



TO: District Superintendents, Principals and Teachers

FROM: Kern Environmental Education Program (KEEP)

SUBJECT: **KEEP Policies and Procedures**

Thank you for your participation in the KEEP program.

We are looking forward to another outstanding year of outdoor science education with your students at our campus. Each year we aim to improve and advance our program, based on our experience and your comments. The following KEEP Policies and Procedures have been prepared for you. This packet has been designed as a separate reference for schools, teachers, and administrators.

Items covered in this packet include estimates of attendance and billing policies, student health and safety, counselor recruitment, forms, arrival and departure times, teacher responsibilities and scholarship information.

Thank you for your support and involvement in the Kern Environmental Education Program. We look forward to having you and your students attend KEEP this year. If you have any questions, contact Russell Sentes at the KEEP Office at (661) 636-4161. See you there, and happy trails!

JGM:rs
(Rev. 12/24)

Office Of John G. Mendiburu, Ed.D.
Kern County Superintendent Of Schools
Advocates For Children

Kern Environmental Education Program

KEEP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Section 1. Reservations, Billing Policy and Estimate of Student Attendance.

- A. Reservations and Billing.** Applications to attend KEEP are made during the month of February each year. An application form is emailed to every school. These must be returned to the KEEP office by the end of February. Once the master schedule for each campus is prepared, you will be emailed a written confirmation of your week at KEEP for the following school year. The formal KEEP Agreement will be mailed out to the district office for signature. This agreement forms the contractual basis for your school's attendance at KEEP. The number of students agreed to in the confirmation letter will form the basis for billing . It is KEEP 's policy to bill for a minimum of 90% (in district) and 95% (out of district) of this confirmed number of students, plus counselors and teachers. **If your school has more students wanting to attend than what was submitted on the application, or students with special physical health needs, please contact Russell Sentes at (661) 636-4161 for approval as far in advance as possible.**

After your week at KEEP, your district office will be billed by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Business Office for the actual number of total participants, including all students, counselors and teachers, at the contracted fee. If actual attendance is below 90% of the agreed student number in the signed contract, billing will be made for **not less than 90%** of this written amount. As an example, if School A signs a contract indicating 100 participants, but in fact only brings 85, then School A will be billed not for 85 but for 90 (90% of their original estimate of 100). Billing is done after the school attends KEEP. There are no prepayments or deposits to attend KEEP.

- B. Extra Counselors.** There is a required ratio of 1:7 counselors, not including teachers. Schools may bring two additional counselors (one male and one female) beyond the required ratio at no cost. KEEP acknowledges that having additional 1-2 counselors can be of great assistance and will not bill your school for these extra persons. For example, at the required ratio of 1:7, if School A is bringing 70 students, then School A must bring 10 counselors. The school may bring one extra male and one extra female (for a total of 12 counselors), but the billing will still be for 10. Conversely, if your school does not bring the minimum number of counselors to meet your ratio, you will be billed at the minimum ratio number. Additionally, it will become the classroom teachers' responsibility to supervise students (24 hrs/day) in lieu of the missing counselor.
- C. Early Departures.** In the event that a student or counselor needs to be sent home due to illness, injury or unforeseen events (other than disciplinary), KEEP will bill as follows:
- If a student or counselor goes home on the first day of the program, a one-day charge will be assessed.
 - If a student or counselor goes home on the second day of the program, a two-day charge will be assessed.
 - If a student or counselor goes home anytime after the second day, the full amount of the weekly fee will be billed, with no reduction or refund.
 - If a student or counselor goes home due to disciplinary action, there will be **no adjustment** to the billing, i.e., the full amount will be billed, regardless of when the person is sent home.

It is a regular occurrence for ill children to need to go home. Sometimes parents cannot or will not take responsibility for this. Make advance plans before coming to KEEP that address how your school will transport ill children home. Teachers need an after-hours phone number they can call between 4 p.m. - 7:30 a.m. for emergency support.

If a student or counselor does need to go home, responsibility for transportation is assigned in the following order: 1) parent/guardian, 2) school, and 3) district. KEEP does not transport students or counselors home. If there is no other option, a charge of \$500 will be assessed to the school.

Section 2. Forms.

Only the two most commonly used forms are discussed here. All forms are located on the KEEP website (www.campkeep.org). If you need a hard copy of the forms or a Teacher Resource binder please contact Russell Sentes at (661) 636-4161.

- A. Student Registration.** Every student attending KEEP must have a completed and signed registration form. This is mandatory. Please make sure the entire form is completed and signed by a parent or guardian. Note also that KEEP recommends a copy of the parent's insurance card be attached to the form (does not apply if family carries no insurance). KEEP also requires a registration form for all counselors, shadows, and teachers.

- B. Pupil Medication.** If a child is to be given any type of prescription or over-the-counter medication, a Pupil Medication Form must be completely filled out and signed by **both** parent and doctor. A high percentage of Pupil Medication forms are not being filled out properly. Complete instructions are provided on the forms. The three most important points are: 1) prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications **both** require a Pupil Medication form; 2) the doctor's and parent's signature must be present for **each** medication; 3) the medication must be in the original container and labeled with the student's name.

Section 3. Student Health & Safety

- A. Students with Specialized Physical Health Care Needs.** Students with the conditions listed below must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, district employee, or other qualified adult. This person may not be the child's classroom teacher or counselor. This person must be capable and willing to provide the necessary specialized physical health care for the student throughout the week, including all trail hikes. These adults will be allowed to participate without a fee. You must call the KEEP office (661-636-4161) to clear the participation of any student with specialized physical health care needs six weeks in advance. These conditions include but are not limited to:
- Any medications requiring injections (EpiPen or Glucagon),
 - Diabetes,
 - Severe bee sting or insect bite reaction,
 - Severe food or nut allergy reaction,
 - Mobility limitations,
 - Severe asthma requiring nebulizer (breathing machine) or activity restrictions,
 - Seizure disorder,
 - Respiratory restrictions (limiting activity),
 - Recent hospitalization,
 - Hemophilia,
 - Need for assistance with clean intermittent catheterization, or
 - Other conditions requiring medical procedures or assistance.
- B. Site Visitation.** The KEEP campus is a closed campus. Due to the open nature of our sites (no fences), we cannot have strangers visiting campus and still keep track of all the students. This rule applies to parents, family members, or anyone else who is not scheduled to participate with the attending school. If you have any questions, please call Russell Sentes at 661-636-4161.
- C. Non-Scheduled Participants.** Participation is limited to registered students, counselors, medical shadows, and teachers. Other school personnel are encouraged to visit KEEP. Visits must be arranged with the KEEP Program Supervisor. The KEEP program offers an opportunity

for students to grow their independence away from home. It is not anticipated that parents and/or guardians will participate, other than as counselors or medical shadows.

Section 4. Counselor Recruitment.

- A. Counselor Selection.** Your school has the responsibility of selecting the adult counselors who will be attending with your students at KEEP. These may be college students, parents, or other known and trusted adults. The choice is up to your school. The required ratio of counselors-to-students is 1:7.
- B. Fingerprint Requirements.** Districts will need to obtain criminal background clearance for adult volunteers. This can be done in one of two ways. AB 346 establishes an "Activity Supervisor Clearance Certificate" obtained from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. Alternatively, if your district requires volunteers to clear a Department of Justice and FBI criminal background check prior to participating, those clearances can be used instead.
- C. Student Volunteers.** The use of student volunteers will now be limited to the role of non-teaching volunteer aides under the immediate supervision and direction of certificated personnel as authorized in Ed Code, section 35021. This section allows such volunteers to perform non-instructional work which serves to assist the certificated personnel in performance of teaching and administrative responsibilities.

This means that a student volunteer will no longer be permitted to serve as the sole chaperone in student cabins. Student volunteers are allowed to stay in cabins so long as a fingerprint-cleared adult volunteer or certificated employee also stays in the cabin. The reason for this change is that complete criminal histories on students are unattainable due to legal protections concerning juvenile offenders.

- D. Kern High School District Guidelines.** If your school is a feeder school into the Kern High School District (KHSD) and you elect to recruit high school students to provide extra support for your students at KEEP, you must follow the written guidelines developed by KHSD. These guidelines provide detailed procedures, contact persons, high school assignments, and maximum counselor numbers. Any questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to Russell Sentes at 661-636-4161.
- E. Counselor Forms.** All counselors (whether high school, college or adult/parent) must complete two important forms prior to coming to KEEP. One is a Counselor Registration form and the other is the Counselor Contract. Please ensure that your counselors are given these forms and return them completed and signed (parent signature is required for counselors under 18 years of age).
- F. Cell Phones.** Students are not allowed access to cell phones. *Education Code 4890 I.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

poor and signals may be limited. Adults should be focused 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 an adult's 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.

Section 5. Arrival and Departure Times.

- A. Buses need to arrive at Camp KEEP at 11:30 Monday and Friday.** It is important that your buses arrive between 11:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the day of arrival and departure. Schedules are disrupted and groups are "short-changed" from planned activities if buses arrive early or late. Please do not arrive earlier than these times. This is especially true when two or more schools attend the same week. Notify the appropriate campus two working days in advance if you are unable to keep this schedule. Call the KEEP office at (661) 636-4161 to relay this information.

Section 6. Teacher Responsibilities.

- A. Teacher Responsibilities.** One teacher must attend for every 30 students attending. For example, if 1-30 students attend, 1 teacher is required; if 31-60 students attend, 2 teachers are required; if 61-90 students attend, 3 teachers are required; if 91-120 students attend, 4 teachers are required. More teachers can attend beyond this ratio if desired.

Enthusiastic teacher involvement enhances the quality of the experience for the students. The week at KEEP gives teachers a chance to observe their students in a new physical as well as social environment. Many teachers are surprised to see certain individuals change in ways they never imagined. This week also gives teachers a chance to interact more freely with the students and observe different ways they learn.

Since teachers know the students better than anyone, their expertise will be called upon to provide insight into student behaviors or illness. Teachers also provide needed encouragement, support and care both on the trail and on campus. Teachers are required to fully participate in the KEEP program, as described below.

- Come to the campus prepared with needed forms, medications, and student information.
- Remain on campus while the students are there.
- Work with the counselors on any problems they may be having with students.
- Remain around the campfire at bedtime and to help get the students quiet during cabin patrols.

- Take care of any student discipline problems, homesick, or ill students.
- Conduct Teacher Hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Go on at least one walk with the students sometime during the week.
- Clean their cabin on Friday.
- Meet with a staff member on Friday to evaluate their KEEP week.

Section 7. KEEP Office Location and KEEP Website.

- A. KEEP Office Location.** The KEEP office is located at the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office in Bakersfield. The director is Deputy Superintendent Russell Sentes. He can be reached as follows:

Kern Environmental Education Program,
Attn: Russell Sentes
1300 17th St
Bakersfield, CA 93301

Office: (661) 636-4161

Fax: (661) 636-4127

Email: rusentes@kern.org

B. KEEP Website

Almost everything you need to know is on the KEEP website. Check it out at www.campkeep.org. There are a wide variety of sections to explore, including our campuses, photos at KEEP, driving directions, frequently used forms and handouts, and FAQs.