Camp Schmidt

5th Grade Outdoor Education Trip

Volunteer Coordinator’s Handbook

Name ________________________________

School ______________________________

Date of 5th Grade Trip _____________
Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Planning Your Schmidt Center Trip 2
- Scheduling of Your Trip 2
- Pre-Trip PowerPoint 2
- Planning Documents 2
- Transportation 3
- Parent Assistance 3
- Permission Slips and Emergency Information 3
- Safety, First Aid, and Medication 3

Know Before You Go 4
- Proper Clothing 4
- Food Service 4
- Accommodations 4
- Personal Items and Clean-Up 4
- Schedule 5-6

Appendices (Hand-Outs for Chaperones and Students)

1. Parent Chaperone Guide
   - The Role of a Parent Chaperone
   - Background Check
   - Pre-Trip PowerPoint
   - Proper Clothing
   - Food Service
   - Accommodations

2. Chaperone Do’s and Don’t’s

3. What to Bring (Note: This page should be included with both the Chaperone and Student materials.)

4. Student Letter

5. Sample Parent Letter

6. Permission Slip

7. Field Trip Medication Forms

8. Schmidt Center Map
Introduction

Congratulations and thank you for accepting the extremely important role of Volunteer Coordinator for your school’s 5th grade trip to the Schmidt Center! You will get to experience (or re-experience) the incredible value of hands-on, experiential learning outdoors in the natural world!

Research shows that there are many factors that influence our knowledge, understanding, and concern for the environment.\(^1\) The Schmidt Center exposes students to two of the most important factors:

- Successful and positive experiences in the outdoors
- Knowledge of the interdependencies that exist in the natural world

The Center provides direct, performance-based instruction that reflects the indicators set forth in Common Core, the Maryland Voluntary School Curriculum, and the Maryland School Assessment Program. In addition, the Center addresses the goals and objectives of the Maryland State Department of Education’s Environmental Education Bylaw (MD Ann. Code § 13A.04.17.01-04).

This Volunteer Coordinator’s Handbook is intended to be a practical and useful guide for planning a residential (overnight) environmental education trip to the Center. The answers to the most frequently asked questions are included. However, if you have any questions about planning, organizing, or executing your trip, please call the Center for assistance.

We look forward to working with you and your students!

\(^1\) Hungerford & Volk, Southern Illinois University, 1990.
Planning Your Schmidt Center Trip

Scheduling of Your Trip
The Schmidt Center sends letters announcing the assigned dates for each school’s fifth grade overnight trip during the summer vacation. If your school has not received its date by the first day of school or you have a specific question about your date, please call the Center’s administrative office at 301-888-1185. Schools and programs interested in opportunities beyond the fifth grade overnight trip may call the Center at any time.

Pre-Trip PowerPoint
The Schmidt Center has prepared a PowerPoint slideshow that provides an overview for students, chaperones, and volunteering staff of the fifth grade overnight trip program. Experienced volunteer coordinators may choose to conduct a presentation using this PowerPoint on their own. Alternatively, volunteer coordinators should schedule a visit by Schmidt Center staff to present the PowerPoint to your students approximately one month prior to your trip. The presentation lasts about 45 minutes.

At this time, you should be prepared to provide the Center staff member with the following information:
1. A preliminary estimate of the number of students attending
2. A preliminary estimate of the number of staff, parents, and other adults attending
3. Any special requests

Planning Documents
A host of planning documents is available on the Schmidt Center’s website. (https://sites.google.com/a/pgcps.org/william-s-schmidt-outdoor-education-center/file-cabinet)
The volunteer coordinator should review them and direct chaperones to review documents as appropriate. In all circumstances, volunteer teachers who are teaching each class must review their lesson plans prior to arrival at the Center. The following materials on our website will assist you in planning your trip:
1. This Volunteer Coordinators’ Handbook and Attached Appendices:
   • Chaperone Handbook
   • Student Handbook (to assist students in packing and preparing for the trip)
   • Map of the Schmidt Center
   • Permission and Medical Forms
2. Floor plans/bed capacity of your assigned site (for your use in room assignments)
3. T-shirt flyer (please note – checks are not accepted)
4. Lesson Plans for all modules
5. Student Workbook (curricular materials)
6. Videos modeling the teaching of selected modules
Transportation
Information about confirming your bus schedule will be provided via email from Schmidt Center staff. In general, buses usually arrive at your school around 9:30 a.m. the first day of your trip and leave the Center around noon the second day. Pay close attention to emails for important information concerning buses. You may order buses from fieldtrips@pgcps.org.

At least one member of your school’s staff should drive a car to the Center in case of emergency.

Parent Assistance
Parents are an essential component of any successful program. If possible, arrange a meeting with your parent helpers to let them know their responsibilities. Parents should not be used as instructors for the modules taught at the Schmidt Center. These modules are curricular lessons, and should be taught by volunteer teachers. Parents’ responsibilities may include chaperoning groups of students as they walk between lessons and dormitory supervision at night. We recommend one parent for each ten students. Be sure to include both male and female chaperones. Any parent attending this trip must complete the full fingerprint background check.

Permission Slips and Emergency Information
The permission slip and emergency information form in the Appendix of this Handbook should be copied, completed by parents, and brought by you to the Center. Parents must provide emergency contact information on the forms in case they need to be reached during the trip. At the Center, place the forms close to the telephone in the office so that all staff members can access them.

Safety, First Aid, and Medication
Please encourage and reinforce good safety practices in all planning sessions with students. Children often get excited outdoors and may consequently engage in unsafe behaviors unless safety expectations are clear prior to the trip.

A Schmidt Center staff member trained in first aid and CPR will be on duty at all times. The Center also has access to 911 services and is 20 minutes from Southern Maryland Hospital. If you witness an accident that occurs onsite, you will be asked to complete an accident report form. If a child becomes ill at the Center, it is your school volunteer coordinator’s responsibility to contact the parents immediately and, if necessary, arrange for parents to pick up the child.

Only students with special authorization may carry medication personally. Unless so authorized, the volunteer coordinator must collect and hold all medication. Please consult Administrative Procedure 5163 for specific information about medication and about the necessary Medication Authorization Form.
Know Before You Go

Proper Clothing

The Schmidt Center’s program operates outdoors in rain or shine. Make sure that students and staff pay attention to weather forecasts and bring appropriate clothing, including, as appropriate: warm layers and outerwear, raingear, waterproof shoes, and changes of clothing.

Food Service

All meals, except lunch on the first day, will be provided by the Center. The first day’s lunch should be trash-free, i.e., all reusable containers, no plastic bags or disposable bottles, sandwiches in Tupperware rather than baggies, etc. Please turn packing a trash-free lunch into a teachable moment so that students can embrace and understand this important environmental measure prior to arrival at the Center.

Food is typical school cafeteria fare. If a child requires a special diet for religious, cultural, or medical reasons, he should bring meals along. The Center has limited refrigerator space, so only children who absolutely require special diets may bring their own food.

Accommodations

Sleeping arrangements are dormitory-style with bunk-beds. The rooms are heated, but not air conditioned. Both students and chaperones need to bring pillows and either sleeping bags or other bed linens.

The Center has three sites where groups may be housed. Group size and special needs determine to which site a group is assigned. Generally, your school is assigned to the same site as the previous year unless there is a special reason for a change. The sites are:

- Site 1 a/k/a Villages & Center Building – capacity = 168
- Site 2 a/k/a Orme Building – capacity = 120
- Site 3 a/k/a Cabins – capacity = 32
- Neville Building Administration, Offices, Nature Center (no sleeping areas)

The volunteer coordinator should assign students to the bedrooms prior to arrival at the Center. Diagrams of the sleeping quarters are included in this Handbook. Boys and girls may never enter each other’s quarters for any reason and must never be left unsupervised at any time.

Personal Items and Clean-Up

It is students’ responsibility to take care of their belongings and of their space at the Center. Students’ names and school’s name should be clearly marked on all personal items. Be sure that students are aware of their responsibility to clean up after themselves, particularly before leaving their sleeping and common areas on the last day.
Schedule

The Instructional Activity Daytime Schedule will be developed by Schmidt Center staff and emailed to you approximately one month prior to your trip. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to assign each instructional activity module to a volunteer teacher (not a parent – These modules are part of PGCPS curriculum and should thereby be taught by PGCPS teachers.) It is also the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator to give relevant lesson plans to each volunteer teacher and ensure that they have reviewed the plans prior to arrival at the Center so that they are prepared to teach!

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for planning any evening after-dinner activities beyond the campfire and wagon ride provided by Center staff (weather-permitting). If you would like to make s’mores, be sure to bring supplies. The Center will provide toasting skewers. "Free time" frequently leads to dangerous behavior and injuries, so it is not recommended as an activity. If you choose to schedule free time in the evening, it must be closely supervised for safety reasons. In planning evening activities, be aware that full dark falls shortly after 5:00 p.m. in mid-December, but closer to 9:00 in late May.

In general, the schedule will operate as follows:

Day One
Start of school day Parents and students arrive at school and assemble luggage
9:30 Buses arrive, luggage is loaded, depart school
10:30-11:15 Arrive at Center, store luggage, student orientation
11:15-11:45 Lunch
11:45-12:00 Prepare for instructional activities
12:00-5:00 Four instructional activity blocks (75-minutes each, taught by your volunteer teachers, following lesson plans provided by the Center)
5:00-5:15 Prepare for Dinner
5:15-6:15 Dinner
6:15-9:00 Evening Activities (Center will provide campfire and wagon rides, weather-permitting)
9:30-10:00 Prepare for bed (showers if desired)
10:00 Lights out

Day Two
Varies depending on site
7:15-8:00 Wake-up, pack & remove luggage, clean-up, prepare for Breakfast
8:00-11:00 Two instructional activity blocks (75-minutes each, taught by your volunteer teachers, following lesson plans provided by the Center)
11:00-11:15 Closing Ceremony
11:15-12:15 Lunch, load buses, depart
Your schedule will resemble this sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Activity</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Confidence Course</th>
<th>Stream Ecology</th>
<th>Nature Trail*</th>
<th>Forest Fall-Out</th>
<th>Mapping &amp; Orienteering*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schmidt Center Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Marker / Location</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>service building</td>
<td>field</td>
<td>pavilion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Period 1 12:00 - 1:15
- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F

Period 2 1:15 - 2:30
- F
- A
- B
- C
- D
- E

Period 3 2:30 - 3:45
- A
- B
- C
- D

Period 4 3:45 - 5:00
- D
- E
- F
- A
- B

Walk to Dinner @ 5:10pm / Eat Dinner at 5:30pm
Campfire at 7:00pm
Wagon Ride at 8:00pm
Lights Out at 10:00pm

DAY TWO
Wakeup @ 6:00am / Remove Luggage by 7:00am / Walk to Breakfast @ 7:10am / Breakfast @ 7:30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Activity</th>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Confidence Course</th>
<th>Stream Ecology</th>
<th>Nature Trail*</th>
<th>Forest Fall-Out</th>
<th>Mapping &amp; Orienteering*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Schmidt Center Staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Marker / Location</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>service building</td>
<td>field</td>
<td>pavilion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Period 5 8:30 - 9:45
- C
- D
- E
- F
- A
- B

Period 6 9:45 - 11:00
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- A

After 11:00am: Closing Ceremony / Eat Lunch / Load Buses and return to school - around 12:00pm
Appendices

1. Parent Chaperone Guide
2. Chaperone Do's and Don’t's
3. What to Bring (Note: This page should be included with both the Chaperone and Student materials.)
4. Student Letter
5. Schmidt Center Map
6. Permission Slip
7. Field Trip Medication Form
8. Sample Parent Letter
Appendix 1

Parent Chaperone Guide

for making your child’s trip to the Schmidt Center possible!!!! You are absolutely essential to our program.

Below is some information to help you prepare for your trip and know what to expect 😊

The Role of a Parent Chaperone

Parents’ responsibilities may include chaperoning groups of students as they walk between lessons and dormitory supervision at night. We recommend one parent for each ten students. Parents should not be used as instructors for the modules taught at the Schmidt Center. These modules are curricular lessons, and should be taught by volunteer teachers. Please encourage and reinforce good safety practices at all times. Children often get excited outdoors and may consequently engage in unsafe behaviors unless safety expectations are clear.

Background Check

Any parent attending a field trip must complete the full fingerprint background check.

Pre-Trip PowerPoint

Either your school’s trip volunteer coordinator or a Schmidt Center staff person will be conducting a PowerPoint slideshow at your school that provides an overview of the fifth grade overnight trip program. The presentation lasts about 45 minutes. Please find out when the presentation will occur and attend if at all possible.

Proper Clothing

The Schmidt Center’s program operates outdoors in rain or shine. Make sure to pay attention to weather forecasts and bring appropriate clothing, including, as appropriate: comfortable walking shoes, warm layers and outerwear, raingear, waterproof shoes, and changes of clothing.

Camp Schmidt T-shirts (adults sizes only) are available for purchase for $10.

Food Service

All meals, except lunch on the first day, will be provided by the Center. The first day’s lunch should be trash-free, i.e., all reusable containers, no plastic bags or disposable bottles, sandwiches in Tupperware rather than baggies, etc. Food is typical school cafeteria fare. If you prefer to bring your own meals as a chaperone, we have adult-only refrigerator space.

Accommodations

Sleeping arrangements are dormitory-style with bunk-beds. Both students and chaperones need to bring pillows and either sleeping bags or other bed linens. Chaperones must sleep in the sleeping quarters assigned to students of their same gender.
Chaperone Do’s and Don’ts

DO:
- Come with a great attitude, ready to learn and enjoy the outdoors!
- Be prepared to spend almost all of your time outside with appropriate clothing for the weather
- Assist with behavior management and safety
- Provide a model for the students of how to respect and enjoy the environment
- Bring a reusable water bottle and coffee cup
- Encourage the students to go outside their comfort zones and try new things
- Be sure you have completed the full fingerprinting/background check
- Bring comfortable shoes for extended walking (expect at least 2-4 miles)

DON’T:
- Step in to tell students solutions to problems; instead, facilitate students working together to problem-solve
- Leave students unsupervised, ever, for any reason, even for a second
- Take cell phone calls in front of the students; instead, step away if you have an emergency
- Bring alcoholic beverages on the trip; this is a school facility!
What to Bring

**Recommended:**
- Sleeping bag or bedroll
- Pillow
- Seasonal jacket or coat
- Pajamas
- Towel
- Reusable water bottle
- Comb or brush
- Gloves
- Handkerchief
- 2 pairs of walking shoes – be prepared that the shoes will get muddy and dirty
- 2 complete changes of clothing
- Trash-free lunch for the first day

**Optional:**
- Bag for dirty clothes
- Bug spray
- Camera

**NOT ALLOWED:**
- Shorts (warm weather is tick/poison ivy season)
- Candy
- Gum
- Radios/MP3/iPods/CD players
- Money (except for buying a T-shirt)
- Electronic games/ toys
- Pocket knives
- Curling irons
- Hair dryers
Dear Student,

It is almost time to visit the William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center (Camp Schmidt)! This two-day overnight experience will be fun and exciting. You will learn many things about your environment by going outside and having hands-on experiences that you'll remember forever! You will do things you never thought you could accomplish as you learn about nature and about yourself.

Your teachers will give you more information as your trip gets closer. You need to recognize, though, that a safe and enjoyable trip depends on you.

**DO:**
- **Make sure you share this information with your parents!**
- Come with a great attitude, ready to learn and enjoy the outdoors!
- Read the "What to Bring" list and take it seriously
- Bring a reusable water bottle
- Be prepared to spend almost all of your time outside with appropriate clothing for the weather
- Pay attention to weather forecasts as your trip comes near
- Put your name and school on all of your belongings
- Make sure you talk to your teacher before the trip if you have a special diet (vegetarian, etc.)
- Make sure you talk to your teacher before the trip if you need to bring medications
- Come prepared to be on your best behavior and to listen to your teachers and chaperones at all times

**DON'T:**
- Come expecting two days of recess; Camp Schmidt is all about fun and learning
- Bring anything that is not allowed
- Bring anything that goes in the trash can for your Litter-Free Lunch
- Wait until the last minute to pack
- Worry about spending time outdoors – you’ll be perfectly safe if you follow directions

We can't wait to meet you and share our beautiful forest, fields, and stream with you!

The Schmidt Center Staff
Dear Parents:

As part of Prince George's County Public Schools' Environmental Education Program, a two-day field studies program has been scheduled for your child on _________________. This two-day experience is an extension of our instructional program and regarded with the highest degree of importance.

The site for our program is the William S. Schmidt Environmental Education Center, located in the southeastern section of the County, south of Brandywine, Maryland, on Maryland Route 381. The Center is owned and operated by the Prince George’s County Public School System.

The Environmental Education Center is an outdoor laboratory. The outdoor laboratory extends the four walls of the classroom to provide a classroom filled with rich learning experiences that cannot be duplicated within the school building.

Volunteer classroom teachers, administrators, and Environmental Education Specialists will be in attendance to instruct and supervise the students.

The cost of this activity is funded largely by Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS). The cost of this trip is __________ and must be submitted with the attached, signed permission slip by __________. Make checks payable to __________________________ School.

The students will be traveling on school buses. They should arrive at school at the regular starting time. They will return to school in time to catch their regularly scheduled school bus home. Call the school to make other special arrangements.

We are asking for parent volunteers to assist in the program. Please contact the school if you are interested in assisting.

The program your child will be participating in may include nature walks; searching for life in a stream; lessons in using a compass; using math skills in the outdoors; physically challenging activities to develop confidence, teamwork, and self-esteem. All activities will be conducted in accordance with PGCPS’s policies and procedures.

You will find a list of recommended supplies and a permission slip attached.

Thank you for the support and cooperation that will make this program the highlight of the year.

Respectfully,

__________________________________________

Appendix 5
PERMISSION SLIP

I give permission for ______________________________ to attend the ______________________________ School Environmental Education Overnight program on ___________________________ at the William S. Schmidt Center.

I understand that my child will be transported to and from the Center by County school bus. The cost of the fieldtrip is ___________________________. I must return this permission slip with the above fee by _______________________.

________________________________________________________
Signature of Parent or Guardian

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization Form

Name of Student __________________________________________
Sponsoring Teacher ________________________________________

Parents or Guardians ______________________________________
Emergency Phone if Parents cannot be reached ______________________

Family Physician _________________________________________
Dentist _________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________ (H) __________________

Does pupil have any disease, handicap, or other conditions? □ Yes □ No

Describe _______________________________________________________________________________________

Does the above restrict any activities? □ Yes □ No

If yes, to what extent? ____________________________________________________________________________

Is pupil covered by hospitalization and/or accident insurance? □ Yes □ No

Name of Carrier __________________________________________
Insurance No. ____________________________________________

NOTE: In a serious emergency, your son/daughter may have to be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room. Should such action be necessary, you will be notified as soon as possible and will be responsible for any charges incurred. The school has no funds to meet the bills resulting from care which is sought outside the school setting.

It is important that you understand that your signature on this card does not give the hospital permission to treat your son/daughter.

________________________________________  __________________________
Date                                                Signature of Parent or Guardian

Appendix 6
FIELD TRIP MEDICATION INFORMATION

Notification to Parents: Parents are to be advised of the Prince George’s County Public Schools policy on medication administration at school and/or school-sponsored field trips.

A Physician’s Medication Authorization for Prescription and Nonprescription Medication Form (see attached; also this document, PGIN #7540-3454, is an attachment to PGCPS Administrative Procedure 5163) must be completed and signed by a health care provider in order for any medication (prescription or over the counter) to be administered. Medications WILL NOT be accepted by school personnel or administered without the receipt of a completed Physician’s Medication Authorization Form. The directions on the label must match the directions on the Physician’s Medication Authorization Form.

Prescription medication WILL NOT be accepted by school personnel without the pharmacy label on the container with the student’s name, directions, and expiration date.

Over the counter medication must be labeled with the student’s name and birth date.

To ensure safe handling of medication:

1. **Parents:** have the responsibility to deliver all medications to the school. Students are not permitted to carry medication without required authorization and approval of the school nurse. Students who carry medication without approval are in violation of the PGCPS Code of Student Conduct.

2. **School Personnel:** must notify parents of unused medications. Parents will retrieve unused medication from the school. Unclaimed medication will be disposed of by flushing.

3. **Monitoring Medication:** School personnel must monitor the taking of medication (including inhalers). School personnel will be responsible for the storage and administration of all medication. Students may carry inhalers and Epinephrine auto injectors only with authorization of the school nurse. Students are not to carry medication on their person or concealed in the backpacks or overnight belongings. This is for the safety of your own child as well as all students on the field trip. If you have questions regarding medications on this field trip, please call the school nurse.

________________________________________________________________________________
at ____________________________
(school telephone number)
(school name)

The environmental field trip is scheduled for: __________________________________________
(William S. Schmidt Center or Hard Bargain Farm) (date)
{ ↑ circle field trip location ↑ }

PLEASE BRING MEDICATIONS AND FORMS TO THE SCHOOL NURSE BY ____________
(due date)
### Physician’s Medication Authorization For
Prescription and Nonprescription Medication
ONE MEDICATION PER FORM

**FOR COMPLETION BY PARENT(S) GUARDIAN(S)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name of Student</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I understand that I must supply the school with the equipment/supplies needed to administer the medication.
- I understand that all medications must be labeled with the name of the medication, name of the student, name of the physician, date, and directions for administration. Prescription medication must be labeled by a registered pharmacist.
- I hereby authorize the medication described below to be administered as directed by my child’s physician.
- I understand that the physician will be called if a question arises about my child’s medication.
- 911 will be called immediately if there is a problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Parent/Guardian</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR COMPLETION BY PHYSICIAN**

1. Name and strength of medication

2. Reason for medication

3. Route of administration

4. Dosage of medication

5. Time of day medication is to be given

6. Date medication began Date medication discontinued

7. Side effects

8. Additional information (crush, dissolve)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician’s Signature (Original signature/NO stamp)</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician’s Printed Name</th>
<th>Physician’s Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physician’s Telephone Number</th>
<th>Physician’s Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by Health Services Staff Name/Date

---

Appendix 7 – second page