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Outdoor Experiential Environmental Education  
Blue Ridge Education Center

Dear Parents,

Your child will soon be visiting the Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center with her/his classmates and teachers to learn about the natural world and themselves. Please read the following information and complete both the Health Form and the Activities Disclosure and Permission Form.

The Blue Ridge program is residential and experiential. Through hands-on activities, the students learn about the life in a pond, a mountain stream, and a mixed-hardwood forest. In addition to the natural science classes, we also offer lessons about the cultural history of the area. Furthermore, the Blue Ridge program is a social experience in which your child will be living and learning in a close community.

Blue Ridge's site is an ideal outdoor classroom. Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the 468-acre property hosts plants and animals from both the Piedmont and Appalachian regions, making for rich biodiversity, including some rare and unusual plants and animals. Wildlife such as deer, turkey, bobcat, hawks, owls, raccoons, heron, beaver and many others can be found on the property along with many species of plants and insects.

Although the center is located at Mikell Camp and Conference Center, it is important to note that this is not 'summer camp'. The emphasis at Blue Ridge is on education, not recreation. Our program is a valuable extension of your child's classroom work. It may include math, science, language arts, and social studies. Your child's teachers have chosen the classes that they want us to teach during the field study. Programs are taught by our staff of professional instructors who are college graduates or interns with a desire to share their love of nature with young people.

During your child's stay, supervision will be provided 24 hours a day -- by the Blue Ridge staff during classes and evening programs, and by the teachers and chaperones during free time and at night. Children sleep in comfortable dorms (heated in cold weather) in units of 12 children and one adult.

Professional food service staff serve nutritious and delicious meals in our dining hall. Special dietary restrictions, due to allergies or vegetarians for example, can be accommodated with advance notice.

It is important that your child come to Blue Ridge with the proper clothes and equipment. To help you pack, a packing list is enclosed with this letter. You are urged to follow the suggestions on the list closely for the benefit and comfort of your child. Students carry all their own luggage uphill to the dorms, so don't over pack!

Please remember old clothes are preferred over new clothes, since most activities will be held outside. **Rain gear** is absolutely essential for every child. A **refillable, reusable water bottle** is also a necessity to keep your child hydrated. Students may get wet while studying at the stream or wetland

sites, so they will need clothes that can get wet. Please do not ignore the list of "do not bring" items. If these items are discovered, they will be taken from the child and held until the end of the program.

We ask you not to visit Blue Ridge while your child is participating. This is an opportunity for her or him to learn to function away from home. Visiting parents may not only distract their child but make others jealous or homesick as well.

Children are not permitted to use the telephone under normal circumstances; please refrain from calling your child except in an emergency. The number is (706) 886-7621.

If you'd like to see what the group is up to while they are here check out Blue Ridge on social media. We can be found as Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center on facebook or @blueridgeoec on Instagram.

Your child will surely appreciate a letter from home during his or her stay at Blue Ridge. Please mail letters so they arrive a day or two before your child leaves. Address letters in the following manner:

- Student's name
- School's name
- Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center
- 237 Camp Mikell Court
- Toccoa, GA 30577

Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center reserves the right to send any child home for destruction of property, aggressive behavior, illness, or any other acts judged detrimental to the functioning of the program.

Please read the enclosures carefully and feel free to contact Blue Ridge or the school to obtain more information about the program. We look forward to meeting your child!

Sincerely,

Anna Dinwiddie, Director  
Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center

## **Medical Information**

We want to provide a safe structured environment for your group, but we acknowledge that accident can happen. Please read through this page and fill out the form required.

1. The "Health Form" must be completed and signed by each student's parent or legal guardian. These forms must not be altered in any way. We cannot accept a child whose medical forms are not completed and signed.
2. All medication accompanying your child must be clearly labeled with the student's name, name of medicine, and directions for use. All medications will be kept in the possession of the school personnel responsible for administering medications OR will be locked securely in the Blue Ridge OEC office.
3. A recent tetanus shot is recommended. Blue Ridge reserves the right to send any student home that arrives ill or becomes ill during his or her stay.

### **Procedures – In case something happens...**

*Emergency* -- Blue Ridge staff members have been trained in emergency procedures and in an emergency, the staff person will see that appropriate action is taken and that medical attention is prompt. All staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid and carry stocked first aid kits in the field. For more serious problems, the student or teacher or chaperone will be transported to Stephens County Hospital, which is only 10 minutes from the facility. The hospital's main number is (706) 282-4200. Emergency telephone numbers are posted by all telephones should an emergency occur while students are not with Blue Ridge staff.

*Non-emergency* -- All medications (prescription and non-prescription) will be turned over to and dispensed by the teacher/coordinator of the group. Emergency bee sting kits and asthma inhalers should remain with the child for immediate use if necessary and the child should be able to use it on their own. Be aware that all instructors also carry Epi-pens and are trained to use them.

## BLUE RIDGE OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER

Here is a copy of the packing list we sent out to students, so you are aware of what they should have with them and what they should not have:

### PACKING CHECKLIST:

- \_\_ 1 sleeping bag or bed roll (sheets and 2 blankets), pillow
- \_\_ 1 pair of old jeans per day
- \_\_ 1 pair of shorts per day
- \_\_ 2 tee-shirts per day
- \_\_ 1 heavy shirt (1 per day in cold weather)
- \_\_ 1 sweater or sweatshirt
- \_\_ 1 warm jacket (cold weather)
- \_\_ 2 pairs of sneakers (one that can get wet – Chacos and Texas with a secure heel strap are acceptable to use as water shoes). All footwear **MUST** have a secure heel strap. Flip flops and Crocs are not allowed at any time at Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center
- \_\_ 1 change of underwear per day
- \_\_ 2 pairs of socks per day
- \_\_ 1 raincoat or poncho
- \_\_ 1 hat or cap
- \_\_ 1 pair of pajamas
- \_\_ toilet articles (soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, towel etc.)
- \_\_ sunscreen
- \_\_ water bottle (a refillable, reusable bottle— not the throw-away kind)
- \_\_ plastic bag for dirty clothes
- \_\_ pen and writing paper

### OPTIONAL ITEMS:

- small day pack
- camera
- flashlight
- stamped, addressed envelopes

### PLEASE DO NOT SEND:

- candy, gum, or food of any kind
- knives, hatchets, or any other weapon
- fireworks
- iPods, MP3 players, tablets, electronic games, cell phones, or any other electronics.
- MONEY (except for Blue Ridge merchandise, if desired)
- Flip flops or Crocs

The Camp Mikell Store may be open to accommodate the purchase of souvenirs. Your school will determine if the Store will be open or not. Merchandise may also be viewed on our website: [www.blueridgeoec.com/merchandise](http://www.blueridgeoec.com/merchandise).

The Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center is not responsible for articles left behind.

Any and all school clothing policies remain in effect at Blue Ridge. For example, if the shorts you want to wear are too short to be worn at school then the shorts are too short to be worn at Blue Ridge.

## Interested in More??

Did your child love the programming at Blue Ridge? We encourage you to consider summer camp at Camp Mikell! Camp Mikell is on the same property as Blue Ridge and has camps throughout the summer divided by age groups so your child can attend summer camp with peers of the same age. Camp Mikell offers traditional residential summer camps, a Performing Arts camp, and an Outdoor Camp which is staffed by Blue Ridge Instructors.

Every summer Blue Ridge staff operates Outdoor Camp programs through Camp Mikell.

Activities include:

- Backpacking and camping
- Rock climbing
- Rafting for older campers
- Swimming
- Arts and crafts
- Archery
- Hiking
- High ropes for older campers
- Lots more!

For more information about Outdoor Camp, Traditional Camp, and Performing Arts Camp, visit [campmikell.com](http://campmikell.com). We would love to see your child again!