

Wilderness School: Enrollment and Behavioral Policies

ENROLLMENT:

Who To Contact:

All correspondence regarding enrollment policies should be directed to the Wilderness School Enrollment Office: email: WildernessJourney@CT.gov, phone 860- 653-8059. Inquiries may also be made to the Wilderness School Director: Aaron Wiebe, email: aaron.wiebe@ct.gov, phone 860-653-8059.

1. Voluntary Participation:

The Wilderness School expedition is a great opportunity for youth who choose to participate, and maintain motivation during each phase of the program. As the youth learns more about the Wilderness

School and what we have to offer it is our hope that a commitment to our program is made prior to participation in an expedition.

2. Age Requirement:

Applicants between the ages of thirteen and seventeen years old are eligible to apply for an Expedition. Applicants sixteen to twenty-one years of age may attend specific programs designed for older adolescents. Applicants must be judged developmentally appropriate during the Pre-Enrollment

Interview and student Orientation in order to participate in the program. Exceptions to the age range guidelines may be made based on student appropriateness.

3. Weight Requirement:

It is recommended that students weigh a minimum of eighty-five (85) prior to participation in a Wilderness School Expedition. Exceptions may be made with proper medical documentation and consultation.

4. Medical Examination:

Applicants must be in good physical health and must be able to pass a Doctor's physical examination within two years of the course starting date. Applicants whose medical examination or medical history report indicates a cause for concern may be required to update the Doctor's physical examination prior to participation in the program.

5. Medical and Health Restrictions:

Applicants with medical and health histories that may present problems on an Expedition may attend the Wilderness School upon successful completion of the enrollment process. Medical and health histories must be shared with the Enrollment Office staff for review by appropriate program personnel.

- a. Applicants with back problems, seizure disorders or other physical difficulties are not eliminated from consideration but must have a Doctor's written support for participation in the program.
- b. Applicants with diagnoses of asthma are required to bring all prescribed inhalers (as well as one unused back-up inhaler for 20-Day Expeditions) for each prescription.
- c. Applicants with significant medical concerns or addictions to alcohol, drugs or nicotine may not be appropriate for the program and may be placed in a pool of high risk applicants at the discretion of the Director or a designate.
- d. Applicants with active enuresis/encopresis may not be ready for a Wilderness School Expedition. Discussions with the medical team, the applicant and the youths support team will be a factor in determining the right time for a youth to participate in an expedition.

- e. Applicants who require medication needing refrigeration or delivery via a nebulizer are restricted from attending any Wilderness School course where activities may occur in a remote, non-electric setting. Restrictions also include any specialized equipment that requires waterproof packaging or which may not reasonably be carried in a backpack without risk of damage.
- f. Applicants who require frequent blood monitoring may not be appropriate for a Wilderness School Expedition.
- g. Applicants with medical conditions that can be identified by medic alert tags or bracelets are required to wear them when participating in Wilderness School activities.

6. Prescription Medications:

- a. All prescription medications must be accompanied by a written Doctor's order in a format approved by Office of Early Childhood Education, Youth Camp Licensure.
- b. Program safety considerations and State of Connecticut, Office of Early Childhood Youth Camp Regulations require limiting the volume of student medications present on Expedition programs. Students with large volumes of medications may be placed on a waiting list to ensure compliance with program limitations on medication volume per course.
- c. All medications must arrive at the Wilderness School in original prescription containers and have a current prescription label attached. Medications must be delivered to the Wilderness School ninety-six (96) hours prior to the course start.
- d. Applicants who have begun or discontinued psychiatric medication are required to wait at least twenty-one (21) days prior to participation in the 3 to 20 Day Expedition unless Doctor's orders indicate otherwise.

7. Non-Prescription Medications:

- a) All non-prescription medications accompanying the student on the course, including vitamin supplements and homeopathic treatments, must be accompanied by a written Doctor's order in a format approved by Office of Early Childhood Education, Youth Camp Licensure. Medications must arrive at the Wilderness School in **original purchased containers and have intact, complete labeling for ingredients, directions, and precautions**. This must occur ninety-six (96) hours prior to the course start.
- b) Program safety considerations and State of Connecticut, Office of Early Childhood Youth Camp Regulations require limiting the volume of student non-prescription medications present on Expedition programs. Students with large volumes of non-prescription medications may be placed on a waiting list to ensure compliance with program limitations on medication volume per course.

8. Psychiatric History:

Applicants with histories of psychiatric problems may attend the Wilderness School upon acceptance of all Application Materials by the Wilderness School Enrollment Office and successful completion of an Orientation Program as required under the supervision of program staff.

9. Psychiatric Restrictions:

- a. Applicants who require direct clinical supervision are not appropriate for the Wilderness School program.
- b. Applicants with one or more psychiatric hospitalizations within the past six (6) months for suicidal ideation or behavior, severe emotional disturbance or trauma, out-of-control behavior, or violent behavior, will be required to provide additional documentation prior to acceptance, to be reviewed for consideration by the Wilderness School Enrollment Office and leadership team.
- c. Applicants with one or more hospitalizations for psychiatric reasons within the last two (2) years, or who have experienced a severe emotional disturbance resulting in suicidal attempts, gestures or ideation within the past two (2) years, must present a written statement from a Medical Doctor (M.D.), Psychologist (M.A. or Ph. D.), Social Worker (M.S.W.), or Family Therapist (M.F.T.) or other clinician stating the applicant is competent to perform course activities in a reasonable manner.

10. Background of Sexual and/or Violent Offense:

Applicants who have a history of sexual offenses, sexually inappropriate behaviors, physical violence, or threats with a weapon must provide all documentation required by the Wilderness School for program participation. Applicants with sexual offenses or serious violent offenses within the previous six (6) months will require more extensive assessment.

11. Court History:

An applicant's history of court or police contact must be shared with the Wilderness School during the Enrollment process. Current legal status will be evaluated by the Wilderness School Enrollment office and the applicant's legal team.

FIELD-RELATED BEHAVIORAL:

Students may be removed from Wilderness School Expeditions when violations of behavioral policies or program expectations make continued participation physically or emotionally unsafe for any student or staff. If field interventions by program staff result in a student being removed and sent home from the course, students will be returned to the Wilderness School base camp and will require transportation home by the agency or family at the first opportunity. Violations of Wilderness School Behavioral Policies require intervention from program staff and removal from proximity to other students while a determination is made whether the student shall be allowed to continue participating in the program.

Wilderness School Behavioral Policies:

- 1. Non-Compliance:** Failure to comply with program policies, procedures, expectations, or staff directions or requests in a deliberate, repetitive manner will result in removal from the course activity and group participation, with contact made with the Referring Agency and/or family.
- 2. Violence and Threatening:** Violent or threatening behavior will result in the student's removal from the course activity and group participation, with contact made with the Referring Agency and/or family.
- 3. Severe Emotional Disturbance:** When a student's actions present a reasonably assured risk of harm to self or others, the student will be removed from the course and care of the student will be relinquished to an emergency medical service, an M.D., parent or family, or Referring Agent.
- 4. Emotional Safety:** Intentional, repetitive actions (verbal or physical) that result in emotional distress or intimidation of a persistent nature will result in removal from the course activity and group participation, with contact made with the Referring Agency and/or family.
- 5. Sexual Activity:** Engaging in or being suspected of sexual activity will result in removal from the course activity and group participation, with contact made with the Referring Agency and/or family.
- 6. Drugs and Alcohol:** Using or being suspected of using drugs or alcohol will result in removal from the course activity and group participation, with contact made with the Referring Agency and/or family. Please note: There is no use of tobacco products at the Wilderness School.