



Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s),

Your child will soon have an opportunity to participate in a residential outdoor school program. Outdoor environmental education uses the natural world to give students a learning experience that cannot take place in a classroom. The Nature's Classroom Institute program will help students understand the natural environment; participate in ecosystem exploration; and study and work together with their peers and teachers as a community.

The program includes activities such as confidence-building group challenges, historical simulations, scientific exploration, and many more hands-on academic lessons. To learn more about Nature's Classroom Institute visit our website at <http://discovernci.org/>.

### ***Health and Medications:***

There is no requirement that students undergo a medical examination before attending Nature's Classroom Institute. The program is physically intensive, however, and you may wish to consult your physician if there are any health concerns that should be brought to the attention of the NCI staff. Note any special concerns on the online medical form (access will be provided by your child's school). Please note that signatures are required on our Medical Permission & Administration Form, whether or not your child is taking any medicine. All medication (even over the counter) must be turned into the school teachers before arrival at Nature's Classroom Institute.

***Prescription Medication:*** All prescription medication must be in the original container and labeled with your child's first and last name. Unidentified medicine cannot be administered. *Note: NCI is a learning facility and not just a camp. Attention and focus are still required for the best experience possible.*

***Over the Counter Medication:*** Over the counter medication such as melatonin or cold medicine **should be labeled with the name of the medication, child's full name and school.** NCI provides first aid boxes to all visiting teachers with common over the counter medication such as cough drops, hydrocortisone cream, and liquid/pill form of ibuprofen, acetaminophen, diphenhydramine, (Benadryl) etc. There is no need to send this with your child unless there is a strong preference for a particular flavor/brand or they take it on a consistent basis.

### ***Meals and Dietary/Allergy accommodations:***

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are prepared by our in-house cooking staff and are served family style with a snack of milk/water and a cookie in the evening. Please **do not** send your child with any type of snack/food (unless prior accommodations have been made with NCI/visiting teacher) as a consideration for other students with severe allergies and dormitory pest control.



Special dietary needs should be noted on the medical forms. Vegetarian, gluten and dairy free options are available upon request. NCI is a nut aware program and we strive to ensure our food does not include peanuts or common tree nuts (cashews, almonds, walnuts, pecans and hazelnuts). Our host facility is NOT nut free, and therefore it is still required to send your child with their prescribed epinephrine pen. Any food item that has been processed in a facility with common allergens will be identified to the students by our staff. If your child has a unique set of allergies/intolerances (for example: gluten, dairy and soy free) please have your classroom teacher contact a NCI staff member to make further accommodations. To view our menu for a full list of dietary substitutions, please see our website at [www.discovernci.org](http://www.discovernci.org).

### ***Safety:***

In the unlikely event that your child needs to see a doctor due to an injury or illness, guardians identified on the online registration will be informed by their student's visiting teacher/chaperone or NCI staff member. Please do not send a cell phone with your child "for emergencies." Student cell phones are not allowed at NCI due to our security policies (exceptions can be made for children who are diabetic). You may discuss with your child's chaperone an appropriate method of contact if needed prior to the field trip. *The Emergency Medical Authorization must also be signed as a requirement of participation in the NCI program.*

**\*\*Request a 24 hour Emergency Contact name and mobile telephone number from your child's teacher**

All staff is trained in CPR + AED, First Aid and Epi-Pen procedures.

Parents are welcome to visit the site before or after the school visit, preferably mid-week. We do not provide tours to parents whose children are currently on site. You must visit our website to set up an appointment ahead of time or email our Midwest Outreach Director. For security reasons, unscheduled visitors are not allowed on campus and will be asked to leave immediately.

If your child needs to arrive later or leave earlier than their group due to prior commitments or ailments, please make a plan with your chaperones to coordinate arrival/departure times and where to meet for the hand off.

*Please see our website for a detailed description of our security policy.*

### ***Telephone:***

There is no telephone available for student use. For safety reasons, NCI staff is not allowed to give updates on specific children to inquiring callers. Updates on your child should be pre-arranged by your student's classroom teacher. To speak with our offsite Midwest Outreach Director between the hours of 7:00am—3:30pm, please call (800) 574-7881 (this is not a direct line to our Lake Geneva site).



### ***Supervision and Staff:***

Students are supervised 24 hours a day. Classroom teachers from your child's school accompany each visiting group. In addition, Nature's Classroom Institute has permanent staff residing on-site consisting of the Education Directors and our environmental education instructors (1 for every 12 students). Emergency medical care is available less than 20 minutes away from the site.

### ***Lodging:***

Students, visiting teachers, and chaperones are lodged in climate-controlled dormitories. Most rooms have private bathrooms. To view pictures of our campus, please visit our website at [www.discovernci.org](http://www.discovernci.org) – Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

All dormitories have locking capabilities with emergency exits. Tornado shelters are located in or near each living space. We conduct fire drills twice during the week, one within two hours of the school arriving and the second within 24 hours of arrival.

### ***Mail:***

Mail is greatly appreciated by the students. You may send mail along with your child's teachers to be distributed throughout the trip. Please label the envelopes with their name and what day you'd like the mail to be given to your child.

*Optional: Feel free to send your child with pre-addressed and stamped envelopes to send mail home from NCI.*

### ***Pictures:***

NCI Staff members take photos of visiting students throughout the week which are collected and shown in a slideshow on departure day for 4 and 5 day groups. Photos are emailed to classroom teachers after the trip. It is at their discretion if they share these photos with parents. Any student who has not been granted permission for photos to be taken will not show up in the slideshow.

**Please see below for a full packing list organized by season**



## Nature's Classroom Institute Packing List

Please do not buy new clothes for your child to wear at Nature's Classroom Institute. Send old clothes (i.e. "play clothes") that you don't mind your child getting dirty during outdoor activities. Clothes should be chosen for comfort and durability rather than style. Students are *mostly* outside from 9:30am until 8pm in all weather conditions besides thunderstorms. This includes very cold temperatures in moderation. Particular care should be taken in supplying ample footwear and pants, as students frequently participate in activities that involve plants, mud and water. Please check weather reports for your NCI location the day before your trip to pack appropriate gear.

**Please make sure that personal items are clearly labeled with your child's last name** (especially cameras and water bottles). Any lost items can be identified to NCI staff during the week as there are many lost and found bins located on site. If an item is not noticed as missing until after the return home, please let your child's classroom teacher know so they can reach out to a staff member. **NCI is not responsible for any lost or damaged possessions.**

Students will be required to carry/roll their own luggage to and from their dorm up a slight incline and possibly up stairs, depending on which dorm they are in. Try not to over pack, as it will be difficult for them to maneuver heavy, bulky items. We suggest a suitcase that is easy to roll, a backpack and/or a bag to carry their bedding. Garbage bags are okay for bringing bedding, but easily rip in transport. If this is your only option, please send an extra one for the trip home.

*We highly encourage you practice packing with your child as they will be required to repack their suitcases at the end of the week. It would also be helpful to go over life skills such as how to adjust water temperatures in a shower as well as making a bed if this is something they are not used to already.*

**\*\*This packing list is for a five day 9 to 12 year old trip. Please adjust accordingly age, length of trip and individual need\*\***

Check boxes are located to the left of each item for your convenience.

### ***Required Packing List for lodging in all seasons:***

- ☐ 1 freshly laundered twin fitted sheet and/or top sheet
- ☐ 1 or 2 freshly laundered blanket(s) (adjust for thickness of blanket)
- ☐ 1 freshly laundered pillow and pillow case
- ☐ 1 toiletry kit with soap, shampoo, toothpaste, tooth brush, and hair comb/brush/general toiletries
- ☐ 1 towel and wash cloth



***Required Packing for 60 degrees and above (typically August/September and April/May trips)***

**Clothing Requirements:** Students are required at minimum to wear full length, durable pants, a shirt with sleeves (short or long) and closed toed shoes for ALL activities, no matter the temperature outside.

- ☐ 3 pairs of jeans or other durable long pants (Thin, cotton leggings are not considered durable pants. Students will explore off trail eco-systems and are exposed to thorns, burrs, sharp sticks, poison ivy and ticks. Please make sure your child is prepared for these experiences)
- ☐ 1 pair of shorts (for transitions and dorm time only)
- ☐ 5 T-Shirts and/or Long Sleeve Shirts (Tank tops are only permitted as pajamas)
- ☐ 1 or 2 sweatshirts or equivalent
- ☐ 1 Raincoat or Poncho
- ☐ 1 pair of pajamas
- ☐ 5 pairs of underwear
- ☐ 8 Pairs of Crew or Knee Length Socks (wool are the best!)
- ☐ 1 pair of water resistant shoes/boots for forest exploration that can be muddy/wet
- ☐ 1 pair of comfortable shoes/boots for walking on our paved campus (please no light up shoes!)

***Highly Encouraged Items:***

- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Non-scented sunscreen
- ☐ Hat with brim
- ☐ Sunglasses

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***Required Packing for 60 degrees and below (typically October to March trips)***

**Clothing Requirements:**

- ☐ 3 pairs of jeans or other thick, long pants (Thin, cotton leggings are not considered appropriate pants. These are good to wear under jeans or as pajamas, but would not be sufficient to keep them warm in the dead of winter.)
- ☐ Snow Pants (required only if there is snow on the ground)
- ☐ 5 T-Shirts and/or Long Sleeve Shirts (Tank tops are only permitted as pajamas)
- ☐ 1 heavy winter jacket that can fit multiple layers underneath
- ☐ 2 or 3 sweatshirts or equivalent
- ☐ 1 pair of warm pajamas
- ☐ 5 pairs of underwear



- ☐ 10 Pairs of Crew or Knee Length Socks (wool are the best!)
- ☐ 1 pair of waterproof snow boots with good traction (Ugg style boots and rain boots are not good options as they provide little support while walking on slippery conditions and have little to no insulation)
- ☐ 1 pair of warm, comfortable shoes/boots for walking on our main paved campus
- ☐ 2 winter hats to alternate in precipitation
- ☐ 2 or more waterproof gloves

*Optional items:*

- ☐ Hand warmers
- ☐ 1 or 2 scarves

**Please keep in mind layers for temperatures below 40 degrees:**

*Top*

1. Undershirt
2. Normal shirt
3. Sweatshirt
4. Thick coat

*Bottom:*

1. Long underwear
2. Thick pants
3. Snow pants

***Optional Items for all field trips:***

- ☐ 1 water bottle labeled with the students name
- ☐ 1 *disposable* camera (digital cameras are *highly* discouraged)
- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Small backpack/fanny pack to carry a water bottle, rescue medication, poncho, etc.
- ☐ Shower shoes
- ☐ Dirty laundry bag
- ☐ Chapstick

***Prohibited items:***

- ✗ Sleeping bags (Sleeping bags are dangerous because of their slippery nature and difficulty getting out of in case of an emergency.)
- ✗ Knives/weapons of any kind
- ✗ Radios
- ✗ Flashlights
- ✗ Electronic items such as cell phones, hand held gaming devices, etc.
- ✗ Fishing & Sports Gear
- ✗ Candy, Gum and food
- ✗ Money or credit/debit cards
- ✗ Any medications packed in suitcases – must be given to the teachers prior to departure from school