

OLD OAK RANCH GOLD CAMP CABIN LEADER TRAINING MANUAL



OUR MISSION: *Old Oak Ranch Gold Camp exists to teach young Californians about the most critical and exciting period in their state's history. The lessons of the 1848-1854 California Gold Rush and westward migration in the central Sierra Nevada foothills, including key figures and places, will be taught through authentic, interpretive programs that transform the student into a pioneer gold miner.*

Job Description

The Cabin Leader is one of the most important people on the camp leadership team. You are the one who has the closest contact with the students, and therefore, the most opportunity to impact their lives in a positive way. This is a great privilege and a great responsibility.

Qualifications: (Please contact Old Oak Ranch Educational Programs regarding exceptions.)

- Be at least eighteen years old.
- Be willing to be accountable to others, being guided by the established standards for daily work, group living and personal conduct.
- Be willing to participate actively in the program & purpose of the camp.
- Have a desire and mindset to serve. Leading a cabin group is a demanding job, which can be tiring at times, but is extremely rewarding.

Responsible to:

- The student who depends on you to help make camp a safe, fun and educational experience
- Your School Coordinator
- The Camp Director

Responsibilities:

- Live with the students day and night and be available to them at all times.
- Learn the names of your students by the end of the first night.
- Go to bed when students do, not earlier, not later. Stay in your cabin after lights out. Students must never be left unsupervised.
- Sit and eat with your students at meal times. Never complain about food or service in front of the students. Bring any concerns to your coordinator.
- Attend & be on time to all meetings. Make sure your students do the same.
- Perform and be on time to scheduled assignments.
- Take the initiative to do things spontaneously with your students during free moments.
- Lead group discussion times as directed by the program.
- Help students personally apply what they have studied during the day.
- Enforce "lights out" in your cabin, which means absolute quiet/no activity.
- Look for opportunities throughout the day to listen to your students. Avoid offering counsel in areas for which you are not qualified or trained. Ask for help if you get in over your head. Always spend one-on-one time in public areas. Always keep it guys with guys and, gals with gals.
- Seek out students who seem to be out of touch socially or otherwise, and help them feel welcome and included in the larger group.
- Promote both personal and cabin cleanliness for yourself and students. In the same manner, you are expected to instill, by example, a respect for the facilities and the environment.
- Maintain a healthy working relationship with other staff members.
- Never discuss problems in front of students; bring problems to the Camp Director. Avoid & discourage complaining. Keep things positive!
- Participate enthusiastically in the camp program and encourage your students to do the same.
- Ask for help if you are getting overly tired or stressed out.
- At the end of camp, supervise the cleanup of camp so that your cabin and the camp as whole are cleaner than when you arrived.

Staff Conduct

Any person accepting a position as a Cabin Leader is committing to a position of great responsibility. You will be expected to conduct yourself in a way that is a credit to your school and Old Oak Ranch Educational Programs. All of your actions need to comply with common sense health and safety standards & rules for students and staff. If you're in doubt about something – please ask!

Guidelines:

- Due to the number of students and camp policy, any calls – incoming or outgoing – should be for emergencies only. Business or confidential calls can be arranged with the Camp Director or Camp Office.
- No one is permitted to leave the grounds for any reason without the permission of the Camp Director AND the School Coordinator.
- Each Cabin Leader and staff member is responsible for their own bedding, clothing, luggage, and personal belongings unless prior arrangements have been made.
- Please respect the camp property and grounds.
- Please do not bring pets to camp. They are not allowed on the grounds.
- Any illness, injury, or infection must be reported to your first aid contact person at once. Injuries should also be reported to the Camp Coordinator.
- It is a State requirement that shirt and shoes be worn in the dining hall.
- Make it a point to throw your trash in the receptacles provided. It will greatly aid those who keep the grounds clean, and it will also set a great example for the students.
- When leaving a room, please turn off the lights and heater or cooler if they are no longer needed.
- There may be poison oak at camp. Stay on the trails and you won't have any problems. If you don't know what poison oak looks like – please ask. “Leaves of Three...Let Them Be!”

Dress Code

Safety dictates that socks and closed-toe shoes be worn at all times, except when participating in pool activities, bathing or when sleeping. Cabin Leaders are serving as role models to their students. Please exercise discretion when choosing swim attire or clothing with logos or designs.

Precautions to Take – for the protection/benefit of you and your students.

- Never remain alone with a student, especially during private activities (showering, changing clothes, etc.) If there are no other students or adults available step out of the room and allow the student their privacy.
- One-on-one time should always be in full view of others (i.e., in a public place such as the ball field, basketball court, etc.). If in an enclosed room, keep the door open.
- Do not allow students into staff areas (staff cabins or lounges).
- Follow our standard procedure for handling discipline (pg. 6). Don't do anything that may be misconstrued as abusive. Unsure? – Please ask.
- Be aware of what you share and ask. Keep personal matters private.
- Report suspicious or unusual behavior to your school's Camp Coordinator.
- Because children respond differently, always ask permission to hug or touch a student. It is advisable to limit your physical contact with them.
- Be sure to spend equal time with your students; do not show attention to only a few.
- Try not to be overly anxious or paranoid. Do be cautious and aware.
- Precautions excerpted from the CCI/USA paper, Focusing on the Foundations of Christian Camping, Focus Series #21, "Seven Keys to Understanding Child Abuse," by Becca Cowan Johnson, Ph.D.

Notes:

Visitors During Camp

Visitors at camp are generally not allowed. Please inform the Camp Director immediately if any student has an unexpected visitor. Prior arrangements for visitors must be made through the Camp Director and Camp Office. Please let us know if a student is planning to leave early and with whom. This policy is for the student's safety and our protection. This is very important!! If you have questions about specific students or situations, please ask the Camp Director.

Discipline Policy and Procedures

We make every effort to provide students with opportunities to express themselves in a positive way. Unfortunately, there are times when students and staff make choices that create problems for themselves and/or others. In these cases the following guidelines are typically adhered to.

- 1st incident: A verbal warning is given.
- 2nd incident: The individual meets with the School Coordinator.
- 3rd incident: The individual meets with the Camp Director.
- 4th incident: The child's parent/legal guardian is consulted.
- 5th incident: The individual is sent home.

These steps are effective in most cases. There may be times when one or more steps are skipped depending on the nature of the problem. The decision to send a student or staff person home for any reason will be made by the School Coordinator in consultation with the Camp Director. The following situations will be cause for immediate dismissal from camp.

- Use of drugs.
- Use of alcohol.
- Use of tobacco products (not arranged in advance for adults).
- Inappropriate physical contact with students or staff.
- Any other situations as decided by the School Coordinator & Camp Director.

Tools to Help Handle Discipline Problems

- Know the guidelines, rules and expectation for students and Cabin Leaders. Know the consequences of not following them.
- Guidelines and their consequences should be clearly communicated. Don't be vague when making or enforcing a rule.
- Enlist the assistance of other staff, especially your School Coordinator, if any difficulties arise.
- Sit with your students during classes & meetings. Position yourself so you can reach all your students and see the person up front during meetings.

Steps to maintain control:

- Use non-verbal messages, i.e., eye contact, gentle touch with hand, etc.
- Call by name to get attention; use a simple "No".
- Eye to eye talk (clarifying expectations).
- Personal conference – outside (assign consequences, lose privileges)
- Remove from situation – change seating, position next to you.
- Personal conference with the School Coordinator, parent, etc.
- Principles to remember when confronting a student:
- Pursue respect before rapport. You are a role model, not their peer.
- Confront in private – don't embarrass in front of others.
- Avoid threats – don't say things you can't back up. Know your limits!
- Keep comments short and specific.
- Look for opportunities to be a true friend. Ask if anything is wrong, or "Can I be of help".
- Make the discipline consistent with the offense. Don't over-react!
- Allow the person the opportunity to share their side of the situation.
- Keep yourself under control, i.e., don't raise your voice or get into a power struggle. Take a break until you feel under control again.
- Don't take their behavior personally.
- Physical punishment is not acceptable. Seek help if needed.

Notes:

Tips for Guiding Students in Discussions

Set up a good “learning environment” for your group discussion times. Find a quiet place. Ask yourself, “Can I see each of my students’ faces? Can they see each other? Can we hear each other well? Are we away from distractions and other groups? Are we relatively comfortable? These things will help everyone feel a part of the experience and keep their attention.

Silence can be helpful. Don’t panic; allow students time to think. Sometimes a few moments of silence is what it takes before students get involved.

Speak to Individuals. Direct questions to individuals one at a time instead of the whole group. “Susie, how would you respond to that question?”

Try again. If students have a hard time participating, try repeating the question, or ask it in a different way. Ask them what they think the question means, or give a short example response yourself. “I don’t know” is an okay response for both them and for you. No one knows all the answers. They will respect your honesty. Let them know you will try to find the answer and get back to them. Sometimes there is no simple answer to a particular question.

Meet students where they are. Never press students to say more than they feel comfortable sharing in the group. Do not ask students to read out loud unless you have asked them in advance. Try not to embarrass a student.

Bring stories to read with or to your students at rest or bedtime. This time will assist students in going to sleep calmly and with positive thoughts. (Please do not share “Ghost Stories” or read scary books to the students. We want ALL students to sleep well without bad dreams.) Students may enjoy personal stories or making up stories together. Sharing hopes and dreams can also be a good way to get to know your students. Evening talks can open doors for sharing when the atmosphere is relaxed. Attentively listen to your students. Do not make judgment or supply ready answers. This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage each student to ask questions, discuss, express, and reflect upon the experiences of the day. Allow your students to think for themselves and share if they desire. You need to create and foster an environment where the students do not fear ridicule or censure.

Learning can be fun. Be creative! You will learn and gain confidence as you share your own answers. Relax and do your best. You are not expected to be the “answer person.” Learn from each other.

First Aid Procedures

A qualified first aid person from your school will be on duty or on call at all times. In case of a MAJOR ACCIDENT, send a reliable person for help immediately. If at all possible, write down the following information and send it with the messenger:

- Type of accident.
- Place of accident.
- The accurate, full name of the injured person.

Remember to keep the injured person calm. Have another Cabin Leader keep the other students in the area away from the injured person. DO NOT attempt to move the injured person unless not moving them will cause them greater injury. If it is a fall victim, DO NOT MOVE THE HEAD!

Make sure that ALL injuries are reported to your school's first aid contact.

All accidents should also be reported to the Old Oak Ranch Gold Camp staff supervisor on duty.

Please check with your school for additional first aid procedure details and reporting requirements.

In case of fire:

- Sound fire alarm. Pull stations at all buildings.
- All guests assemble at flagpole in lower camp, the basketball court at Hilltop, or the parking lot at Prospector Point.
- Take attendance -- account for all in YOUR camp.
- Begin fire operation -- campers remain under supervision at flagpole, basketball court or parking lot.
- Staff use fire hoses, extinguishers. Fight fire under the supervision of Camp Manager.
- Kitchen crew to call 911, Tuolumne Fire Dept.