



## COUNSELOR PRE-TRIP ORIENTATION LETTER

Thank you for volunteering to create an awesome week for our students.

Being a counselor is a challenging, fun, and extremely rewarding experience. Be prepared to learn a bunch about science, nature, kids, and...yourself.

Counselors are responsible for the safety, well being, and educational support of approximately 7-12 elementary students for five days, 23 hours per day. A welcoming and nurturing environment is critical to students' ability to learn. As a counselor, you create that in the cabins and throughout the week.

This letter is a quick introduction to prepare you for your week as a counselor at KEEP. You will receive a complete orientation after lunch on your first day.

We highly recommend you download and read the KEEP Counselor Handbook. ([Ocean/By the Sea](#))

### Roles & Responsibilities

As a counselor, you directly supervise 7-12 students during meal times, evening activities, showers, and in cabins at night. This allows you to be immediately available for emergencies while bunking with students.

Your days will be full with activities on a tight schedule so students can get the most out of the week. You will assist naturalists in various ways during nature hikes. Be ready to guide and mentor the students under your care through their busy days. Follow the student rules and role model the great behavior you would like to see from your students.

KEEP requires fingerprints for all adults. For student safety, adults are never to be alone with a single student, and students must always be supervised by an adult.

### Cell Phones/Computers

At KEEP, the children's needs come first. During our week, students are not allowed to use phones. We want them to experience being fully immersed in nature and their community. To support the students' experiences, we ask that you limit your phone usage to your afternoon break. This allows you to be more fully present for the students' needs. We visit sandy, salty areas and advise against bringing electric equipment of any kind on hikes. However, counselors may use the camera, weather, and clock/alarm functions on phones, provided student privacy is respected in regards to sharing and social media. Outlets are available for charging, however you may prefer a portable charger. Wi-Fi is not available. Further details about each camp's photo and phone policies will be explained upon arrival.

### Hiking

Be prepared! You will be hiking, every day, rain or shine, covering up to 5 miles up steep, dusty hills or on slippery, rocky shores. Your clothing and footwear will get dirty, sandy, or wet during your visit. Make sure you bring sturdy, closed-toed shoes with good tread on the bottom. Ugg boots or rubber boots are NOT good for hiking on trails.

Bring warm clothes, as the weather can get cold. We do not recommend heavy jackets for hiking. Instead, several light warm layers work much better. Bring a backpack to carry your layers, camera, and refillable water bottle.

## Meals

The KEEP Menus are designed to be student friendly while complying with school breakfast and lunch guidelines.

Please inform your child's school if you and/or your child have special dietary needs (eg. vegetarian, dairy-free, etc.) and accurately document them on the registration forms, at least three weeks prior to your stay.

Do you drink coffee or tea? Please bring your own insulated mug to enjoy your hot beverages.

## Important Tips

Adults may bring medicine for themselves and their own child to be stored in a secure location away from students. KEEP medical paperwork must be filled out for anyone under the age of 18 even if a parent is attending. Limited over-the-counter medicine is available to adults as requested.

Adults are not allowed to bring separate vehicles without prior written permission from their school and KEEP. Adults are not allowed to leave campus during the week except for scheduled hikes.

As official school campuses, our sites are tobacco, alcohol, and drug-free zones (including e-cigarettes and vapes). Other prohibited items include: weapons (pocket knives, tasers, etc.), gum, matches/lighters, electronic equipment, blow dryers, curling irons, and clothing or materials depicting violence, sexual content, drugs, or alcohol.

All documents are available at [www.campkeep.org/forms](http://www.campkeep.org/forms).

## Checklist

### Day of Departure

Pre-Travel Health Screening Form:

- ☐ Filled out for 7 days prior to trip
- ☐ Signed (Parent/Guardian for under 18)
- ☐ Bring with you on departure day

### Three Weeks Prior To Arrival

Adult Registration Form and Contract:

- ☐ Filled out completely
- ☐ Initialed and signed (Parent/Guardian for under 18)
- ☐ Returned to visiting school site

Student/High School Counselor  
Registration Form and Contract  
(Under 18):

- ☐ Filled out completely
- ☐ Signed (Parent/Guardian)
- ☐ Signed (Doctor)
- ☐ Returned to visiting school site

### Preparation

- ☐ Download and read the Counselor Handbook ([Ocean/By the Sea](#))
- ☐ Counselor Readiness Video
- ☐ Packing List