

CAMP  
**KEEP**

Kern Environmental  
Education Program



**COUNSELOR HANDBOOK**

July 2017







# COUNSELOR HANDBOOK

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# Counselor Letter

Welcome to the Kern Environmental Education Program (KEEP). This handbook has been written and designed to help you prepare for your KEEP week. The responsibilities expected of a counselor are tremendous and not suited for everyone. Please read the following information so you arrive at KEEP prepared and willing to do a great job. Reading this handbook will not only make your week easier, but will benefit the students you will be supervising.

Your first responsibilities are to fill out and return the registration and contract forms to the elementary school which has recruited you. Remember to check with the school regarding fingerprint requirements. The checklist on the next page will help you get organized. If you have any questions or concerns after reading the following information, please contact the elementary school that recruited you, or the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office.

The Kern Environmental Education Program has a long and rich history of introducing participants to their environment through serious study and investigation. KEEP depends on the support of staff, including counselors, to maintain its high expectations of work performance and dedication to the students. The KEEP staff looks forward to working with you.

**KEEP Staff**

# Checklist

Your first responsibility as a KEEP counselor is to come to the campus prepared. The following list is a guide to help you get organized. Please make certain all your paperwork is turned in prior to your arrival at KEEP. Counselors with incomplete paperwork will not be able to attend.

**Please read carefully, fill out and return:**

## **1. Registration Form**

- completely filled out
- signed by your parent (if you are under 18 years of age)
- turned in to the teacher/counselor who recruited you

## **2. Student Medication Form (if you are under 18 years of age)**

- completely filled out (if you are taking any medication during your KEEP week)
- signed by a doctor (for prescription and over-the-counter medications)
- turned in to the teacher/counselor who recruited you

## **3. Counselor Contract**

- read and initial each statement
- signed and dated by you
- signed and dated by your parent (if you are under 18 years of age)
- turned in to the teacher/counselor who recruited you

## **4. Read:**

- Counselor Orientation Letter (provided by your recruiting teacher or download-able at [campkeep.org](http://campkeep.org))
- Packing List
- Counselor Handbook

# Packing List

## What to bring and what to leave home...

The importance of proper clothing cannot be stressed enough. You and the students will be spending all of your waking hours outdoors. The weather does not cancel walks; therefore, it is important you follow the clothing list to ensure a comfortable week.

- **dress in layers** to allow for changing weather conditions
- **comfortable footwear** is essential
- **label** all your clothing

- 1 warm sleeping bag
- 1 flashlight & batteries
- 2 or 3 pairs of shoes
- 4 or 5 pairs of pants or sweats
- 1 or 2 long sleeve shirts
- 1 or 2 sweatshirts
- 1 warm jacket
- 8 pair of socks
- 5 t-shirts
- underwear
- sleepwear
- wristwatch
- toothbrush & toothpaste
- soap
- deodorant
- shampoo
- bath towel
- chapstick
- comb/brush
- hat or visor
- day pack
- a pillow
- your *Counselor Handbook*
- watch
- water bottle
- your medications

## Optional

- ✓ camera
- ✓ sunscreen
- ✓ sunglasses
- ✓ binoculars
- ✓ rain jacket or poncho
- ✓ travel mug
- ✓ money for KEEP foundation items

## DO NOT BRING

- ✗ gum
- ✗ knives
- ✗ matches
- ✗ swimsuits
- ✗ tobacco products
- ✗ blow dryers or curling irons
- ✗ clothing with inappropriate logos or language\*
- ✗ inappropriate books or magazines\*
- ✗ alcohol or illegal drugs
- ✗ shorts
- ✗ platform shoes

*\* If you are in doubt about what is appropriate, do not bring the item(s).*

# KEEP Rules

Students and their safety are a priority at KEEP, therefore:

- ✓ Stay on the KEEP campus unless you're with a naturalist or teacher.
- ✓ Protect all living things in and around the campus. Don't remove, injure or destroy any man made or natural objects. Collecting souvenirs or any natural object is unacceptable.
- ✓ Respect the KEEP Campus and the environment around you. Avoid littering or damaging plants, structures or equipment. Please use trails.
- ✓ Keep dry by staying out of creeks, bays and the ocean.
- ✓ Walk, don't run.
- ✓ Stay in your trailer/cabin after lights out and maintain quiet.
- ✓ You may only go into your trailer/cabin, not any other sleeping trailer/cabin.
- ✓ Report all injuries or problems to a teacher or naturalist immediately, day or night.
- ✓ Follow the KEEP schedule. It makes sure everyone works well together and can make the program a better experience.
- ✓ No throwing items such as rocks, sticks, or sand.

# Responsibilities

## Counselor Schedule and Responsibilities

- ✓ Give teachers feedback on positive and negative student behavior
- ✓ Be a good role model, show students how it's done
- ✓ Ask teachers or staff for help or ideas
- ✓ Remember, students come first
- ✓ Be positive and enthusiastic
- ✓ Enjoy yourself

6:45 a.m.	Supervise student showers for assigned cabins
Before 7:00 a.m.	Quiet and on bunks • restroom (two students at a time)
7:00 a.m.	• wake up students • prepare for breakfast • clean trailer/cabin • prepare for hikes
7:10 a.m.	Breakfast set-up for assigned trailer/cabin
7:30 a.m.	<b>BREAKFAST:</b> • sit in center of group • supervise as necessary • organize clean-up
8:00 a.m.	• prepare for walks • brush teeth • bathroom • journal and jacket • “prep” time
8:30 a.m.	Walks & picnic lunch • assist Naturalist as needed • positive attitude • encourage good behavior • one counselor at end of group, others spread out evenly among students • IMMEDIATELY notify Naturalist of unsafe behavior • assist with lunch set-up and clean-up
3:30 p.m.	Teacher hour • counselor meeting and counselor showers
4:30 p.m.	Student showers • all students on assigned day • ensure privacy/dignity Supervise free time • with students • play fair • respect each other & equipment
5:10 p.m.	Dinner set-up
5:30 p.m.	<b>DINNER</b> • Enjoy meal with students • sit in center of group • supervise as necessary • organize clean-up
6:30 p.m.	Prepare for evening program • brush teeth • use bathroom • jacket • “prep” time
6:45 p.m.	<b>EVENING PROGRAM:</b> • sit in center of group • encourage good behavior • participate appropriately <b>CAMPFIRE:</b> • choose log for group • sit center • encourage good behavior • participate
8:45 p.m.	Prepare for bed • YOU be in your trailer/cabin • NO ROWDINESS • get help if needed
9:15 p.m.	Lights Out • whispering • each student in their own bunk • no scary stories
9:30 p.m.	Quiet Time until 7:00 a.m.



# For Your Information

## Campus facilities .....

Each KEEP campus is unique. All offer a clean and safe facility for visiting students, counselors, and teachers. Counselors will be given a complete tour of the campus after your arrival (see campus map).

## Staff .....

**Program Supervisor:** ultimately responsible for all visiting students, counselors, and classroom teachers to insure their safety, well-being, and learning while attending the program.

**Lead Naturalist:** responsible for orientation, supervision, and daily meetings with counselors. Takes over in the absence of the Program Supervisor.

**Naturalists:** responsible for the health, education and well being of all students and counselors.

**Classroom Teachers:** directly responsible for student behavior and discipline; will decide with the Program Supervisor whether to send a student(s) or counselor(s) home.

**Counselors:** responsible for a specific group of students 24 hours per day; serve as role models for the students and set good examples for the students to observe and follow; accountable to classroom teachers and KEEP staff.

**Support Staff:** Cooks, Maintenance, and/or Bus Driver - responsible for the safety and well being of visiting students, counselors, and teachers.

## Goals .....

- ✓ To foster the understanding that the natural environment functions according to a unique balance among the biological, physical and human realms.
- ✓ To use the natural environment as a living laboratory to teach ecological concepts through experiential learning techniques.
- ✓ To understand the options available to people so that they may act to shape and control the effect of human activities on the Earth's ecosystems and its finite resources.

## KEEP History .....

### **Ocean Campus 1968**

Tehachapi Mountain Park (1968–1969)  
Hart Flat (1970)  
Montaña de Oro (1972–973)  
Cambria Pines YMCA camp (spring of 1974)  
Montaña de Oro (summer of 1974–present)

### **Cambria Campus 1992**

Cambria Pines YMCA Camp (1992–1993)  
Camp Yeager (1994 –present)

## Arrival .....

The first day is a critical day in your KEEP week. All organizational tasks are dealt with on Monday to facilitate a smooth and educational week. When you arrive on campus you and the students will be shown the bathrooms and then escorted to the campfire circle or dining hall for a brief welcome and explanation of expectations by the Program Supervisor. After lunch an orientation meeting with the students and Program Supervisor will be held. During the remainder of the afternoon counselors will be with the Program Supervisor, Lead Naturalist, and classroom teachers to discuss specific expectations for counselors and to acquaint you with the campus. You will have ample opportunity to ask questions during the counselor orientation meeting with the Lead Naturalist.

## Cell phone policy .....

Students are never allowed access to cell phones. \*Education Code 48901.5(b). Teachers, KEEP staff and counselors are expected to not be distracted by phones while involved with students. Adults at KEEP will have access to their cell phones but cell service is sketch and the KEEP staff prefer adults focus on the students, their activities and safety rather than what is on their screen. Counselors will have approximately an hour each day while not in charge of students to freely use their mobile device.

It is acceptable for adults to use cameras on their phones to take pictures of the environment, themselves and their own child, but at all times the privacy of other students must be respected in regards to sharing and social media. Adults should not allow a student to use

their phone, and adults should not call another parent with concerns about a student; all concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or program supervisor. The KEEP staff will provide counselors a secure location to store and charge their cell phones.

**Fire bell** .....

If you hear the fire bell:

- 1 bring your students to the emergency meeting spot**
- 2 count your students**
- 3 wait quietly for instructions from the staff**

**Showers** .....

Counselors will have the opportunity to take a shower Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

**Counselor contraband** .....

Counselors may bring a small amount of nut-free food to consume during their time off – never in front of the students. Contraband will be stored in the office – never in the sleeping trailers/cabins.

**Rain** .....

KEEP operates under all types of weather conditions, be prepared to walk in the rain, wind, fog, and sun.

**#\*@!!!!\*##!\*#@** .....

[high frustration level with students]... Get help immediately from a teacher or staff member.

**Evaluation letters** .....

If a letter is needed to prove volunteer service, for college applications, scholarships, etc., please inform a Lead Naturalist on the first day of your service.

# Student Challenges

*Living and working with a group of other people can be very challenging and require unlimited amounts of patience and understanding. As a counselor, the KEEP staff and classroom teachers depend on you to maintain a positive and cooperative atmosphere in your trailer/cabin. The students in your trailer/cabin will require your complete attention and supervision. Listed below are some potential student challenges with solutions that you may find helpful.*

## Discipline .....

and control will result in an easier week for you and the students in your trailer/cabin. Discipline requires fair and consistent behavior from you. Ignoring problems is a silent acceptance of the behavior and allows it to continue.

### **When a student misbehaves:**

- ✓ keep your cool
- ✓ give student(s) one warning or seek teachers' help
- ✓ let students know that the behavior is unacceptable, not the student
- ✓ if behavior continues, take student(s) to teacher or staff
- ✓ never use physical discipline, verbal discipline or "boot camp" discipline (sit-ups, etc.)

## Fighting .....

cannot be tolerated at KEEP. Teachers or staff must be notified immediately of such behavior.

## Quiet time .....

at night after lights out can be challenging. Remember that the staff and teachers are on site to help you with quiet time. One strategy to use is to transition the students from loud to quiet, for example:

- ✓ use restrooms
- ✓ get into bunks
- ✓ whisper in bunks
- ✓ read or tell the students a story - no scary stories
- ✓ all quiet

## **Homesickness** .....

can occur anytime during the week. Students who have rarely been away from home may feel sick, become behavior problems, refuse to eat, cry, or seem antisocial. The best strategy that you can use to help students overcome homesickness is to include them in all group activities. Allowing a student to be alone only makes the homesickness worse. If you feel unsuccessful in helping the student, please alert the student's teacher or a staff member as soon as possible. Calls home should only be initiated by the student's school teacher.

## **Showers at KEEP** .....

can be an uncomfortable event for an elementary student. Many students have never showered outside the privacy of their own home. If a student refuses to take a shower, he/she may have a good reason that they need to explain privately to their teacher. Please do not force any student into taking a shower, but immediately follow up with the student's school teacher.

## **Bedwetting** .....

is another common occurrence at KEEP. It is of utmost importance that the issue be treated with sensitivity and discretion. Proper handling of such a situation will be discussed in detail during the first day counselor meeting with the Lead Naturalist.

## **Students** .....

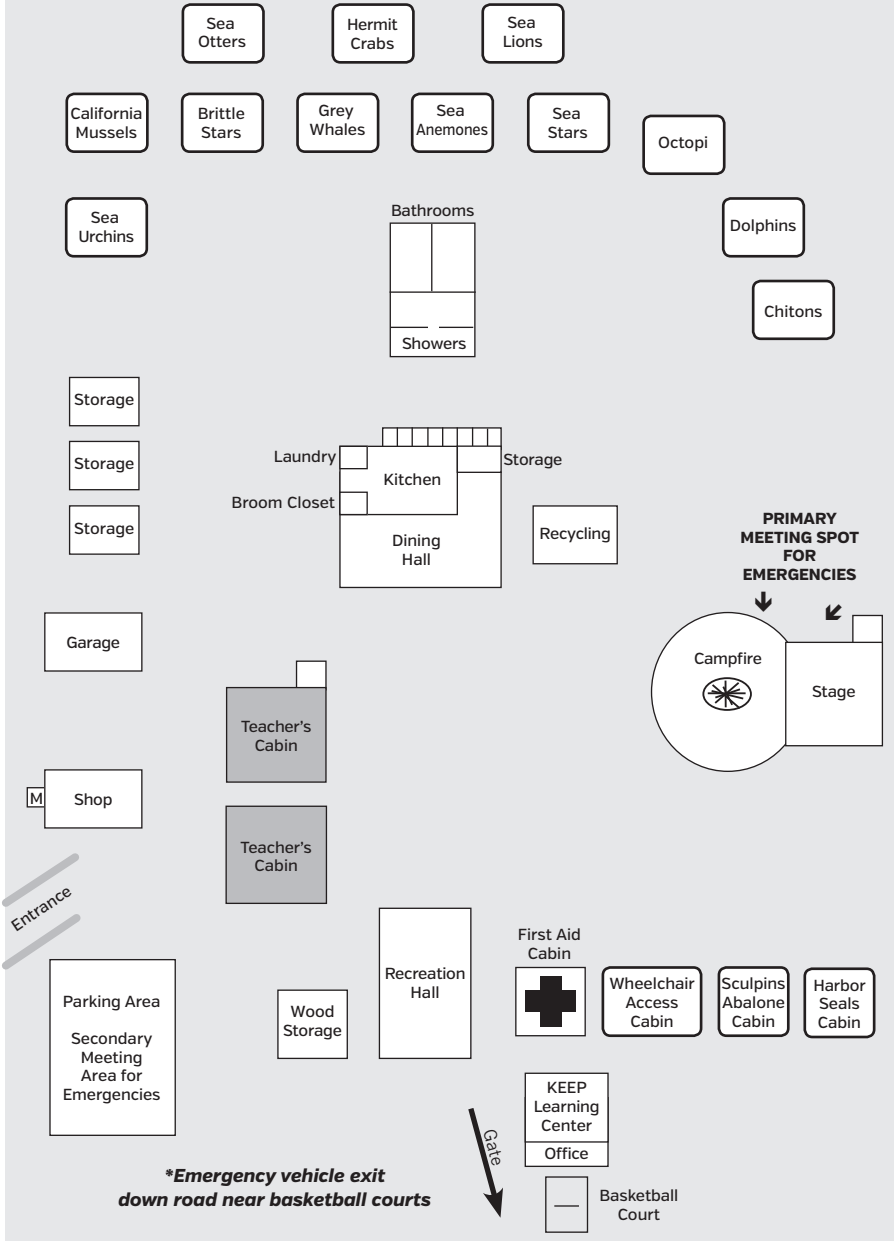
who are not eating, complain of illness, do not follow the KEEP rules, show disrespect to you or other students, are not cooperating, or generally are a constant challenge to you need to talk with their teacher or staff member immediately.

## **Remember** .....

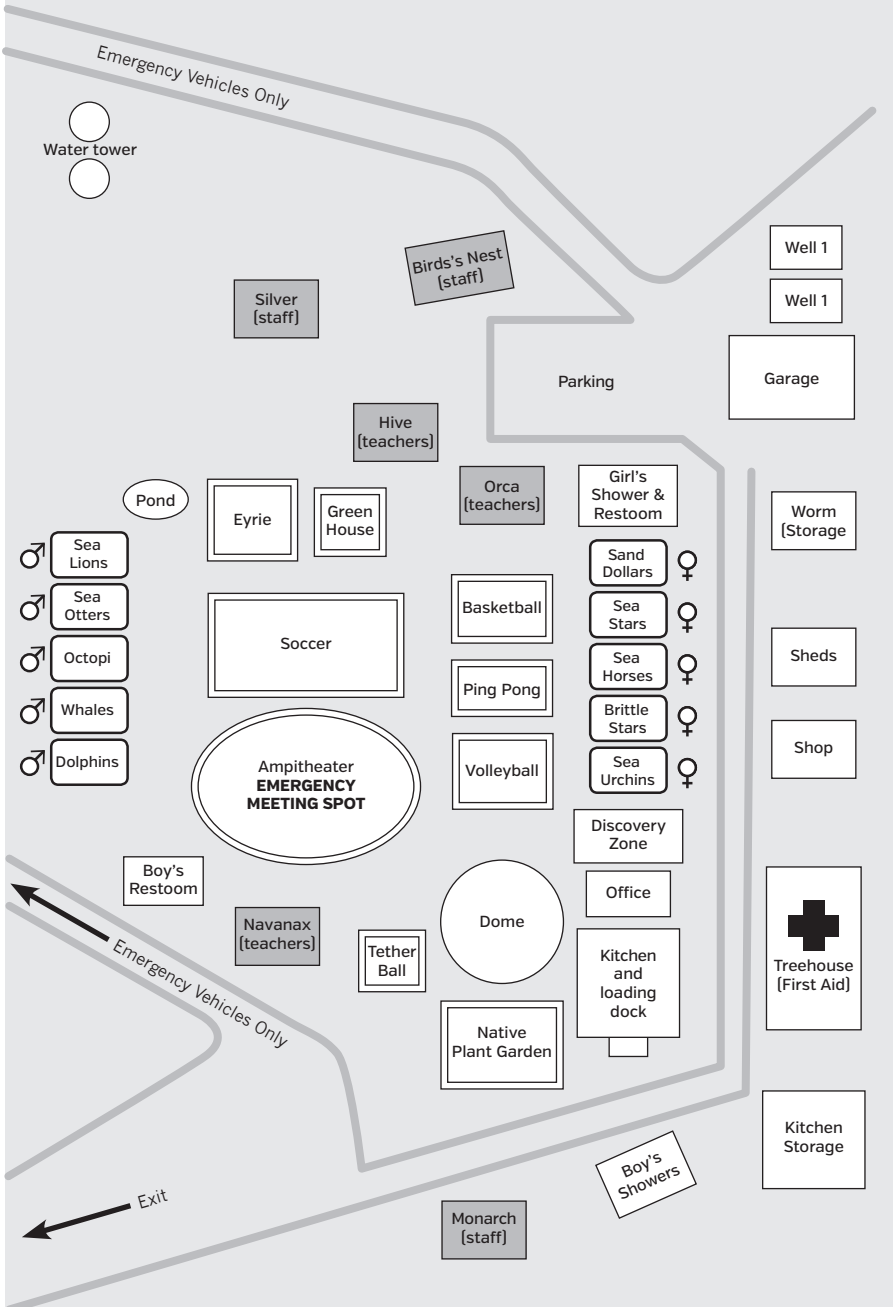
- ✓ Stay positive
- ✓ Be firm but friendly
- ✓ Act fairly and consistently
- ✓ Ask for help when you need it
- ✓ Respect is earned

# Cambria Campus

## Map of Camp Yeager



# Ocean Campus





**KEEP Program Office**  
1300 17th Street  
Bakersfield, CA 93301  
(661) 636-4629  
Desiree Von Flue, Assistant Superintendent

**KEEP Cambria Pines**  
P.O. Box 346  
Cambria, CA 93428

**KEEP Ocean**  
P.O. Box 6091  
Los Osos, CA 93412

[campkeep.org](http://campkeep.org)

**CAMP KEEP IS OPERATED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF**

*Kern County*  
**Superintendent of Schools**  
*Office of Mary C. Barlow ...advocates for children*

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