

Parents' Guide to School's Out

Mt. Pleasant

School's Out students hike, explore the landscape, and participate in nature games, activities and study. Every School's Out session features unit-based age appropriate activities, stories, games and crafts.

Our Schools' Out rules encourage respect for oneself, each other, and the environment. General rules include: keep hands, feet, and objects to self; leave nature where it is; be kind and respectful to fellow students and staff; help preserve our historic land by not defacing, climbing on or destroying Conservancy property.

Out of respect for our natural areas, we follow Leave No Trace ethics. This includes not climbing in trees, removing wild animals or destroying wetland habitats.

The "Bee's" of School's Out:



- Be Nice
- Be Respectful
- Be Safe

Be Prepared!

What to Wear:

- ✓ Comfortable clothing that can get dirty and wet
- ✓ Sneakers or boots and socks - open toed shoes and flip flops are NOT allowed
- ✓ Dress for the weather- hat, coat, gloves, rain boots as needed
- ✓ Sunscreen

What to Bring:

- ✓ Extra set of clothing just in case
- ✓ Rain or cold weather gear if the weather calls for it
- ✓ Reusable water bottle
- ✓ Lunch – send a hearty, non-perishable lunch with your child each day; keep in mind that the Conservancy DOES NOT provide refrigeration. We encourage trash-free lunches to promote environmental stewardship. Recycling and composting are available. We work closely with parents on any food related allergies. A peanut free table is available at lunch, please let us know if you need other accommodations for your child.
- ✓ Snack for After Care
- ✓ A backpack in which to store your child's items

What to Leave at Home:

- ✓ Anything breakable or valuable
- ✓ All electronics
- ✓ Gum or excessive candy (a piece or two in the lunch is fine; a bag becomes a problem)
- ✓ Animal habitats or carriers
- ✓ Cell phones are not permitted during School's Out hours

Inclement Weather: School's Out student will explore outdoors unless there is severe weather. On rainy, cold or windy days, please prepare your child for outdoor activities. Pack a jacket, coat, hat, gloves, extra shoes and clothing as needed. If there is thunder, high winds and/or lightning storms we will not be outside, and will have alternative indoor activities planned. Weather will be monitored by Conservancy administration using emergency weather radios and local weather reports.

Labeling: All personal items need to be labeled including backpacks, water bottles, lunches and clothes. The Howard County Conservancy is not responsible for any lost/stolen personal items. The Lost and Found basket will be out during pick up. After one month in Lost and Found, items will be donated to a local charity.

Drop Off and Pick Up: The School's Out program runs from 9:00am – 3:30pm. Morning drop off is open from 8:45-9:00am and the afternoon pick up window is from 3:30-3:45pm. Both will be in our Nature Center.

Before and After Care: Drop off for before care will start at 8:00am in the Nature Center. Students in after care must be picked up by 5:30pm.

Late Pick Up: A charge of \$10 for the first fifteen minutes and \$15 for each additional fifteen minutes will be charged to parents for children not picked up by the scheduled time, payable upon arrival of the authorized adult picking up the child.

Student Protection: You, or a designated person, are required to sign your child in and out with a staff member. For your child's safety, only the individual(s) designated on the registration form can pick up your child. The person that completed the health form is the only one who can add or delete individuals with pick-up authority.

Waste-Free Lunches: Much of the trash we generate comes from the packaging on the food we buy, and lunch foods are no exception. Our waste-free lunch program favors the use of reusable food containers, drink containers, utensils, and napkins. We discourage the use of disposable packaging, such as prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins, and disposable utensils. We provide recycling and composting. Our gift shop sells Snack Taxis, reusable cloth snack bags. For ideas for waste-free lunches, visit <http://www.wastefreelunches.org/parents.html>.

Tick Checks: The staff will remind students to conduct a tick check. It is also very important that you check your child at home thoroughly after the School's Out day.

Sunscreen: We do not provide or apply sunscreen. We encourage you to apply sunscreen before School's Out. All sunscreen is FDA controlled and must be in its original container with your child's name on the outside.

Snacks: The Howard County Conservancy will not provide a snack. If your child is in after care, we recommend packing them a snack. If food is ever provided as a special treat or activity, parents will be given notice 1 week prior to the program date. If your child has any allergies you are welcome to send an alternative.

Contact us!

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