



## **CODS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The policies and procedures are to serve as a framework for the facilitation of all residential programs at Coloma Outdoor Discovery School (CODS). By signing the CODS Service Agreement, school Administrators and Visiting Teachers are responsible to understand, and abide by, the terms and conditions outlined below.

### **CODS NATURALISTS**

CODS has a reputation for employing professional Naturalists who are excellent role models, teachers, and well-educated individuals. Because the quality of our programs relies largely on our Naturalists, we search for individuals who have a love for children, teaching and the outdoors. The following is a list of minimum requirements that all Naturalists working at CODS must meet:

- B.A. or B.S. preferably in education, science, history or a related field
- Current CPR and First Aid certification
- Live Scan fingerprint background check
- California Food Handler certification
- On-site training
- Six months experience teaching in the classroom or in outdoor education
- General knowledge of the developmental needs and behavior of children
- Excellent communication and group management skills

CODS staff is on campus between the hours of 7:30am-10:00pm, during which time they are responsible for:

- Assisting/guiding Chaperones and Visiting Teachers
- Educating, supervising, and empowering program participants. Learning will take place in various formats: at meals, in the field, on the trail, and in large (100+) or small (12-16 students) groups.
- Facilitating emergency and situational logistics of program
- Providing and documenting "on-trail" first aid/CPR

### **VISITING TEACHERS**

The success of the Gold Rush program is dependant upon the assistance of Visiting Teachers and Parent Chaperones. *It is imperative that Visiting Teachers and Parent Chaperones be on-site for the duration of the CODS program—programs require a 24-hour/day commitment!*

One homeroom teacher per classroom is welcomed to attend a CODS program with no additional fee. An exception will apply to teachers that job-share a classroom, or who teach a grade level combination class. Additional teachers, aides, or assistants are permitted to attend, pending approval of the Program Director and availability of accommodations, and will be subject to the Parent Chaperone fee. School administrators are encouraged to attend for all or part of the CODS program with no additional fee. Family members (spouses, children, etc.) are discouraged to visit or stay at CODS.

The on-site role of the Visiting Teacher(s) is outlined in the CODS Teacher Handbook and includes, but is not limited to:

*In general—*

- Assigned the role of chaperone if the required number of Chaperones is not in attendance.
- Assisting students who have special needs/diets
- Facilitating & logging participant check-out for students who depart early
- Facilitating a structured 30-minute “teacher time” each evening
- Floating among student learning groups
- Following through with student and/or parent chaperone discipline as directed by CODS personnel
- Notifying the parent/guardian and school principal in situations of: discipline, illness, or emergency
- Providing general help with program transitions (i.e., move-in, bed time, free time, and shower time)

*Protocols regarding participant health practices—*

- Acting as the emergency point person between the hours of 10:00pm-7:30am
- Administering, carrying, and documenting student medications if he or she is designated by your school as “*trained school personnel*”
- Driving participants to the hospital for non-life threatening emergencies
- Providing basic first aid to students on campus
- Supervising students who become injured/ill

**PARENT CHAPERONES**

Parents who are attending an overnight program have:

- Attended a pre-trip presentation or information meeting at your school
- Attended an on-site orientation at Coloma
- Been pre-selected by the Visiting Teacher(s)
- Filled out a CODS Health Information Form
- Received a fingerprint background check
- Abided by any other criteria as deemed by your school

CODS encourages careful selection of Parent Chaperones, as they play a very important role at outdoor school. A suggested application for the selection of Parent Chaperones is provided in the Service Agreement packet. For the safety and security of our participants, we do not allow any unapproved visitors.

The total number of Parent Chaperones permitted depends on the final number of attending students. For the daytime program, two adults (preferably one male and one female) from the attending school will be assigned to each small learning group by Visiting Teacher(s). If the final student number decreases, resulting in fewer learning groups, the number of Parent Chaperones will also be reduced by two (2) for each learning group. Please review the typical schematics below:

Total # of students:	Number of learning groups:	Number of chaperones:
9-17	1	2 or 4
18-32	2	4
33-48	3	6
49-64	4	8
65-80	5	10
81-96	6	12
97-112	7	14
113-128	8	16

The Program Director or Lead Naturalist will be in contact with the Visiting Teacher(s) if the final number of learning groups, chaperones, or both, will differ from that above.

Outdoor school is an opportunity to grow for many children; because of this, Chaperones are NOT to be placed in the same learning group as their child. Chaperones will have time to connect with their child at meals, free time, during the evening program. If a parent strongly requests to stay with his or her child at night, the visiting classroom teacher is responsible for letting the Program Director or Lead Naturalist know at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip, as CODS assigns sleeping arrangements. Requests are usually honored, but not guaranteed.

Expectations of Parent Chaperones are outlined below and include: assisting at meal time; participating in activities; supervising and providing general help to students both during the day and at night.

- Tobacco, drugs and alcohol are NOT permitted on the CODS campus.
- Role-model student guidelines: no gum, candy, open-toed shoes, or electronic devices.
- Travel in groups of three. A group of three consists of two (2) students and one (1) adult or two (2) adults and one (1) student.
- Use positive and appropriate language.
- Avoid conversations related to personal or controversial topics.
- Respect student modesty and privacy.
- Limit physical contact with the students (aside from general assistance and supervised activities).
- Ensure that assigned students are supervised at all times.
- Parents should not request to leave at any time during the program duration.

In order to ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all participants, any parent in violation of the expectations outlined above, or who exhibits abnormal behavior, may be asked to leave the program. The school administrator will be contacted if such action needs to occur. If said individual cannot arrange transportation home for him or herself, visiting schools are responsible for providing transportation home within six (6) hours of the requested leave time. Said individual will be isolated from the CODS program until transportation arrives.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

CODS does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, gender or sexual orientation, in employment of administration or staff; the admission or treatment of visiting participants, parents or teachers; or in the operation of its educational programs and activities.

Frequently, more than one school attends CODS at once. In these cases, schools will remain independent for the small learning groups and for sleeping accommodations. Schools will be integrated during meals, recreation periods, and the evening program, which provide opportunities for the formation of new friendships.

Students who require special assistance with emotional, behavioral, physical or medical needs, are encouraged to attend and will be accommodated provided that ample notice is given to CODS by the Visiting Teacher(s). In most cases, a one-on-one aide is welcomed and appreciated for such individuals; however, aides are subject to the Chaperone fee, and must be pre-approved by the Program Director.

In the case of special dietary needs, "ready to eat," supplemental foods must be pre-packaged and labeled for each meal by the student's parent/guardian. Visiting Teacher(s) will be responsible for making these foods accessible to the student. Refrigeration and a microwave are available on-site for storage and preparation of these foods. A menu and allergen information is available under the "visitor info" page at [www.cods.org](http://www.cods.org).

*It is imperative that students be on-site for the duration of the CODS program—programs require a 24-hour/day commitment!* If a student will be departing early for illness/injury, discipline, or other reasons, Visiting Teacher are responsible to check his/her medical form for authorization to release him/her to the adult present at time of pick-up. The Visiting Teacher, and the authorized adult, must sign and date the “early release” log provided in the CODS office.

## **PARTICIPANT HEALTH PRACTICES**

Careful plans need to be made in preparation for medication administration at CODS. CODS encourages your school to follow the guidelines established for medication administration for school-sponsored activities as written by the California Department of Education (CDE). However, since the liability and responsibility for medication administration at CODS rests upon your school, your school has the option to administer medication according to different protocol if so deemed by your administrator. Please inform the Program Director if your school wishes to conduct procedures differently than suggested by the CDE.

Visiting Teachers have primary accountability for handling emergency situations that may occur after normal operating hours, between 10:00pm-7:30am. If an emergency occurs, Visiting Teachers are responsible for contacting a parent/guardian and following emergency protocol as listed in the CODS Teacher Handbook.

Visiting teachers have primary responsibility for administering basic, on-campus first aid, and assisting/supervising students who become injured/ill. If a student exhibits repeated vomiting, fever, flu-like symptoms, or other serious, non-life threatening illness/injury, Visiting Teachers are to immediately notify the student’s parent/guardian to arrange pick-up. If the student’s parent/guardian is unable to provide transportation home within six (6) hours of the requested leave time, the visiting school is responsible to provide transportation home for the student. Teachers are to also notify parent/guardians if a student: has an allergic reaction of any kind, for sprains/strains/breaks, receives a puncture wound, is stung by a bee/wasp, has an injury in a sensitive area (i.e., eyes, face), or for any other questionable situation.

Upon arrival at CODS, all adults will participate in a tour of the facilities including the location of the emergency phone and First Aid Trailer. Adults will have 24-hour access to the emergency phone, emergency phone numbers, emergency protocol, and extra set of participant health forms, which are located in the CODS Office. First aid and other overnight supplies will be found in the First Aid Trailer. First Aid supplies such as bandages, gauze, and medical tape are also carried by Naturalists. CODS does not provide OTC medications for students. These include, but are not limited to: allergy remedies (Benadryl, etc.), antiseptic or topical ointments, vitamins, cold remedies, insect bite remedies, non-aspirin substitutes, and poison oak remedies. Trained school personnel (TSP) may provide OTC medications if your school has an approved procedure for the administration of selected OTC medications.

During the on-site orientation, Parent Chaperones will be given envelopes by Visiting Teachers which contain participant health forms for the same-gender students in their small learning group. They will carry these forms on their person at all times for emergency purposes. For the best interest of the students, relevant information will be communicated to Parent Chaperones and CODS staff on a need to know basis, ensuring strict confidentiality of any sensitive information.

In case of a medical or surgical emergency, participants may be treated by Marshall Medical, (530) 622-1441, 1100 Marshall Way, Placerville, CA 95667. Expenses for treating the individual are not covered by CODS.

*CDE's Guidelines for Medication Administration for School-Related Activities:*

As written in the Program Advisory on Medication Administration, "Only designated trained school personnel be allowed access to student medication and medication responsibilities for students needing medication at school-sponsored activities." If your school district does not have a nurse who can attend outdoor school, your administrator will need to designate the appropriate number of staff members to assume responsibility. CODS staff does not qualify as trained school personnel (TSP). The following should be considered when selecting TSP:

- Estimate 1 TSP per two (2) small learning groups requiring mid-day medication. Students that require mid-day medication should be placed in the same small learning group(s).
- TSP must be willing and physically competent to escort groups of students during off-campus hikes.

**All medications, including over-the-counter (OTC) medications, may only be administered by TSP, and must have a written statement on the Medical Information and Release Form (provided by CODS) from the authorized health care provider AND the parent or guardian.** An exception to the above applies if a parent/guardian in attendance agrees to administer medications to his/her child--this agreement must be documented on the medication log provided by TSP. TSP are responsible for logging medications at the time and place of administration. Logs are to be returned to and reviewed by the school nurse or other duly qualified supervisor of health.

Students may self-administer emergency medication, such as asthma inhalers and epi-pens, providing that the authorized health care provider states that the student is trained and competent. TSP are responsible for ensuring that such medication is available to the student at all times. Medication given on an "as needed basis" (P.R.N.) must be kept under lock and key.

**★ Please note:** insulin can only be administered by the student, a registered nurse, or the student's parent (who may attend CODS as a special-needs aide). CODS does not have a registered nurse on-site.

All medications must be turned into TSP prior to the trip, and packaged individually in pharmacy-prepared containers (with only the amount to be administered). Container labels must include:

- Student's name
- Authorized health care provider's name
- Name of medication
- Dose of medication
- Method of administration
- Time of administration

*For detailed information on the California Department of Education's health guidelines, visit: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/Ls/he/hn/documents/medadvisory.pdf>*

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Behavior at the Coloma Outdoor Discovery School is guided by respect: for nature, self, community members, the facility, and leaders. Students attending the Gold Rush program will wear a bead on their name tag representing a commitment to the above.

CODS believes that most discipline problems can be avoided by providing clear expectations, proper group management, and the use of positive reinforcement. However, if one or more of these preventative methods prove to be ineffective, Naturalists and/or Visiting Teachers will implement the following steps:

1. Three (3) verbal warnings. Discussion with student about his or her “choices.”
2. Lowering or removal of respect bead (does not apply to *Team Discovery* participants). Respect bead may be earned back if student shows progressive improvement.
3. If negative behavior continues, a meeting with the student, Program Director or Lead Naturalist, and the Visiting Teacher(s) will occur to determine an action plan.
4. If the action plan proves unsuccessful, a parent/guardian will be notified to pick-up the individual. If the student’s parent/guardian is unable to provide transportation home within six (6) hours of the requested leave time, the visiting school is responsible to provide transportation home for the student.

*Please note:* in cases of extreme or abnormal behavior, one or more of these steps may be skipped as deemed appropriate by CODS Administration or a Visiting Teacher(s).

Visiting Teachers: Please notify the Program Director or Lead Naturalist if discipline situations arise from another visiting school that affect program quality or the welfare of participants.

### **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Please give your transportation provider the following weight limitations for the one-lane bridge that leads to CODS:

- 2 axle vehicles—14 tons (28,000lbs.)
- 3 axle vehicles—21 tons (42,000lbs.)

Please notify the Program Director if your bus is over the limit. CODS will arrange to meet you at the alternate drop-off and pick-up site which is behind the Old Schoolhouse in the town of Coloma. A map and directions may be found in the Teacher Handbook, or can be faxed upon request. Luggage may then be transported over by our pre-arranged trailer, or be carried in your supplemental vehicles.

At least one private vehicle needs to accompany each visiting school and remain on-site for the duration of the program in case transportation is necessary between the hours of 10:00pm-7:30am.

### **PARENT DRIVERS**

Parents who volunteer to help drive students to CODS on arrival day are welcome to use the restroom and say goodbye to the students, but will be asked to leave when the program commences. Parents who volunteer to help pick-up students should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time, and are responsible for providing their own lunch.

### **FACILITIES**

CODS is located within the Coloma Resort, a gated campground. All teaching and meeting areas will occur outdoors or under covered, outdoor areas, aside from the sleeping accommodations and a small clubhouse. Participants arriving in the winter months should be prepared for inclement weather. The pool is not open to school use. Visiting schools are responsible to pay for any damages of Coloma Resort facilities inflicted by program participants.

Gold Rush program participants sleep in bunkhouses which accommodate 12-24 individuals and are supervised by two or more same-gender Parent Chaperones from the attending school. The rooms are climate-controlled and are equipped with a restroom. Additional shower houses are available for participant use. Visiting Teachers stay in separate, same-gender, centrally-located accommodations.

The Program Director or Lead Naturalist will match at least *two* same-gender adults from the same school to supervise and sleep in the bunkhouses. A single same-gender adult would be suitable for supervision if: 1) an adjoining door is available to connect the bunkhouse with another bunkhouse from the same school and gender or 2) the visiting school administrator sends a letter of release. If a small school has only one learning group (due to low student numbers) and no letter of release is obtained, two additional parents (preferably one male and one female) will be required to attend specifically for bunkhouse supervision.

*Team Discovery Ropes Challenge* participants may sleep in tent cabins which accommodate 8-10 individuals and are supervised by one or more Parent Chaperone(s) from the attending school. The cabins consist of sturdy framed canvas tents built on plywood floors with bunk beds and mattresses. Water, electricity hook-ups, tables and awnings are immediately outside the tent cabins, while restrooms and showers are close by. Visiting Teachers have the option of staying in the tent cabins or centrally located accommodations.

## **PROGRAM FEES**

Outdoor school fees vary with the type and duration of program and are updated on our website: [www.cods.org](http://www.cods.org). Please note: fees for groups making reservations through a tour agency are subject to different rates. The cost per student includes room and board, instruction, program supplies, evening presenters, and admission to the State Park (if applicable). Schools arriving with a total of fourteen (14) or less students will be billed for fifteen (15) students to cover the minimum costs required to facilitate a program. CODS fees do not include transportation to or from our campus. Visiting Teachers are required to submit names of all students and Parent Chaperones attending at least two weeks prior to the arrival date.

## **INDIVIDUAL CANCELLATIONS**

Refunds, minus a 20% administrative fee, will only be given for students who fall ill within three days prior to the arrival date. The illness must be verified by the classroom teacher and reported to the Executive Director in order to receive a refund. Refund checks will be made to the visiting school, not to individuals.

Adjustments to the number students as listed on the Service Agreement must occur within 30 days of receipt of the Agreement. After 30 days, the number of students can decrease within five percent (5%) of the number listed on the Service Agreement with no penalty. CODS suggests that student numbers be underestimated; otherwise, your school will be charged per student for all reductions that exceed 5%. If more students than estimated attend the trip, an invoice will be sent for the difference owed.

## **GROUP CANCELLATIONS**

Service Agreements, and the non-refundable deposit, are required within 30 days of receipt in order to finalize reservations. Cancellations may be made up to 90 days prior to arrival date with a refund of all payments made after the deposit, minus a 20% administrative fee. Cancellations with less than 90 days notice will not be refunded. Should CODS be unable to

perform its services by reason of unavoidable damage to the school site or facilities in relation to natural causes such as fire or flood all funds will be refunded.

**UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES:**

CODS takes proactive measures to ensure the safety of all our participants. An emergency plan is included in all Teacher and Parent Chaperone Handbooks.

The administration at CODS works closely with local emergency personnel to develop and maintain plans for coping with a variety of emergency response situations. These plans include procedures to respond to critical incidents, such as fire or flooding. Visitors will be oriented upon arrival to a “safety meeting spot” in case of an emergency. Participants sleeping in the bunkhouses will participate in a “fire drill” on their first evening at outdoor school. As noted in the handbooks, CODS will make changes in the scheduled program due to weather restrictions or other unforeseen circumstances.

If a campus-wide evacuation is deemed necessary by CODS, the visiting school is responsible to provide transportation home for the students within six (6) hours of the evacuation notice.