

Parent's Information Sheet

Your child will soon spend an exceptional week at the Keewaydin Environmental Education Center (KEEC). During the five days at KEEC, the students will actively learn about the environment and their role in it on both a local and global level. Their studies will incorporate science, math, social studies, and language arts. In the process of learning about the natural world, the children will also learn about themselves and how to be a responsible, contributing member of a community. The students will grow personally from the need to cooperate with others and to live and work harmoniously in both large and small groups. A week in a secure and caring environment, in close contact with so many people, allows students to make new friends and to see classmates and teachers in a new light. It is a growing experience and often a very important first time "away from home" experience.

The focus of our KEEC program is community. We demonstrate that all things are interdependent within communities through every aspect of our program. A crucial aspect of any community is that each member is necessary for its successful functioning. This is why KEEC is intentionally a residential program. The residential experience is critical to the lessons we convey throughout the week. For this reason, students may not leave and return, except in emergency situations. The student's absence would be felt and their contribution would be lost. They would also miss out on an essential part of the experience that could not be made up in any way.

In order to maintain this vital sense of community, we ask that you refrain from casual visitation. While the visits are of good intention, they disrupt the flow of activities and the 'community establishment'. Also, such visitations often result in a confused, homesick child rather than a happy one. Parents who have been enlisted by the school to serve as chaperones fulfill a very important role and are welcomed as part of the educational team.

For students prone to homesickness, the right send off is very important. It sets the tone for either a successful or unsuccessful experience. Good-byes such as "I'll miss you", "What will we do without you for a week", and "I'll be sad while you're gone", while true, tend to send students away feeling guilty about leaving. A promise to come get them leaves a child very determined NOT to enjoy themselves. These suggestions are an effort to prepare a child to successfully meet a challenge with the support of their teacher, friends, and KEEC staff. Your encouragement and support of this learning experience is essential to their longevity in this program.

Here are a few facts that should answer some of your common questions:

1. Students live in summer cabins with wood stoves installed for spring and fall use. We take all the necessary precautions to maintain safety concerning wood stoves. Flush toilets and hot showers are available in nearby buildings.
2. Children are under direct supervision at all times. The school's teacher, because of their familiarity with children, will be responsible for the social behavior of the class. While it is unlikely, Keewaydin reserves the right to send a child home during the week, if necessary.
3. When there is more than one school at KEEC for the week, we combine the students in all aspects of our program: study groups, cabins, and at the tables in the dining hall. There is always a KEEC staff member and at least one adult from one of the schools sleeping in each cabin with the children.
4. A registered nurse is available each morning in our well-equipped dispensary. All KEEC staff have CPR and First Aid certifications. In addition, we have a local physician on call for consultation and emergencies. The Porter Medical Center in Middlebury is fifteen minutes away.

5. Keewaydin does not provide medical/health coverage for any participant in the KEEC program. A parent or guardian's own health insurance would be the primary provider.

6. All medication brought by students is checked in on Monday by our physician and nurse and will be under supervision of the nurse throughout the week. If you grant permission on the health form, medicines such as Tylenol, Robitussin, Benadryl, Pepto-Bismal and throat lozenges may be given when necessary.

7. In the event of serious sickness or an accident, the school teacher in charge will notify parents as soon as possible.

8. Please use the Equipment List provided to insure that children come with proper clothing.

9. Food, drinks, gum, money, knives, electronic games, radios, mp3 players, games, etc. are not allowed. Given the full schedule of activities, these items are unnecessary and are easily lost in our cabin settings.

10. Swimming may be offered when weather is suitable and with permission of the school. A certified Lifeguard will oversee all swims.

11. In case of emergencies, our phone number is (802) 352-1050. Please refrain from calling unless it is of utmost importance. Our address is 10 Keewaydin Road, Salisbury, VT 05769. Please feel free to write letters, clearly labeled with your child's name.

The above has hopefully answered many of your questions. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any other questions. We are very excited that your child will be with us and want her/him to have the best week possible. Thank you for cooperating with our many requests and allowing your child to be a part of this unique experience.