



# Parent Handbook

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# Flow of the Day

- **Drop-off:** Everyone meets at Cameron Park at 8:45am
- **Into the van:** The children get into the van, and select a “stuffy” or stuffed animal to accompany them on the journey
- **Depart** at 8:55am sharp and wave goodbye to the parents (the tinted windows make it difficult for you to see them, but typically the children will wave until their parents are out of sight).
- **Arrive** at the destination for the day, orient/play
- **Circle time** which is a snack of rice cakes and apples, a story, job assignments and some songs.
- **Adventure** around the destination of the day
- **Lunch:** We enjoy our trash free lunches all together
- **Explore** and play before making our way back towards the bus
- **Closing circle**
- **Pick-Up** at Werry Park. Please be there at 12:55 pm so you can be there to greet your child upon their return back from our great adventure!

# Arrival and Departure

- The arrival and departure will happen at Cameron Park, 2101 Wellesley St. Palo Alto
- Please plan to have your child at the park at 8:45am every morning. Although the teachers may be present before this, we will be planning out the exciting day ahead. Please plan to care for your child until their transition into the van.
- A timely arrival will maximize the children's time in nature, so please plan to arrive by 8:40 am to plan for our prompt departure at 8:55 am.
- Pick-Up will be at 1:00 pm every day. Please be there as we arrive- plan to arrive at Cameron Park by 12:55 pm to connect with other parents and to greet us upon our return. There are no late pick-ups unless previously arranged and agreed upon. If you are aware that you may be late please arrange to have another parent or designated person to care for your child upon their arrival. Late arrivals will be penalized \$10 after 1:15 pm, and an additional \$15 for every 10 minutes after 1:25 pm.
- Teachers are available for brief parent check-ins until 1:10 pm. From 1:10-1:30 pm the teachers meet in the park to debrief the day and are not available during that time.

# What to Bring

- In order for your child to be adequately prepared for the day, please plan to have the following items in their **child sized backpack**:
  - **Minimum of one 16 oz water bottle.** Please pack **water** for your child. Please do not pack milk, soda, or other sugary beverages as these may lead to an increase risk of dehydration.
  - **A trash free lunch.** Please pack a nutritious trash free lunch for your child. Many of the wonderful places that we adventure to do not offer trash bins, and it is very inconvenient for your child to re-pack unnecessary or messy debris.
  - **A ziplock bag with a change of clothes.** As Pathfinders consists of many nature adventures, your child may get muddy, wet, or otherwise dirty. It is always necessary to have a complete change of clothes including socks, underwear, and a jacket in cooler months. Please check this bag at the end of each day to be sure to refill the bag of clothes if the extras were used. The change of clothes will also need to be updated with the seasons.
  - **Any necessary medication or emergency items for your child.** If your child has any medical needs or threatening allergies please send your child with the necessary medication in case of an emergency. We are often more than 10 minutes from emergency or medical locations. It is imperative that you send your child with the necessary items for their participation.
  - **Your child in proper attire.** Please check the weather for the day so your child will be comfortable to seize the day's activities. Check the website for more information.

# What Not To Bring

- At Pathfinders we enjoy the unique and fascinating surroundings of the natural world. Please do not pack toys from home, electronic devices, or any other similarly unnecessary items. These can often distract from the outing in nature. If you need your child to carry some form of electronic device for safety purposes please inform a teacher so that we can make a suitable arrangement.
- Please do not send overly valuable items with your child. Keepsakes, important jewelry, or other important items could be lost or damaged.
- If your child would like to bring a special book please inform a teacher in advance so that we can preview the book and work it into the day's curriculum.
- Some children have difficulty riding in the van. If your child would like to bring one stuffed animal that can easily be held in their hands for their comfort in the van, this is permissible as long as the item does not leave the van for the day. Pathfinders is not responsible for the loss or damage of any items brought to camp.

# Hazards

- **Dehydration.** Pathfinders is a very active outdoor based school. It is important that your child is prepared with enough water for the day. Please refer to the “What to Bring” section in order to help prevent dehydration. (We suggest drinking plenty of water at home before the start of the day)
- **Sunburn.** Sunburns are common at all times of the year. Please pack sunscreen SPF 50 or higher for your child. Hats are strongly encouraged on all days to further prevent this. Long pants and sleeves can also be a great preventative for sunburns.
- **Poison oak.** This is a very common hazard at every time of the year. In California poison oak is always in season. In order to prevent poison oak please dress your child in long sleeves and long pants and review the parental resources section on the website if you are informed that your child may have come into contact with the plant.
- **Ticks.** Ticks are common at many of the Pathfinders destinations all year round. Please see the website to learn how to conduct a full tick check EVERYTIME after Pathfinders. There is information on the website for the process to partake in if your child is bitten by a tick. It is imperative to do a tick check at the end of each day. Ticks in our area can carry Lyme disease, finding a tick early is one of the best ways to handle ticks. Also be sure to keep the tick to get tested if it does latch onto your child.
- **Wildlife.** Although very rare there is the potential for a rattlesnake, bobcat, coyote, or mountain lion sighting. In the rare case that we do encounter one of these animals the teachers will be sure to avoid all possible dangerous interaction. However, as we are in outdoor and wild locations please be aware that these occurrences could take place.

# Parent Participation

- Parents are invited to come out with Pathfinders once or twice in the school year starting in October. Be sure to check in with the director prior to your outing if you have a specific plan that you would like to do on your parent outing day. You are welcome to bring books, tell stories, lead a game or art project if you would like. All activities must receive director approval and should be directed towards the outdoors and nature.
- On your parent outing day you will operate as another staff member, and will be asked to assist all of the children and with activities of the day. Your role on parent outings is to support the whole group and to gain insight into the program, and to get a new understanding of your child's adventures.

## *A note on Children's Birthdays...*

If you would like to do something special on the day of your child's birthday you are welcome to. Please reach out to the director in advance in order to ensure that the celebration is in line with the Pathfinders philosophy. You are welcome to bring a trash-free snack, and to plan an activity that celebrates your child's birthday. Please reach out to ensure that the snack does not pose a risk to any of the children's allergies, and that the activity can be arranged on that day.



# Child Sick Policy

- The child sick policy is put in place to assert the safety of your own child as well as the other children in the program. If your child meets any of the listed symptoms, your child will not be able to attend Pathfinders that day. Please be aware that as these events are unanticipated, no refunds will be offered. If your child is sick and cannot attend, please inform a teacher well ahead of our departure time at 9:00 am. In order to **guarantee a timely departure please send a text message by 8 am**
- Please do not send your child if they are experiencing:
  - A fever of 100 degrees or higher
  - A runny nose with thick green or yellow mucus.
  - A cough with mucus secretion
  - Contagious skin ailments such as cold sores, ringworm, fever blisters, or lice.
  - Recurring diarrhea
  - Continued vomiting, or vomiting paired with a fever, stomach ache, sore throat, or fatigue.
  - Pink eye
  - Any contagious diseases
  - Jet lag
  - Allergic reactions: if your child is enduring or recovering from an allergic reaction it may endanger them to send them to Pathfinders that day.
- Upon a successful complete day of wellness or confirmation by a medical professional, your child can return to Pathfinders. If you are unsure about a condition not listed above please call in advance to determine the best course of action for your child and the other participants.

# Staff Sick Policy

- The child sick policy is partly in place to further ensure the wellness of the teachers. On the rare occasion that the teacher(s) are unable to host a Pathfinders session, you will be warned a minimum of twelve hours in advance assuming there are no sudden medical emergencies. If this does occur please understand that your child will not be able to be cared for by the Pathfinders Staff on that day. As these are unanticipated days, there will be no refund offered. Included in the tuition is one paid sick day/ year for the teachers. If a suitable substitute cannot be found for the teachers, class will be cancelled. You will be notified as soon as possible if this is the case. We will however, make all efforts to avoid class cancellations.

# National and Local Emergencies

- There is potential for national or local emergencies. The most likely emergency situations to impact Pathfinders will be unsafe road conditions impacted by wind advisories, flash flood or other flood warnings, fires or earthquake. If a national emergency has been sent out, you will likely be aware of the emergency at the same time as the Pathfinders Staff. You will also be notified by the staff as soon as possible. If you have questions or concerns about sending your child with Pathfinders on any specific days or in particular conditions, please feel free to reach out and determine the best course of action.
- If one of these situations does occur you will be notified as early as possible in order to make additional arrangements. Please understand that as these days are unanticipated there will be no refunds offered, and Pathfinders will not be able to care for your child on that day.

# Parent Teacher Conferences & Communication

## PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Twice a year there will be in person parent teacher conferences. The first conference will take place in fall, and the second in spring.
- The first meeting will help the teachers gain a stronger sense of your child. This will be an opportunity for you to share some more information about your child now that he or she has been a part of the program for a bit.
- The second meeting will discuss kindergarten readiness, observations from the teachers, as well as some more insight for the parents into their child's participation in Pathfinders.

## COMMUNICATION

- If you would like to contact the director outside of the described parent teacher conferences, please respect the communication guidelines listed below.
- Email is the preferred method of contact for questions that do not require immediate response. If you prefer to have a phone conversation, please call before 6 pm. After 6 pm please send an email.
- If you are trying to reach the director to inform that your child will not be attending an upcoming day, please send an email the night before. In the event that you do not have this much notice, please send a text message by 8 am the morning of your child's absence.
- In cases of medical emergency when you require input or follow up from Pathfinders, please don't hesitate to call at anytime.

# Last Day of Pathfinders

- On the last day of Pathfinders family members are encouraged to participate. On this day there will be a ceremony to celebrate the children who will be graduating from the program.