



Parents' Guide to Pok-O-MacCready

The Pok-O-MacCready Outdoor Education Center (PMOEC) has been serving New England, New York, New Jersey, and Quebec since 1974. We specialize in customized outdoor programs that blend education with team-building, adventure, and fun. Our staff of professional outdoor educators ensures that every group has an enriching experience.

The Center's Mission is *to create and encourage a sense of awe in the presence of nature, to promote teamwork, communication, and tolerance, and to build self-confidence and to nurture self-worth for students of all ages.*

A trip to Pok-O-MacCready Outdoor Education Center offers your child a chance to appreciate the outdoors, develop lasting relationships, self-reliance, cooperation, interdependence and, of course, to have fun! This guide is designed to offer advice and address specific issues such as preparing for the trip, health forms, parent-student communication, care packages, medical concerns, dietary needs, emergencies, and homesickness. Your active participation and encouragement, both before and after the trip, will enhance your child's experience and ensure a successful school trip.

◆ Campus

Our campus consists of over 300 acres *inside* the beautiful 6 million acre Adirondack Park, the east's largest wilderness. Our property is crisscrossed by more than 20 miles of cross-country skiing, mountain biking, hiking, and nature trails.

Our location on Long Pond gives us easy access to canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Long Pond also serves as an outdoor classroom for our Pond Ecology class. Lake Champlain is only minutes from our facility, and the Eastern High Peaks, Dix Mountain, and Giant Mountain Wilderness Areas can be accessed from several trailheads less than an hour's drive away. The Pok-O-Queen is our flagship building. It houses the Teachers', Students', and Staff Lounges, our administrative office, and a dining hall that can seat 120 people. Egg Drops, Nature Crafts, and activity debriefs all take place there.

Our four winterized dorms, MacCready Lodge, Aunt Sarah, the Junior House, and the Farmhouse, can host 120 students and adults. In the spring, the 180-person Robinson Dining Hall opens and groups may also stay in our more rustic lakeside cabins.

◆ Preparing for PMOEC

Each lead teacher has a PMOEC Packing List which all parents should receive. The Packing List can also be found at our website (www.pmoec.org) under the For Parents page. For all trips, your child should bring a sleeping bag, pillow, bath towel, and toiletries. These items are not provided by the Center.

For **winter trips**, please make sure your child has warm winter boots, a warm coat, 2-3 pairs of socks **per day**, extra gloves, 2 hats, and proper long underwear and layers.

Camping gear can be found at EMS, REI, L.L. Bean, and CampMor.

◆ Health Forms

All students who attend PMOEC must have a completed PMOEC Health Form with a parent signature in order to participate in activities.

◆ Medical Concerns

The health and safety of the Center's students is of primary concern to us. It is essential, for optimal health care in your absence, to openly convey information about any medical, behavioral or other care issues regarding your child to the director as well as to the lead teacher from your child's school. All information provided to the Center is held confidential by the staff.

PMOEC staff are forbidden by New York State Department of Health to dispense over the counter medications to any person under the age of 18. During your child's stay at the Center, all medications should be given to the lead teacher who will be responsible for appropriately dispensing medications. **Students with epi-pens and inhalers should carry these items on their person at all times.**

All PMOEC staff are trained in First Aid and CPR/AED. In the event of a serious injury, an ambulance from the town of Willsboro will be called and students will be taken to the nearest hospital, Champlain Valley Physician's Hospital, in Plattsburgh.

◆ Dietary Needs

Menus at PMOEC are designed to appeal to a wide range of students and include several separate menu items so that everyone will find something to enjoy. Fresh fruit is always available in the dining room as well. We do not offer alternatives for picky eaters, and frequently find that students who are hesitant to try a dish find they like it after watching their peers and instructors enjoy it. The Center's chef is adept at meeting a variety of special food needs, including the following: vegetarian and vegan, religious restrictions such as avoiding pork, or keeping meat and dairy separate (we cannot offer truly kosher or halal fare), food allergies, from mild to severe, including nut, egg, and dairy allergies, and food intolerances such as lactose intolerance and Celiac disease.

If your child has a dietary restriction, be sure to list them in the box on the PMOEC Health Form and return the form to your lead teacher at least 2 weeks before your child's trip. The chef will only provide alternatives to students whose needs are listed on their health form. With advance notice, the Center will be able to provide special meals that are as similar as possible to the main meal, which helps students focus less on their food and more on their experience at the Center. If your child's restrictions are severe or unusual, you may wish to contact the chef directly at 518-963-7647 or email chef@pmoec.org. The chef is happy to work with parents to meet their students' dietary needs.

◆ Food and Electronics

You may choose to send snacks with your child for the bus or train ride. Upon students' arrival at the Center, the staff will collect all non-perishable food and drinks (other than water) and electronics and store these items in the Teacher's Lounge to be distributed for the return ride home. We do not want to encourage furry visitors in the dormitories, and we strongly believe that students should immerse themselves in the natural world and socialize with their peers during their stay at the Center.

◆ Money

You may send money with your child to purchase a souvenir from our store on the last day of the trip. PMOEC is not responsible for lost money.

◆ Lost and Found

We do our best to check dormitories and the Pok-O-Queen before the group leaves for lost articles. However, PMOEC does not mail items that students leave behind.

◆ Parent- Student Communication

Students are not permitted to make or receive phone calls during their stay at the Center, except in emergencies. PMOEC does not deliver faxes or E-mails to students, nor do we allow students to send faxes or E-mails. In our 103 years of experience dealing with young people, we have found that homesickness is in direct proportion to parental communication. If a child expects to have a good time, the occurrence of homesickness is greatly reduced. Make sure your child knows that missing home is OK, and that you'll be there when she/he returns after having a great time.

Phone messages for teachers will be taken at the director's office (518-963-7967) and given to the lead teacher at dinner. Remember that the director is extremely busy when a group is attending the Center. Any emergency messages will of course be delivered as soon as possible. Teachers and chaperones may use the phone in the teachers' room to make long distance calls as well as access a computer to check email. **Please do not call teachers back on this number, as it is shared with the Chef's phone line.** Cell phones routinely do not work at the Center.

You may choose to send mail to your student in advance at 1391 Reber Rd, Willsboro, NY, 12996. Mail will be delivered to the lead teacher upon the group's arrival.

◆ Daily Schedule

7:00 - 7:50 am	Early Bird Class
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:15 - 12:00 pm	Morning Class
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:15 - 2:15 pm	Recreation Time
2:15 - 5:00 pm	Afternoon Class
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:15 - 7:00 pm	Teacher Activity Time
7:15 - 9:00 pm	Evening Program
9:00 - 10:00 pm	Dorm Time

◆ Student Evaluation of Trip

Upon returning home, please encourage your student to take our online evaluation found on the front page of www.pmoec.org to let us know how he/she enjoyed the trip!

◆ Summer Camp

If your child had fun at the Center, he or she may want to consider spending the summer in the Adirondacks as well. Pok-O-MacCready Camps offers a traditional Adirondack Camp experience for girls and boys. Horseback riding and wilderness programs are emphasized, but there are a wide variety of activities to choose from. Call 518.963.7656 or go to www.pokomac.com for more information.