



## Welcome to NatureBridge in Prince William Forest Park!

NatureBridge has been teaching and inspiring youth since 1971. Welcome to a rewarding week with your students. Thank you for taking on the incredibly important role of being a NatureBridge chaperone. Your efforts are essential to our program's success. *Please read this over thoroughly and bring it with you on your NatureBridge trip.*

### Group Coordinator Responsibilities

*Before the Program:* This is the person who has taken responsibility for organizing all of the program logistics for your school or group's program with NatureBridge. They are responsible for a wide range of tasks before the program begins, including:

1. Sending a packet home with the students and chaperones including: the parent letter, a packing list, student expectations, and registration forms.
2. Holding pre-trip meeting with both the students and chaperones in order to go over such things as program goals, behavioral expectations, logistics of the program, and a plan and strategy for free time.
3. Submitting paperwork essential to NatureBridge planning for your program including: Planning Questionnaire, Learning Group Lists, and Lodging Assignments.

*During the Program:* The Group Coordinator acts as the liaison between the Site Coordinator and the rest of your group. It is part of their responsibility to check in with the Site Coordinator at both breakfast and dinner. This is a time to express concerns, address logistics, do paperwork, exchange mail/phone messages, and facilitate a smooth-running week. It is also the Group Coordinator's responsibility to pass on all pertinent information to other chaperones and/or to the students.

**Alcohol:** NatureBridge prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances on campus or at any activity involving student participants.

### Site Coordinator

The primary role of the NatureBridge Site Coordinator is to act as a liaison between your school and NatureBridge to coordinate the logistics on campus. Please feel free to approach the Site Coordinator for any reason.

The dining area is the easiest way to reach the site coordinator is at meals or by calling 703-881-8858. Note: This phone number can also be used to reach the Overnight Staff Member on Duty.

### Overnight Educator

There will be an educator that will be assigned to stay on campus each night to support chaperones in case the need should arise. The overnight educator will be on duty after Evening Program in the evening and until the first Breakfast shift in the morning. The educator can be reached on the campus phone at 703-881-8858.



## Chaperone Responsibilities

Chaperones are with their students almost 24 hours a day. The most successful chaperones are actively involved in their role. You can prevent, solve and address many of the issues that arise by being visible and present for your students. It is your responsibility to enforce NatureBridge policies, demonstrate a positive attitude and model inclusive behavior.

### ***Before Trail (Before 9:00 am)***

7:00 a.m. Student wake-up and cabin time. Times may vary depending on Breakfast schedule.

- Breakfast: Walk with your students to breakfast, supervise them in the Dining Hall, be sure to arrive ON TIME for announcements from the Site Coordinator.
- Prep for Trail: Please ensure that students are on time to meet their educator with daypacks ready to go so that they can depart as soon as everyone is present (two full water bottles, sun protection, extra layers, rain gear, journal & pen or pencil). No cell phones, candy, extra books, iPods or extra weight.

9:00 a.m. Meet your educator: location to be announced by the Site Coordinator

### ***On Trail (9:00-4:00 p.m.)***

A chaperone's positive attitude and active participation affects the students' attitudes and willingness to take part in new challenges. Students look to all adults as role models in demonstrating compassion for all students, a respect for the natural world and enthusiasm for learning. Part of your responsibility is taking an appropriate, engaged role in field activities, group challenges and discussion during the daily hikes.

*Cell Phones should only be used in the event of an emergency while on trail with a group.*

Strenuous Nature: While our program focuses on field science, hiking is often required to reach our educational locales. It is imperative that chaperones are in strong enough physical condition to hike several miles on uneven ground. On most days groups will cover between 2-5 miles. Adult chaperones are part of the group and also an important safety resource should there be an emergency, they must remain with the group.

### Your Educator

- The Educator decides on the day's destination based on the teaching plan, fitness of students as a whole, weather and other objective hazards and logistical constraints.
- Please work with your Educator to support their plan without letting your personal goals interfere with the program.
- Your Educator will discuss your role in the learning group during your first meeting.
- You will return to the Cabin Camp 1 Dining Hall at 4:00PM

### ***After Trail, Before Evening Program (4:00-7:15 p.m.)***

After an amazing day of learning, your students will have some free time.

- Please escort students back to cabins with their day packs.
- Be visible and present in common spaces. You are responsible for your students. Check bathrooms frequently during high volume use.
- Walk with students in groups to the Ball Field or any other site on campus which is away from the Cabin Loop in which students are staying.



- Dinner: Walk with your students to dinner, supervise them in the Dining Hall, be sure to arrive ON TIME for announcements from the Site Coordinator.
- Evening Program: Each night you will have a program. Listen to the Site Coordinator's announcements and look for your schedule [on the whiteboard in the Dining Hall].

### ***After Evening Program (until 9:30 p.m.)***

Please help your students' transition for sleeping.

8:30 p.m. Return to cabins: change into pajamas, use bathrooms, etc.

9:30 p.m. Lights out. Your students are quiet and (at least pretending to be) asleep. The overnight educator will stop by to check in at each Cabin Loop before lights out.

## **Safety**

Group safety is the primary responsibility of the Educators on trail. *You are a crucial source of support should an accident or emergency occur.* The educators hold a Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder Certification. They carry a first aid kit and radio, from which they can contact our base of operations as well as the National Park Service emergency response personnel.

## **Medical Facilities**

Urgent Care:

NextCare Urgent Care

3990 Fettle Park Dr, Dumfries, VA 22025

Hospital:

Potomac Hospital

2300 Opitz Blvd, Woodbridge, VA 22191

We ask that chaperones do as much as possible to instill a sense of safety and personal responsibility in the students. Students taken ill or injured are under the care and supervision of the group's leader and adult chaperones, who will call to confer with the parent/guardian. [We ask that all school groups bring one personal vehicle to act as a transport for students or chaperones in need of medical care.]

## **Student Medications**

Chaperones are responsible for managing student medications. It is each school's responsibility to work with parents to ensure that student medications are properly administered while on site at Prince William Forest Park. MOST medications should NOT remain in the student's possession during the program. NatureBridge staff can administer over the counter medications from their first aid kit to participants within the limitations of their training.

## **Students Who Can't Participate in the Field**

Occasionally students do not go out on hikes due to illness or disciplinary action. When this happens, an adult chaperone must stay back. Please be sure to notify the Site Coordinator when this occurs. It is necessary that each group brings an adequate number of chaperones (normally one "floater" is enough) for this purpose. Students who stay back from trail must stay on campus. Students can only leave campus for their day program with NatureBridge staff.



## **Visitors**

NatureBridge staff must be notified if anyone not initially arriving with the group will be visiting campus. This includes school administrators or chaperones that will be arriving late.

## **Early Departures**

If any students or adults will be leaving the program early, they must inform NatureBridge Staff (Day Manager, Site Coordinator, and/or Lead Educator for the school). Before anyone leaves campus, an Early Departure Form must be completed. For planned early departures, the Group Coordinator must notify the Lead Educator and may get the Early Departure Form ahead of time.