Logistics & Expectations Guide for Lead Teachers
Welcome to *A Mountain Classroom* (AMCR), the school program of the Appalachian Mountain Club. This guide should be read by the lead teacher to help answer questions about the program and AMC facilities. It will also clarify the roles and responsibilities of both the AMC education staff and the school chaperones.

**OVERVIEW**

**Background**

*A Mountain Classroom* uses inspiring outdoor settings and experiential methods to engage students and their teachers in learning. Offering three basic curricular strands, *Ecology and Earth Science*, *Leadership Development and Teambuilding*, and *Basic Guided Trips*, we work with you to complement your classroom lessons and/or other developmental goals for students. Elements from each curricular strand can also be woven together on programs.

Small field learning groups distinguish *A Mountain Classroom* and provide the opportunity for our staff to connect with participants. Additionally, trip chaperones enjoy the opportunity to observe and work with students in a new and rewarding way. Engaging the mind, body, and spirit, our program connects you and your group with our region’s most spectacular natural areas for an unsurpassed educational experience that is truly unique to *A Mountain Classroom*.

**Mission**

Through the power of outdoor experiences, *A Mountain Classroom* increases students' ecological understanding, inspires their personal growth and develops community.

**Philosophy**

We have developed an educational philosophy that is directed by core beliefs. They are:

- Developing environmental literacy is dependent on well-designed field activities that contribute to a well-balanced education.
- Education can be active, engaging, and relevant and can stimulate the mind, body, and soul.
- Experiences in nature support wellbeing.
- Stewardship of the environment grows from direct, positive experiences in the outdoors complemented by an understanding of our physical and emotional connections to the natural world.

**Outcomes**

Field-based programs allow students to explore topics and find personal growth in a new learning environment. This environment permits students and teachers to be free of the stresses of daily school life and to view each other in a constructive new light. Outcomes of *A Mountain Classroom* programming are many and generally acquired simultaneously. Substantiated by academic research and from our own evaluation and program feedback, we know young participants:

1. Develop an appreciation for the natural environment through exposure to spectacular wilderness areas.
2. Improve environmental literacy through increased understanding of ecological concepts and balanced exposure to environmental issues.
3. Strengthen intra- and inter-personal skills through group and individual challenges.
4. Develop leadership skills using leadership theory and practice that can be transferred to other life endeavors.
LEAD TEACHER PLANNING CHECKLIST

Three Months in Advance

☐ Select parent and teacher chaperones keeping in mind the physical demands of the experience. Provide chaperones with copy of Chaperone Information, Role and Responsibilities page included in this packet.

☐ Distribute paperwork from the Take Home Packet to students and chaperones. This completed paperwork is mandatory for all students and chaperones.

☐ Meet with teachers/chaperones to discuss expectations and curriculum goals.

☐ Meet with students to discuss behavioral expectations and equipment needs.

☐ Get commitments from participants for attendance and collect money.

One Month in Advance

☐ Send 100% of tuition using one check only to:

   AMC c/o School Programs
   PO Box 298
   Gorham NH 03581

☐ Fill out and return the Pre-Trip Questionnaire on Google Forms.

☐ Work with Program Coordinator to set-up a pre-trip phone meeting to discuss:
   - Curriculum goals
   - Logistical details
   - Final numbers and dietary or allergy information

☐ Collect Medical, Release of Risk, and Photo Release forms for all adults and students. Check that they are filled out properly and signed by a guardian.

2 Weeks in Advance

☐ Divide students and chaperones into field groups (number of groups determined by AMC). Fill out Field Group Template completely for all groups.

☐ Scan & email all forms (medical form, risk release form, photo release & completed Field Group Templates) to the Program Coordinator.

☐ Fill out rooming chart and return by email to AMCAMountainClassroom@outdoors.org

☐ Provide Program Coordinator with a list of gear needs for the group.

Please bring the following with you to the AMC to ensure a prompt course start!

☐ A packet for each field group containing the original Medical, Release of Risk, and Photo Release forms for each member of the group, with the group list on top. Please don’t staple!

☐ Any alterations to your rooming chart (this will be reviewed at the check-in desk upon arrival)

☐ Bagged lunch for all participants for the first day.

Contact Information

Lucy Koup: Pinkham, Huts, ME, MA, NY, NJ
Program Coordinator
P- (603)-466-8109 E- lkoup@outdoors.org

Audrey Springer: Highland Center & Cardigan Program Coordinator
P- (603)-278-3823 E- aspringer@outdoors.org

Alice Puccio: Coos County Education Coordinator
P- (603)-278-3819 E- apuccio@outdoors.org

Dawna Blackstone: Piscataquis County Education Program Coordinator
P- (207)-695-3085 E- dblackstone@outdoors.org

Rachel Freierman: Program Manager
P-(603)-466-2721 ext. 8184
E- rfreierman@outdoors.org

Lodging & Billing Questions: all lodging and billing questions should be directed to AMCAMountainClassroom@outdoors.org
LEAD TEACHER INFORMATION, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Role of the Lead Teacher
The lead teacher is responsible for communications and trip planning with A Mountain Classroom staff, as well as other teachers, chaperones and students for the program. To make this task as simple and as organized as possible, please follow the Lead Teacher Planning Checklist. Below are some suggestions for maximizing the organization of your trip.

Completing the Pre-Trip Questionnaire
The Pre-Trip Questionnaire is extremely helpful in ensuring that you and your students have the best possible experience at A Mountain Classroom. Please complete and submit your Pre-Trip Questionnaire at least 2 weeks in advance of your program. Even if you are a returning school and you have filled one out before, we ask that you complete the form as it contains necessary information for our planning purposes and preparing our field educators to work with your students and provides demographic information that is important for the continued funding of our program.

Arranging Students in Field Groups
The arrangement of field groups is a crucial factor in the students’ experience. Please consider the following in determining field groups in order to effectively nurture successful group dynamics:

- Create groups with approximately the same number of students in each group.
- In order to facilitate team building and new, positive social interaction please break up cliques.
- Organize students into groups of mixed physical abilities. We would like to ensure all students consider their hiking as an accomplishment, which can get compromised if students who are challenged by physical activity are segregated into one field group.
- We ask you to think carefully about pairing parent chaperones with their own children. We value the time parents take away from other responsibilities to be at AMCR, but this is an opportunity for students to grow and learn away from their traditional environments.

Designating Room Assignments
When creating rooming assignments, please take into account the following:

- We recommend students be roomed with others of the same age and gender whenever possible.
- Chaperones and students should be roomed near each other, but not with each other.
- Although we realize your entire group will not fit this way, we suggest you use two-person rooms for adults and four-person rooms for students.
- Avoiding a two year age gap between roommates may reduce the chance of inappropriate behaviors.

Take Home Packets and Required Forms for Students and Chaperones
Please start to distribute the forms soon after you’ve received this packet. The take home packets include a Parent Letter, Equipment List, all necessary forms (Medical, Release of Risk, Photo Release), and Tick Information for programs occurring in MA, NY & NJ.

- Please make sure that students’ parent/guardians receive, read and understand the contents of the Take Home Packet, and ensure that forms are completed prior to your trip.
• When collecting back these forms, please be sure that all forms are filled out correctly and signed by a parent/guardian.
• Please make sure that you brief the teachers and chaperones, especially your fellow teachers, on the information you’ve shared with the AMCR Program Coordinator regarding curriculum goals and expectations.

Digitizing & Arranging Forms

A Mountain Classroom retains Medical and Release of Risk forms after your program. We are moving to digital copies of these files. We therefore ask you to scan & email PDF files of all forms—at least 2 weeks prior to your program start date. If we receive these forms in advance, our Program Coordinators and Field Educators will have the chance to review medical concerns and need prior to your arrival.

Please also bring packets for each field group containing the completed Field Group Template and original Medical, Release of Risk and Photo Release forms. These forms are imperative and will be carried by each educator during the field day for their group.

Thank you for your organization and diligence in this pre-trip process. It is in part your dedication and willingness to put in this time and effort that makes our program possible and run smoothly.
CHAPERONE INFORMATION, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The participation of chaperones is an essential component of all *A Mountain Classroom* programs. We truly appreciate the time that these adults take away from their jobs, homes and families to assist with the supervision while groups participate in the *A Mountain Classroom* program. These experiences for students could not happen without the help of chaperones. The lead teacher will convey the crucial logistical and curricular details of the program to all chaperones.

Chaperones attending an *A Mountain Classroom* program are expected to:

- Serve as role models for students and demonstrate the importance of leadership and respect.
- Have clear communication with their own team of adults and check in regularly with AMCR staff.
- Enthusiastically participate in and model a positive attitude during activities. Remember, students are asked to find answers and solve problems on their own. Student learning seems to be enhanced by an open, non-critical atmosphere, allowing them to discuss things freely without being overshadowed by adults.
- Assist with discipline, and help to keep students focused on academic lessons.
- Be present with their field group during all hiking activities.
- May be asked to supervise a student who can no longer participate fully but remains on the trip.

Chaperone Schedule & Responsibilities

Following initial group introductions and a briefing with the students and teachers/chaperones, students will be separated into their individual field groups and the field day will begin.

- Chaperones should be pre-assigned to one field group and are asked to stay with this group for the duration of the program. If there are reasons for switching groups or you need to step away from the group for a minute, please speak with AMCR staff. One chaperone per field group is required on all hikes.
- The AMCR educator will typically ask the chaperone(s) in their group to stay in the rear of the hiking group to ensure that the group stays together.
- *A Mountain Classroom* staff are not allowed to administer any student medications. Chaperones from the students’ school are required to follow their school’s policies in regards to handling and dispensing student medications.

Chaperones are *solely* responsible for student’s safety and well being during Recreational (free) time and overnight hours. We ask that at least one adult is present in all locations students are allowed to go during Rec. Time, and is actively supervising.

Recreational (Free) Time

Rec. time is student free time and a time for students to play and relax. School chaperones have *sole responsibility* for student supervision during student Rec Time.

- Please ensure kids maintain appropriate behavior in the lodge and are respectful of other guests using the facility. While students have the use of common spaces during this time, a school chaperone should be aware of student’s whereabouts and continue to circulate to make sure interactions between students and between students and other guests are appropriate.
- Non-school adults may also be staying in the facility with your group. Please be advised of their presence and maintain supervision for student safety.
- Close supervision during free time minimizes discipline problems, injury, and homesickness.

**Overnight Hours**
School chaperones are solely responsible for student supervision in the overnight hours—which is after evening program until you meet with your field group the next morning—8:30pm—8:30am. Similar to supervision of Rec Time, please actively supervise students during these non-programming hours.

- At our **Roadside Lodge Facilities** there are front desk staff or caretakers who are available as resources during the overnight hours (Pinkham Notch Visitors’ Center, Highland Center, Cardigan Lodge, Maine Wilderness Lodges, Noble View Outdoor Center, Corman AMC Harriman Outdoor Center & Mohican Outdoor Center).
- At the **AMC’s Backcountry Huts** or on **backpacking programs**, while school chaperones are responsible for student supervision during overnight and non-programming hours, AMCR educators remain on site and are can be resources to chaperones if an emergency occurs.

**Child Safety Guidelines**
The Appalachian Mountain Club will not tolerate the abuse or neglect of participants, chaperones or staff. The AMC values emotional and physical safety and will take steps to protect those involved in our programming while fostering a culture of respect and prevention. We ask you to confidentially notify a program administrator of any incident that raises a “red flag” in respect to interactions among people involved in the program. Red flags may include, but would not be limited to, any indication of inappropriate touching, exclusive relationships and/or selective attention between adults and students, inappropriate disciplinary strategies, or students and students and inappropriate or suggestive language. Please report incidents where any adult or older child seeks to be alone with program participants.

**Medications**
**Teachers or chaperones are responsible for holding and administering student medications.** Please make sure that the school chaperone understands the medical needs and the medication procedures necessary for all the students in their group. **Any medication needed during school or for physical activities needs to be administered on the trip.**

**Alcohol Policy**
Teachers and chaperones cannot drink alcoholic beverages while they are responsible for students and involved in AMC programs.

**Smoking Policy**
Smoking is prohibited in all AMC buildings. Smoking areas and disposal containers are located on the grounds. We follow smoking procedures established by the school, but prohibit smoking during programming and around AMC equipment. While in the backcountry, smokers are expected to carry the filter out of the woods for proper disposal.

**Damage Policy**
The AMC will charge a school for student caused damage to our facilities.
Below is a sample schedule, typical of our 3-day residential programs. Program schedule specifics will be discussed with the school's Lead Teacher, and a specific schedule for your program will be provided to you upon your arrival. A general idea of the schedule and chaperone responsibilities can be learned using this schedule.

### Your School!

**Grade:** 8th  
**Numbers:** 33 students and 4 chaperones (Split into 4 field groups)  
**Lead Teacher:** Your Name!  
**Educators:** Lucy K, Rachel F, Alice P and Audrey S  
**Facilities:** Pinkham Notch Visitors' Center  
**Curriculum Focus:** Forest Ecosystems

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<th>Wednesday 4/11</th>
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| 11:00am: School Arrival | 6:30—8:00am: Breakfast  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE | 6:30—8:00am: Breakfast  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE |
| Group Introduction & Lunch  
Move into rooms & Teacher Meeting | 8:30 Meet Group for Day | 8:30 Meet Group for Day |
| Break into Study Groups  
Gear Shakedown & Group Expectations  
Introduce Ecological Concepts & Sense of Place  
Short Hike or Walk with Integrated Field Learning | Full Day in Study Groups  
(Destination based on ability and school curriculum)  
Continue Curriculum Themes  
All Day Hike with Integrated Field Learning  
**Lunch on Trail**  
Sample Activities:  
- Sensory Exploration  
- Land Management Analysis | Half Day in Study Groups  
Wrap up Curriculum Themes  
Short Hike with Integrated Field Learning  
Debrief with Group and Collect Gear  
**12:15pm Sit Down Lunch**  
Sample Activities:  
- Presentation of Findings  
- Sustainability of Systems  
**School Departs after Lunch** |
| Field Day Ends @ 4:45pm | Field Day Ends @ 4:45pm | |
| 4:45-5:45 Rec Time  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE | 4:45-5:45 Rec Time  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE |  |
| 5:45 Ort Discussion | 5:45 Ort Discussion | |
| 6:00 Dinner | 6:00 Dinner | |
| 7:00-8:30 Evening Program  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE | 7:00-8:30 Evening Program  
SCHOOL CHAPERONES SUPERVISE | |

AMC outdoors.org
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A Mountain Classroom Educator Role & Responsibilities

AMCR educators are enthusiastic professionals who have chosen the outdoors and experiential education as their method for teaching students. They are college graduates with relevant degrees and/or experience, wilderness first aid certifications, and training in our program components and philosophy. Information about the woods and White Mountain terrain is also part of training. They all have a commitment to enriching student’s lives and a desire to use the wonder of the outdoors to teach program content. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Responsible for programming from 8:30am until 4:45pm, and generally in charge of Evening Programs from 7:00pm—8:30pm.
- Responsible for lesson planning and following general program outline which is chosen by the Lead Teacher in conjunction with the Program Coordinator.
- Responsible for the flow of the day and the overall management of their group, which includes decisions regarding route choices and necessary changes to those routes as the program progresses.

We encourage communication among school chaperons and AMCR educators to increase cooperation and understanding between all involved adults.

Equipment and Weather

Mountain weather is notoriously changeable. It is also more severe than lowland weather, with snow and freezing temperatures possible in any season.

A Mountain Classroom will continue regardless of weather, although hiking routes and/or destinations occasionally must be changed due to adverse conditions. We consider these safety decisions an important part of learning about outdoor travel in mountainous terrain.

It is of utmost importance that participants have adequate clothing to deal with all possible conditions. This will increase the comfort of the individual as well as the ability of the group to accomplish its goals. Proper footwear and rain gear is vital. The only acceptable insulating materials are wool or pile/fleece (synthetic fibers). Cotton is not an acceptable option. When wet, cotton causes loss of body heat and can be hazardous in cold or windy conditions. We have clothing items available to loan participants, free of charge. Ask the AMCR Program Coordinator for details.

Emergency Procedures

All students and chaperones should arrive at the AMC with a completed Medical/Release and Acknowledgement of Risk forms. Educators carry the forms and a first aid kit with them throughout the trip. An electronic copy of the forms will be kept on file by AMCR administrators for us in an emergency.

Educators perform primary first aid duties for an injured person. They also carry InReach Satellite Devices to call for assistance if necessary– although reception is good, the devices are not a fail safe means of communication. Educators are trained how to access additional help if the situation demands it. Depending on the injury, a student may need to curtail activities, be sent home, or be taken to the hospital for treatment.
If the student’s experience is altered significantly, the AMC administration, the student’s guardian, and the school will be notified. The Medical/Release form, which gives legal consent to treat the student, will be sent to the hospital. School chaperones may bring the student to the hospital, if an ambulance is not needed.

Backcountry injuries are unique in that attaining help can be difficult and getting a student to definitive care can take many hours. The AMC front desk coordinates search and rescue efforts in conjunction with the NH Fish and Game and local medical personnel. Volunteer search and rescue groups are called to assist as needed. Hospitals are located throughout the region, and the location of the incident will determine which one is used. In general, 30 minutes is required for travel time to and from area hospitals, once the participant is roadside.

**Emergency Contact**

If someone needs to reach a student or chaperone during a course, they should call the AMC at (603) 466-2721 x0, then speak to a receptionist and tell them an A Mountain Classroom administrator needs to call them back immediately.

Please do not leave messages for program administrators on their voice mail solely as a means of contact. Although they are generally around the area, they may be away from their office phone or away for the day. All efforts will be made to make efficient contact with the person. Teachers play an important role by ensuring group lists are accurate and copies are left with the involved program administrators.

Students are not able to call home or receive incoming calls from Roadside Lodge Facilities except in emergency situations.

Cell phones do not work well at most of the AMC facilities.

**For more information about the facility your group is staying at:**

Please follow the following link, [https://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping](https://www.outdoors.org/lodging-camping), to find detailed information about the facility and its amenities.
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