

# Volcano Outdoor School

## *Parent Information Letter*



Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are excited that your child is coming on a field trip to Mount St. Helens with Volcano Outdoor School.

**About Us:** The Mount St. Helens Institute is private 501(c)3 organization dedicated to science, education and exploration of volcanic landscapes.

We offer activities for youth and adults all year long. We are proud to operate under a special use permit from the US Forest Service Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and are an equal opportunity provider. Learn more about the Mount St. Helens Institute and our programs including summer camps for youth and field seminars and guided hikes for adults online at [www.mshinstitute.org](http://www.mshinstitute.org).

**The facility:** The Mount St. Helens Science and Learning Center is the repurposed Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center nestled on a ridge above Coldwater Lake in the heart of the blast zone. The Science and Learning Center is the base campus for Volcano Outdoor School and here your child will sleep, share meals and learn. The Science and Learning Center is a collaborative effort between the Mount St. Helens Institute and the USFS Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Together, our goal is to connect people with nature through science, the arts, and adventure recreation.



**Meals:** The Mount St. Helens Institute can accommodate most dietary restrictions and food allergies; please be sure the lead teacher/organizer knows about your child's needs.

**What will we learn and do?** While attending Volcano Outdoor School your child will be immersed in 10 hours of experiential, science-based instruction providing foundational knowledge, team building, interactive adventures and guided inquiry. All programs include outdoor exploration on Coldwater Ridge, at Coldwater Lake or at the nearby Hummocks Trail. Our lessons align with National Science Standards and Mount St. Helens Institute works closely with teachers to modify and adapt programs as needed.

**Our expectations of participants:** While at the Volcano Outdoor School we expect your child to:

- Actively participate in activities and lessons
- Respect students, staff, chaperones, themselves, the building and the landscape
- Behave in a safe and responsible manner
- Arrive prepared for a range of activities both indoors and outdoors
- Come with open and curious mind

Please review the Health Form and Waiver for grounds of dismissal.

**What to pack?** In order to have a safe and comfortable trip to Mount St. Helens, we recommend the following:

- Signed Program Waivers (to be collected by the group coordinator)
- Sturdy shoes or tennis shoes (No open-toed shoes, no Keds/Converse)
- Day backpack or book bag
- Water bottle(s); during the summer please bring water bottles that can hold a total of 2 liters.
- Long pants (2 pairs)
- Shirts (2 pairs)
- Sweater/sweatshirt (2)
- Undergarments; during spring and fall we recommend long underwear
- Socks (2-3 pairs)
- Rain jackets (especially in spring and fall)
- Sun hat (especially in the summer)
- Warm hat (especially in the spring and fall)
- Pajamas
- Toiletries (wash cloth, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, etc.)
- Sleeping bag or blankets to sleep under
- Sleeping pad or blankets to sleep on
- Pillow
- Sunscreen (especially in the summer)
- Camera (optional; phone cameras will be allowed at specific times)
- Headlamp/Flashlight (optional)
- Sun glasses (optional)
- Personal prescription or over-the-counter medications (give these to the lead teacher from your school/group)
- Electronics and food will be kept and managed by the teacher/chaperones

**Medical Release Form:** In order to participate in a Volcano Outdoor School program, the Mount St. Helens Institute must have a completed and signed Medical Release Form for each student. Please send necessary medications your child takes with the lead teacher/group organizer.

**Who are the staff and who will supervise?** Our staff are professional educators who are passionate about geology, ecology and outdoor education. During your child's visit, Mount St. Helens Institute staff will provide instruction, learning-based games and meals. Teachers and chaperones will be responsible for supervising students and managing behavior.

**Contact during the program:** In case of a family emergency while your child is at Mount St. Helens, you may contact us at (360) 247-2114.

*We look forward to meeting your child and having a wonderful learning adventure at Mount St. Helens! ~ The Mount St. Helens Institute Education Staff*