** Students are required to remain within the Hilltop Area of campus from dinner through breakfast the following day, unless they have signed out with their Resident or Back-Up Resident the evening prior, in which case they can be on Core Campus. The earliest students can sign out to leave the cabins is 6:15 AM on weekdays and 7:00 AM on weekends. If signing out of the cabin prior to the Morning Wake-Up Bell, students must sign out in groups of three or more. From after breakfast until dinner, students are allowed to be anywhere on the Hilltop Area. If students wish to venture beyond the Hilltop Area between breakfast and dinner, they must check in with a faculty member and sign out using the "Leaving Hilltop Area" form. Students may be able to earn the privilege of additional sign-out areas as the semester progresses.
- **Shoes:** Closed-toe shoes are required in the kitchen, while participating in work crew or using tools

and when necessary for athletic events and art classes. We ask that no shoes be worn in Cheoah or Sikwayi. Shoes are optional in cabin spaces. In every other case, footwear of some sort must be worn always.

- **Food & Dining Room:** As part of our practice of simple living, no gum or candy is allowed on campus at any time. Our chef will provide desserts once a week and for birthdays, and plenty of fruit, full of natural sugar, will be available. We ask that no food of any kind (except for tea or decaffeinated coffee) be sent in care packages because of student food allergies unless deemed a medical necessity by a doctor. All personal tea and coffee should be stored in the Dining Room to avoid rodents in the dorm spaces.
- **General Housekeeping:** Because of fire hazards, candles, incense, or extension cords are not allowed. We ask that book bags/coats/etc. should not be left unattended on the second floor of the Sun Lodge, but be hung on the hooks downstairs in the mudroom.
- **Dorm Life:** Because of health code, only one student is allowed on a top bunk at one time. Students may not share or swap beds, or sleep in each other's beds. Students should never leave the dorm at night for any reason without direction to do so from a faculty member.
- **Study Hall:** Students are expected to remain in one study hall location for the duration of Study Hall. Students should uphold all study hall standards as designated by the Dean of Academics.

## SCHEDULES

Life at The Outdoor Academy is both challenging and rewarding. Our days begin and end early. The morning bell is at 7:00 AM and lights out is at 10:00 PM. Students will have a choice period each day in which they can take care of personal needs (e.g., doing laundry or calling home) or find additional study time. We are intentional in maintaining healthy, meaningful, active days that include scheduled classes, activities, mealtimes, and ample rest.

Students receive a class schedule during orientation and throughout the semester will receive feedback from each teacher on homework, exams, reports, and grades. Course expectations vary, but anticipate at least four hours of class time per week in each class, with field or lab time on top of that. Sunday through Thursday evenings include quiet study hours for the entire campus. Since most teachers live on campus and proctor study halls, students will be able to schedule help sessions with faculty outside of class. We have a student computer lab equipped for word processing only. Some computers are equipped with the Internet and may be used for research projects or independent studies. While our library is small, it is full of books that have been carefully chosen and are relevant to our studies. For further research, we will use local public and college libraries, art centers, and personal interviews.

## FOOD

The food at OA is healthy and tasty. Meals are served family-style and are mostly made from scratch. We do not serve meat at every meal, but our dishes are always hearty, healthy, and balanced. When we do serve meat, we always have vegetarian or vegan options available. If you have a doctor-prescribed dietary restriction, please be in touch with our Admissions Director during the enrollment process to discuss whether or not our dining hall can accommodate your dietary needs. There will be snacks like fruit, GORP, or veggies available between meals. We do not have any vending machines.



Our staff has a unified approach to the presentation of food at family grouped tables. At OA, we do not push food on students, but we do ask that students take tasting portions of most of the dishes on the table. At the same time, we may withhold a dessert from a student who has eaten nothing or eaten poorly. It is our intention to provide nutritionally balanced and varied meal options. Given an active schedule, our students need to maintain a healthy and balanced diet. We stress that eating should not become an emotional or a reward issue. Dining is an intentional time as are the aesthetics of food presentation and the happy ambiance of the dining room.

## **BODY APPEARANCE**

We expect that all members of our community stay clean and take care of themselves physically. We expect that students will brush their teeth twice daily, shower at least every other day, and maintain clean and brushed hair.

While at OA, students are not allowed to drastically alter their appearance. This includes permanently dying their hair while here or shaving their head, or giving themselves body piercing or stick-n-poke tattoos. If students arrive with tattoos or body piercings, these should be unobtrusive, safe, and of non-controversial content. In general, we find that earrings in the outer lobe of the ear, nostril studs or nostril rings that fit closely to the nostril and don't pose a safety risk are acceptable. Some piercings that we find unsafe in our activities are navel, tongue, eyebrow, and lip piercings, and ear gauges/plugs. We ask that students remove these before coming to OA. OA retains the right to determine what is controversial.

## **THE OUTDOOR ACADEMY DRESS CODE**

Why do we have a dress code at OA? Two reasons.

1. The main reason for an OA Dress Code is that we live in an outdoor-focused boarding school, and clothing should be "appropriate to the activity" throughout the day. This means that your clothing will help protect you from the elements (sun, rain, snow, etc), will not inhibit body movements, and will not require frequent adjustments (ie: pulling up sagging pants or tugging down short shorts). You should be able to work, run, play or sit on the ground in different types of weather without worrying about damaging your clothes or exposing your private parts. This creates a safe environment where the emphasis is on who we are and what we are doing, not in how we look.
2. We also want everyone at The Outdoor Academy to feel comfortable interacting with others, no matter what they are wearing. We live, work, go to school and play in a multi-age, diverse group of people who have different comfort levels and cultural values around clothing styles and what is and is not appropriate to wear. Our goal here is to find a common ground so that everyone who lives and works in this community feels respected, comfortable, and safe.

Dress codes are tricky. We acknowledge the complexity of this and encourage the discussion around the sexualizing of clothing and bodies in our culture. The focus of the OA dress code is functionality. Dress for the occasion: you would wear certain clothes to a dance, different clothes to a religious ceremony, and different clothes to OA. **At OA, we expose less skin and wear more durable clothing in order to work and play hard and protect our bodies from the elements.**

The list that follows details items of clothing that break Eagle's Nest Foundation's dress code. This list applies to all genders. This may be different in the dorm, as that is not in the "school" environment. Items deemed inappropriate by the faculty will be held for you to take home at a break or end of semester.

### **No...**

- X Exposed buttocks from too-short skirts, shorts, or dresses. Shorts, skirts, and dresses need to be long enough that this does not happen. Can you do jumping jacks and not show your buttocks? Great.
- X Exposed chests, exposed full cleavage such as low cut tops, midriff tops that expose more than 2 inches, or tank tops with elongated arm-holes. Exception—when swimming or paddling, students can wear athletic swimsuits such as sports bras, full-coverage bikini bottoms, one-piece suits, or swim shorts. No itty-bitty bikinis or thongs.
- X Clothing that doesn't fully cover your **undergarments or private parts**, such as see-through tops that show bras or breasts or nipples, tank tops with elongated armholes that show nipples, or pants that show underwear or private parts from above or beneath.
- X Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or uses vulgar or offensive language.
- X Pajamas and slippers outside of the dorm environment.
- X Clothing that inhibits functional, active body movement that we do every day at OA. If you have to spend energy wondering if you are exposing your private parts while being active at OA, please don't wear it.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS**

Doing chores on a daily basis at OA is central to our work ethic and stewardship principles. Our schedule will be varied so everyone, including faculty, will take a turn at all tasks. There's a lot to do: gardening, cleaning dorms and bathrooms, helping to cook meals, washing dishes, construction projects, trail maintenance, and chopping and loading firewood, just to name a few. We see chores here as a way to care for our home, to learn some new skills, and to take pride in our work. We work together because it is good for the body, mind, and spirit. For outside work, please bring a pair of leather work gloves.

### **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

Based on the ideas of developmental psychologist Abraham Maslow, we identify four dimensions of human need: the need for physical sustenance and safety, the need for belonging, the need for knowledge, and the need for spiritual and aesthetic understanding. In order to attain fulfillment at any level, an individual must be healthy in the preceding levels. The four layers build upon each other and thereby foster growth within oneself and with others.

At root level is our physical health. Next comes the need for belonging to family and community. These fulfilled layers then support the need for knowledge in both mental and physical skill-building. And finally, upon these layers stands the need for spiritual and aesthetic connection to the world around us and our personal beliefs. Eagle's Nest Foundation is non-denominational of any religion. We are inclusive of diverse spiritual beliefs and encourage exploration of our beliefs in connection to the world around us.

There are ceremonial occasions at The Outdoor Academy, including: Morning Watch, Good Night Circle, and The Wheel. The Wheel is a community gathering, intended for personal reflection; activities might include yoga, meditation, sharing of personal perspectives, storytelling, music, and dance.

The Outdoor Academy cannot take students to religious services while they are in school due to our supervision needs and our program calendar. We encourage and support our students coming from faith backgrounds to seek out options to continue (or to develop) a personal faith practice outside of a formal service setting. Additionally, The Outdoor Academy is unable to assure you that we can facilitate your observance of religious holidays. More than likely our classes and expeditions will proceed as usual during religious holiday periods. On the other hand, we welcome diverse religious beliefs and we will respectfully consider requests for recognition of those beliefs within our semester calendar.

# HEALTH CARE

The Outdoor Academy is in compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures as drawn up by Eagle's Nest Foundation's advising MDs and RNs and is within the standards of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. All staff members have First Aid and CPR certifications. Overnight wilderness trips are led by a staff member with more advanced wilderness medicine training.

When our medical team determines a student needs medical assistance that we cannot provide (x-rays, sutures, etc.), the student is taken to an area health care provider. Parents/guardians are always notified of such outside medical visits and are responsible for any costs incurred.

## HEALTH INSURANCE & BILLING

Students are required to have health insurance. Most of the health care providers we utilize will file medical insurance and work directly with parents/guardians on billing matters. Most do not take out-of-state Medicaid. In cases where insurance is not accepted, parents/guardians will be responsible for making payment directly to the health care provider. Small costs for copays and medical supplies may be paid by OA and charged to student school store accounts. Health insurance is required for all participants in ENF programs.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Just as we require a doctor's release document from your regular physician, we also require a release document from any mental health professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, etc.) for students who are currently under the care of a mental health professional. If a student is receiving therapy of any kind at the time of enrollment, they must continue the same level of care while enrolled. In such cases, a Care Plan will be formalized during the enrollment process in consultation with the Dean of Students.

Please note that we have a very small faculty and staff, and as such it is difficult for us to care for students with special requirements. Given the nature of our school, **we are not staffed or equipped to support the following:**

1. A student who is actively suicidal or who has demonstrated suicidal behavior by conversation, action or otherwise in the past year
2. A student who engages in self-injurious behavior that requires medical attention
3. A student with a history of an eating disorder who cannot maintain a weight in the range deemed safe by their health care provider
4. A student who has received in-patient psychiatric hospitalization within the year preceding their desired matriculation at The Outdoor Academy.

If you are concerned with your child's ability to participate in the school activities and living requirements at The Outdoor Academy, we strongly encourage you to contact the Admissions Director prior to application or enrollment to discuss if reasonable accommodations will be necessary and whether those accommodations can be granted. OA intends this dialogue to be part of an interactive process and a resource tool early in the application or enrollment process, not as a way to exclude or screen applicants.

Should a mental health concern arise during the course of the semester, we will require a mental health consultation with an outside licensed professional to determine the necessary supports needed to keep the student in question safe at school. If the necessary supports recommended by the mental health care provider are beyond the scope of our support structures, the student will be required to go on Medical Leave. Mental health care costs that students incur while at The Outdoor Academy are the responsibility of their parents/guardians. Billing procedures are the same as for medical costs (see Medical Insurance and Billing above).

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medications (prescription and over-the-counter) will be administered by our staff after meals and in the evening. These items should be brought to campus in their original containers. Prescribed medications (including facial creams, inhalers, etc.) must be in their original container and be labeled with the student's name. The medications will be administered exactly as written on the prescription bottle. Any changes in medicine administration must be communicated to the OA Medical Coordinator in writing from the student's health care provider. Changes must also be reflected on both the bottle's label and on the prescription. A note on inhalers: if a student regularly uses an inhaler, they should bring two inhalers to school. One will be kept in their possession while the other is kept by our medical staff for cases of emergency. If a student only infrequently uses their inhaler it is acceptable to bring only one.

Students may self-administer vitamins, minerals, herbal medicines, and other substances classified by the FDA as "dietary supplements." All dietary supplements, however, will be stored under lock with the medications and will be available to students only after meals and in the evening. It is up to the student to administer their vitamins and supplements.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

OA requires all immunizations to be up to date with the only exceptions being for health or religious reasons. To apply for an immunization waiver please contact the Admissions Director. Tetanus immunizations should be within ten years. Please inform your physician that students will be in the wilderness during a portion of the semester, and they may choose to update tetanus immunizations that are over five years old. Flu and COVID vaccines are strongly encouraged. Please provide a complete and up-to-date copy of student immunization records (tetanus must be within 10 years).

## **MEDICAL FORMS**

Families will be asked to submit a Student Health History Form, physical examination, and a Program Information Form via SchoolDoc prior to the beginning of the semester. These should be completed and signed by your physician (someone other than immediate family, please) and uploaded to the portal at least thirty days before the student arrives at OA. Please be sure to do and include the following:

1. Sign all requested forms and upload a copy of your insurance card (front & back)
2. Provide your doctor's written instructions for all medications on the physical examination.
3. Provide parent's written instructions on the Student Health History Form for any vitamins, minerals, herbal medicines, or other dietary supplements a student will be self-administering.

Thank you for helping us have a safe and healthy OA semester!

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