

Cedar Creek ESR Teacher Guidelines

Thank you for planning a visit to the University of Minnesota's Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve! We can't wait for you to visit. We do our best to maximize your time here, and over the years have found a few things you can do to help us run your field trip efficiently:

1. Chaperone/teacher logistics: During your visit, you (the teacher) remain responsible for the youth you bring, including behavior and overall group management. We require a minimum of one adult chaperone (teachers, staff, etc) per team of ~30 students. This does not include any paras or other support staff needed by individual students. We recommend that the adult chaperones be school employees rather than parent volunteers, as that generally leads to the best results in managing student behavior. The University of Minnesota further recommends (but does not require) staff-to student ratios of no less than:

- For ages 8 and younger; a minimum of 1:8
- For ages 9 to 14: a minimum of 1:10
- For ages 15 and older: a minimum of 1:12

Frequent head counts and spacing chaperone(s) at the beginning and end of the group will help assure a safe experience for all.

The experience will be more enjoyable, informative and safe if you remind students at school and then before they get off the bus that they are representatives of their school and that regular school rules apply. Please also inform your students in advance that they should listen to Cedar Creek staff and follow their directions. Specifically, we ask that your group:

1. Remember that they are at an active scientific research station
2. Stay on the paths and with the group at all times
3. Refrain from picking flowers or other plants, collecting nature items and stepping in experimental plots

2. COVID policies: As part of the University of Minnesota, Cedar Creek follows the U's official COVID policies. Our staff are all fully vaccinated, and we regularly disinfect high-touch areas and shared spaces. As of 21 March 2022, masks and distancing are no longer required in University spaces. However, we are very happy to follow any additional or stricter guidelines in place at your schools (distancing, group size, indoor or outdoor masking, etc) if we know them. Please let Kara (baldwink@umn.edu) know as soon as possible about your school's additional policies! If the University changes their policies before your visit, we will let you know promptly. Additionally, if your classroom has a confirmed COVID case or exposure, we respectfully request that you reach out to reschedule your field trip. We have a very small staff and an exposure on our team would likely shut down our entire field trip season.

3. Team assignments: If you are bringing more than 30 students, you will be operating as smaller groups during your visit. Please divide your students up into "teams" of ~30 students or fewer. Make sure your students and chaperones know which team they are in when they get off the bus so we can efficiently assign them to their naturalist for the day. For most investigations, we will also ask you to divide those teams into "groups" of 4-5 students who work well together.

- 4. Name tags:** It saves us time and helps our naturalists build relationships with your group if your students and chaperones wear name tags. We recommend including the student's team and group assignment on their nametag – see example below.

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Team A Group 1

- 5. Buses:** Make sure your bus driver knows to stay onsite if necessary (this is in your confirmation email), and knows when to return to pick you up at the end of the day! We also recommend having the bus driver's cell phone number handy as they sometimes leave without warning and are hard to find when they are gone. If you are not sure whether your bus needs to stay onsite, please ask Kara (baldwink@umn.edu) before your visit!
- 6. Insects.** We do have ticks (primarily wood ticks, which do not carry Lyme's disease, but also deer ticks which can) on the property, particularly in late spring and summer. We will go over tick safety with your group when they arrive, but it is helpful if you can prepare them before the field trip as well. Long pants and closed-toed shoes make a huge difference, as do adults who are mentally prepared for ticks! There is also the chance that there will be mosquitos present during your visit. We have insect repellent onsite but recommend that you and your students bring some as well. We are not allowed to apply insect repellent to your students. You will need to assist them with that, or facilitate them doing it themselves - preferably outside.
- 7. Special needs/challenges.** If your group includes students with mobility challenges or who need special accommodations for any reason (access to private restrooms or quiet spaces, ramps, fridges for medications, etc) please let us know in advance of your field trip. We are equipped to handle most situations, but it helps to know in advance what to expect. Many of your activities will take place outdoors on uneven terrain (sand roads, bumpy prairies, floating docks) so prepping for mobility issues is particularly important and avoids frustration and disappointment when you are actually onsite.

If you have questions or concerns about your visit, please don't hesitate to contact our education coordinator, Kara Baldwin (612-301-2602 or baldwink@umn.edu). We are excited to provide your students with an authentic research and nature experience as they develop their identity as scientists!