



Kern Environmental Education Program

A PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF JOHN G. MENDIBURU, Ed.D., KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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 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. 4/26)



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. Online applications to attend KEEP open in February and are available at www.campkeep.org. Additionally, a reminder is emailed to every school. Applications are due by the end of February. Once we prepare the master schedule for each campus, we will email to you a written confirmation of your KEEP dates for the following school year. The formal KEEP Agreement will be emailed 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% of the confirmed number of students, plus counselors and teachers. **If your school has more students wanting to attend than contracted for, or students with special physical health needs, please contact Russell Sentes at (661) 636-4161 for approval as far in advance as possible.**

There are no prepayments or deposits to attend KEEP. 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.

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).

- B. Extra Counselors.** We require a ratio of 1:7 counselor to students, not including teachers. Schools may bring two additional counselors (one male and one female) beyond the required ratio at no cost. Extra counselors are highly recommended in case of illness.

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 brings less than the minimum number of counselors to meet your ratio, you will be billed at the minimum ratio number.

- C. Extra Teacher.** We require a ratio of 1:30 teacher to students. Schools may bring an additional teacher beyond the required ratio at no additional cost. *We strongly recommend sending one teacher beyond the requirement.* If students from self-contained SPED classrooms are attending, the school must send a teacher, aide, or other adult who is knowledgeable about the needs of these students, including triggers, interventions, and strategies for success.

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.

- D. Early Departures.** Should a student or counselor need to go 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 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 sick children to need to go home. Sometimes parents cannot or will not take responsibility for this. Make advance plans before coming to KEEP to 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 \$2.50/mile and \$69/hour 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).

- A. Registration Forms.** Every person 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 requires specific registration forms for counselors, shadows, and teachers.
- B. Student Medication.** If a child is to be given any type of prescription or over-the-counter medication (other than those permitted on the Student Registration form), a Student Medication Form must be completely filled out and signed by **both** parent and doctor. Please check that all Student Medication forms are filled out properly. Complete instructions are provided on the forms. The three most important points are:
- prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications require a Student Medication Form;
 - the doctor's and parent's signature must be present for **each** medication;
 - the medication must be in the original container and labeled with the student's name.

Section 3. Student Health & Safety

- A. Students with Specialized Behavioral and 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 suppositories or injections
- Diabetes
- Severe food allergy requiring epinephrine
- Severe bee sting reaction requiring epinephrine
- Severe asthma requiring daily breathing machine (nebulizer)
- Respiratory restrictions limiting activity
- Mobility limitations
- Seizures
- Recent hospitalizations or surgery

- Other serious physical or mental health conditions requiring medical procedures or assistance.
- Students who could put themselves or others in danger due to their inability to follow safety directions.
- Students who are unable to handle their personal care needs without support (e.g. showers, dressing, falling asleep, etc.)

B. No Head Lice Policy. KEEP has a No Head Lice Policy. Please have students checked for lice several days prior to arrival. Students with head lice will be sent home unless the classroom teacher, instructional aid, or other adult chooses to obtain parent permission and pay for and administer the necessary treatment.

C. Site Visitation. Participation is limited to registered students, counselors, medical shadows, and teachers. The KEEP campus is a closed campus. Due to the open nature of our sites (no fences), we cannot have non-registered persons 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.

School personnel (such as administrators) 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 is responsible for selecting the adult counselors who will attend with your students at KEEP. These may be college students, parents, school employees, 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 must 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 may be used instead.

C. Student Volunteers. Volunteers who are 16-17 years of age may not serve as the sole chaperone in student cabins. They are allowed to stay in cabins so long as a fingerprint-cleared adult volunteer or certificated employee also stays in the cabin.

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.** High school counselors must complete a High School Registration Form and Behavior Contract. All other adults must complete the Adult Registration Form and Behavior 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 48901.5(b)]. Teachers, KEEP staff, and counselors are expected to avoid phone distractions while around students. Adults at KEEP will have access to their cell phones, but should be focused on the students, their activities and safety, rather than what is on their screen. Counselors will have a short afternoon break 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 may not allow a student to use an adult's phone, and adults may not call another parent with concerns about a student. All concerns must be brought to the classroom teacher or program supervisor. The KEEP staff will provide counselors a location to store and charge their devices away from students.

Section 5. Arrival and Departure Times.

- A. Buses must arrive at Camp KEEP at 11:30 on arrival day and at 10:45 on departure day.** We cannot accommodate buses earlier than 11:30AM on arrival day. Schedules are disrupted and groups are "short-changed" from planned activities if buses arrive early or late. If buses arrive later than 12:30 on arrival day, there is a contracted fee to cover staff overtime. If buses arrive later than 1:30PM on arrival day, it becomes the school's responsibility to provide lunch en route. If you are unable to keep this schedule, contact the Program Supervisors ASAP.

Section 6. Teacher Responsibilities.

- A. Teacher Responsibilities.** 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 enjoy seeing their students thrive in the outdoors. 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.

- Be familiar with the medical, learning, and behavioral needs of the students in attendance.
- Come to the campus prepared with needed forms and medications.
- Remain on campus while the students are there.
- Work with the counselors on any problems they may be having with students.
- After campfire, support counselors in getting students quiet, patrol cabins, and check in with staff before going to bed.
- Handle and communicate with families, KEEP Staff, and administrators any homesick, sick, or injured students, as well as any discipline problems.
- Conduct Teacher Hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30PM.
- Go on at least one hike 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 at www.campkeep.org. Look there for information about our campuses, informational videos, photos, driving directions, menus, schedules, and frequently used forms and handouts.