

A program of the San Mateo County Office of Education



SINCE 1968



SAN MATEO  
OUTDOOR  
EDUCATION

Inspiring and teaching fifth and sixth grade students through our week long environmental education program.

## San Mateo Outdoor Education

Nestled in the Redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Jones Gulch has been home to San Mateo Outdoor Education for more than 50 years. We provide week-long residential programs for fifth and sixth grade students, focusing on experiential and environmental education.

During a week at Outdoor Education, students will learn about the natural world, explore the forest and coastal ecosystems, and work together as a community. Through active, hands-on learning, students develop understanding and skills in many subject areas: science, social studies, mathematics, language arts, art, music, drama, and physical education.

Students and Naturalists study and explore the land, sea, trees, animals and ecological relationships within the environment. Our curriculum teaches ecological concepts, including adaptation, change, ecosystems, cycles, diversity, and interdependence. Students also practice interpersonal skills and social development through cooperation, conflict resolution and decision making.



*"Activities are well organized for safety and learning. Naturalists know the scientific curriculum and obviously love nature." Classroom teacher*

## Staff

San Mateo Outdoor Education is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well being of your child. Our Naturalists, the student's Classroom Teacher, and their Cabin Leader will provide constant supervision. Classroom teachers from your child's school will be in attendance and serve as a link between school and home. High school students, selected by their schools in cooperation with the elementary schools, accompany students on all activities, and live in the cabins with the students.

An on-site healthcare specialist who is an emergency medical technician will provide around-the-clock medical supervision, dispense medication, and if necessary, contact you if your child



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encounters any health problems. Be assured that our Site Director and Outdoor Education staff will make every effort to ensure that your child has a successful learning experience.

### Site

San Francisco YMCA Camp Jones Gulch near La Honda is home to San Mateo Outdoor Education. Both the academic program and the camp are Resident Outdoor Science School (ROSS)-certified by California Outdoor School Administrators (COSA). The camp also maintains American Camping Association (ACA) accreditation.

Students live in heated cabins with bunks and mattresses and bring their own sleeping bag and bedding. The students enjoy well-balanced meals, prepared and served family style by the YMCA kitchen staff. Special or medically necessitated diets should be noted on the registration form and discussed with the Site Director at least one week prior to attendance.

### Transportation and Cost

Each school determines the cost of its Outdoor Education week and arranges for transportation to and from camp. The County Office of Education, the school district, and the families of participating students share in the cost of the program. Your child's school will notify you as to the cost and payment schedule.

### Health Information

Please fill out the medical form distributed by your child's classroom teacher. We need to know your child's current health status and any medications that he/she is taking. In the event of an accident, we need to know where to reach you, an emergency contact person if you are unavailable, and the name of your insurance carrier.

### Clothing

Proper outdoor clothing is essential to your child's comfort and well being. Please pack only the suggested items that appear on the packing list provided. Older but serviceable clothing is best. Do not pack new clothing or equipment. Cabin space is limited—pack only one duffel bag or suitcase and one sleeping bag.

### Lessons and Activities

#### Discovery Hike

The Discovery Hike introduces students to the Jones Gulch environment, their new cabin mates, and Naturalist. Students will explore the outdoors, participate in sensory awareness activities, and will take part in cooperative group challenges.

#### Green Day and Eco-Day

Students will spend two days exploring redwoods, oak woodlands, chaparral, and grasslands. On Green Day, students learn about photosynthesis, plant anatomy and reproduction, soil, and air cycles, and explore the relationship between forest plants. Eco-Day focuses on ecological interdependencies, including predator-prey relationships, food chains, habitat and population dynamics.

The students will also visit the Organic Garden/Sustainable Living Center and Nature Lab. The Garden provides hands-on

experience in planting and harvesting vegetables and composting food waste. The Straw Bale Classroom introduces students to green building techniques, photovoltaic solar electricity, and lifestyle changes that reduce environmental impact. The Nature Lab allows students to explore a marine aquarium, complete with an interactive teaching center.

#### Beach Day

Beach Day presents an opportunity for students to explore Pacific coast marshes, tide pools, and beaches. Teaching focuses on intertidal life, wetland ecology, plant and animal adaptations, coastal geology, and observing a colony of harbor seals.

### Evening Activities

#### Night Hike

Students use all of their senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste—to explore the outdoors at night, observe nocturnal animals, and weather permitting, do some stargazing and learn to recognize the constellations.



*"While you are learning you are seeing what you are talking about. So you come home packed with information you will never forget." Fifth grade student*

#### Earth Dance

Students will explore the role of dance in various cultures around the world to gain a better understanding of their significance within each culture.

#### Ocean Odyssey

Students dress up as birds and tide pool creatures and participate in songs and skits about ocean habitats in preparation for Beach Day.

#### Campfire

Students from each cabin, with the help of their Cabin Leaders, will use their cooperative and creative skills to develop and present a three-minute skit describing their week at Outdoor Education.

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Steve Van Zandt, Site Director

## Learn more about the wonders of San Mateo Outdoor Education

[www.smcoe.org/for-families/attending-outdoor-education](http://www.smcoe.org/for-families/attending-outdoor-education)

The San Mateo County Office of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.



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