

August 9, 2022

Greetings, Parents & Student Back-Packers -

As you know, the last few years have included many unpredictable elements that made backpacking either impossible or improbable. The middle school had similar challenges organizing campouts. We find ourselves facing a fall with many students that have never been camping, let alone backpacking.

For this reason, we have created a “mini-backpack” to help get the shakes out, dispel any myths, anxieties, etc. We will set up tents, build fires, hang bear bags, cook food, and hike a little bit. We will not push the envelope too hard. The hike will be short. With only one night, the bags will not be heavy. New students will have the opportunity to meet each other, connect, and feel less anxious about the bigger backpacking trips that are fast approaching (dates listed below).

Please also know that we will not be sending anyone on a trip outside their limits. During Backpacking basecamp this week, we will observe students and their comfort level in the outdoors. We will also provide an opportunity for them to request difficulty level in their backpacking trip. Some want to challenge themselves, some find the idea of sleeping outside a challenge. We will do our best to stretch students, but not too far.

Parent & Students Questions & Concerns Info Session: Wednesday, August 17th 5:00pm-6:00pm

Trip Dates:

- **New Student Mini-Backpack (9th graders and anyone new to the school)**
Thursday, August 18th to Friday August 19th
- 9- & 12- Grade: Depart Monday August 29th return Thursday September 1st.
- 10- & 11- Grade: Depart on Monday Sept 19th and return on Thursday Sept 22nd

For the mini backpack, students will leave towards the end of the school day on Thursday August 18th and return to school around 2:30pm on Friday, August 19th. They will need to bring their backpack, packed to school Thursday morning.

Food, Money and Packing:

Food: We will provide the meals during the trip, as well as trail snacks. Students need to let their advisors know of any food allergies as soon as possible, so we can accommodate accordingly.

Money: Food is purchased with the \$20 trip fee we ask each student to pay (please pay at the office). Please detach the attached slip and return it with your payment to Cathie in the front office. Note that families qualifying for free and reduced-price lunches are eligible to receive subsidies of up to half the cost of school trips. If you don't know if you qualify, please come in and talk with Cathie.

Packing: You are welcome to send additional snacks with your student, but please keep in mind that (a) light packs are much better than heavy ones, so any snacks you send with your student should be

compact and lightweight (eg. jerky, power bars); (b) the school provides snacks; and (c) all food from student packs must go into the bear bag each night. Your student will be asked to carry some of the group food as well as first aid and cooking equipment that the school will provide. We try to share the weight of these things evenly among all members of the trail team.

Clothing & Equipment

Clothing: To help students prepare, a packing list is enclosed along with a list of equipment retailers in case you do not own all of the suggested items already. “Cotton kills,” is a slogan that describes what can happen if jeans & other types of cotton clothing get wet & core body temperatures drop. While overstated & melodramatic, this phrase tells people to bring multiple layers of light-weight non-cotton clothing into the backcountry. ALCS understands that clothing is expensive, so we have non-cotton clothing here at the school to loan out on an ‘as-needed’ basis much as one can check out a library book. Thrift-stores are also an option.

Equipment: The expense of acquiring backpacks, sleeping bags and tents can be significant, so we have an inventory of backpacks, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, and tents that students may borrow. Students must file a request with their advisor to check out school equipment. Students borrowing equipment will pick up the equipment during their pre-trip meeting. They are responsible for what they borrow and must pay for it if they damage or lose it. For this reason, students need to leave collateral for the equipment. A \$50.00 check from you (made out to the school), which we will not cash and will tear up when they return the intact equipment, will work. If they do not bring a check, they will have to leave a cell phone or something else of value.

Medical: Please ensure that all medical information is current prior to the trip with a couple days to spare. Each medical form will be reviewed by Jim McIntosh, who is a Registered Nurse. Inform the school of any health concerns and food issues regarding your student so that we can make their group leaders aware of those concerns. (jmcintosh@aldocs.org)

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call us. You may contact Alex Olsen or Jim McIntosh at any time at aolsen@aldocs.org and jmcintosh@aldocs.org. Please check the website at aldocs.org for updates

Remember that wilderness experience is challenging, fun & exceptional.

All the Best,

Alex Olsen- Experiential Education Director/ Risk Manager
Jim McIntosh – Math, Social Studies, Registered Nurse & Risk Management
Wayne Sherwood - Director

Aldo Leopold Charter School

School Mission—

At Aldo Leopold Charter School the human and natural environments serve as text and lab for learning through direct experience, inquiry, and stewardship.

Packing List for Wilderness Backpacking

Items with an asterisk () beside them are available on loan from the school. “Loaners” require that students offer collateral as a guarantee that items are returned in good condition.*

- Backpack*
- 2-person tent* (larger tents are fun—but they are heavier!)
- Sleeping bag* (should be rated 20 degrees or lower)
- Sleeping pad* (more important than you might think)
- Cap with a brim
- Rain poncho *or* raincoat and pants
- 2 sturdy water bottles or Camelbak-style hydration system plus one bottle
- Headlamp or flashlight
- Sturdy hiking shoes
- Sandals for camp
- 1 pair of socks; cotton is not recommended
- Compact jacket; cotton is not recommended
- Warm cap (even for summer trips); cotton is not recommended
- 1 long-sleeved shirts; cotton is not recommended
- 1 short-sleeved shirts; cotton is not recommended
- 1 pair of pants; long pants that convert into shorts are ideal; cotton is not recommended
- Mess kit (sturdy bowl, cup, spoon, fork)
- Trash bag
- Hand towel and washcloth
- Bandana
- Composition journal with extra pen & pencil
- Pocket knife with a 3-inch (or shorter) blade (optional)
- Lighter (optional)

In addition, students should bring toiletries in a sealable plastic bag: sunscreen, lip balm, biodegradable soap, comb, toothpaste, toothbrush, deodorant, &, if appropriate, feminine hygiene items.

Prescription medications will be packed in by an ALCS staff member. Students who will require prescription medication for the trip should contact Jim McIntosh, RN, at ALCS to briefly review medication administration. Any student who uses an inhaler should bring 2 inhalers on the trip; any student with diabetes medication & supplies should bring a duplicate set of supplies (glucometer, strips, glucagon, &c).

Thanks for being wilderness aware!

Back-Packing Permission Form & Payment Slip

Dear Parents,

Please enter checkmarks below, detach this page from the trip letter-home & return this slip to ALCS with your payment.

Name of student: _____

Please check both of these items after you verify that they are true:

I have provided all medical information so school records can be up-to-date.

I have provided an up-to-date address & phone number.

And, check one of the following three payment options, which are explained in the letter above:

\$20.00 is attached; this fee represents the cost of food on the backpack trip.

\$10 is attached; this option is for families that qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.

\$5 "bare bones" covers the cost of the bus fuel & driver.

Parent Name: _____

Parent signature:

Date: _____