

Volo Natural Learning Community

Outdoor Safety Policy and Guidelines

Volo activities involve the highly beneficial experiences of outdoor, nature-based experiences. Outdoor experiences in nature inherently include risks (e.g., scrapes, stickers, stings, mosquito bites). Volo supervises outdoor activities and attempts to minimize reasonable risks; to that end, the following expectations apply:

1. Staying with the group

- a. Students should remain in sight and hearing of the designated facilitator or appropriate adult at all times, except when using the restroom. Appropriate distances depend on the setting, but should not be more than a distance that can be covered in a few seconds, at most, under the current conditions.
- b. Students will only leave the group with permission to use the restroom, or when accompanied by at least two other individuals, including an authorized adult, except in the case of emergency.
- c. Consequences for inappropriately leaving the group are serious. Volo is not responsible for participants who leave the group without permission.
 - i. If a student intentionally leaves the group without permission, their parents will immediately be notified. In most cases, the parent will be asked to pick up the child and the child will miss the rest of the day, at least. Depending on the circumstances, the student may face a longer suspension or expulsion.
 - ii. If a student intentionally leaves the group without permission for a second time, they will be suspended from Volo activity for at least one week, and may be suspended for a longer period or expelled, depending on the circumstances. During suspension or after expulsion, they will not be allowed to participate in Volo activities.

2. Following directions

- a. Participants should follow safety directions (e.g., to gather, to leave an activity, to go to a certain place) from the facilitator or authorized substitute immediately when requested.
- b. A student should not follow safety directions from the facilitator or authorized substitute if it is clear to the student that the directions are missing or ignoring important safety issues; in that case, the student should communicate with the facilitator or authorized substitute.
- c. Consequences for failure to follow safety directions include notifying the parent, requesting immediate pick up, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the circumstances. Volo is not responsible for participants who ignore, reject, or defy safety directions.

3. Safety Precautions

- a. Remaining safe when outdoors includes consciously and habitually remaining protected from potentially harmful substances, circumstances, and activities. Volo staff and volunteers will help to teach, train, support, and reinforce safe behaviors. These include:
 - i. Washing hands before eating or using the restroom
 - ii. Drinking only known-safe water
 - iii. Immediately reporting any injuries including scrapes, bruises, pokes, or bites.
 - iv. Staying away from wild animals unless trained supervision is present; never get close to a wild animal that appears unafraid or possibly sick.

- v. Never ingesting wild plants except with parental permission and authorized supervision.
- vi. Keeping any perishable food items cool.
- vii. Checking for ticks.
- viii. Using appropriately effective protection from biting insects, cold, heat, and exposure.
- ix. Not climbing on rocks, trees, or potentially dangerous places without authorized supervision.

4. Clothing and gear

- a. Clothing and gear appropriate for the season, weather, and circumstances are expected and must be provided by families. The following expectations apply:
 - i. Each child should provide a change of clothes, including socks and shoes, in a waterproof container to Volo staff. These clothes will be kept on hand in case of need.
 - ii. Each child should bring their own water bottle, lunch, and or snacks.
 - iii. Close-toed shoes with socks are required; during snowy times, insulated boots are needed.
 - iv. Long-pants are required.
 - v. Long-sleeved shirts are recommended, as are appropriate hats.
 - vi. It is recommended to use appropriate clothing for sun and bug protection rather than using chemicals; this may include face nets, gloves, gaiters, and/or tick suits.
 - vii. Students will need appropriately warm, cool, and water proof clothing to meet weather conditions.
 - viii. Large jewelry, masks, hoods, or other gear that may get snagged, unreasonably limit mobility, or poses a direct potential for harm to the individual or others, is not allowed.
- b. Failure to have appropriate clothing. Unprepared students generally cannot be left behind. Therefore, the following consequences apply
 - i. If a student is unprepared for outdoor conditions, their parents will be notified and, if no other gear is available, will be asked to be picked up.
 - ii. Consistently being unprepared will be grounds for expulsion from the Volo program.

I have read and understand the above-listed outdoor safety expectations. I will ensure that my child understands the importance of safe behavior, including, but not limited to staying with the group, following safety instructions, taking reasonable safety precautions, and dressing appropriately. I also agree to support Volo in imposed consequences for potentially unsafe outdoor choices.

In witness whereof, I execute this form by signing below:

Name

Date

Print Name