



**ENVIRONMENTAL
LEARNING CENTER**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Environmental Learning Center
Great School Escape Frequently Asked Questions

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What time is drop-off for Great School Escapes?

Drop off takes place between 8:30 and 9:00 AM. Early drop-off is not permitted.

Late drop-off can be accommodated, please contact us if you need to drop your child off late.

What is the drop-off process?

Drop off will take place at the Environmental Learning Center property (2400 South County Rd. 9). [Click here for directions.](#)

A staff member will be standing near the parking lot and will direct you to your child's instructor. We require participants to be signed in and out; please park your car and walk with your child each day.

In case of cold weather, the program may be moved to the CSU main campus, in which case drop off would take place on campus. Parents will be notified of this change and provided with a specific drop off location 24-48 hours in advance.

What time is pick-up?

Pick-up will take place between 3:00 and 3:30 PM. Late pick-up is not permitted.

We can accommodate early pick-up; please contact us if you need to pick your child up early from a Great School Escape.

What is the sign-out process?

On your child's paperwork, you will list the people who have permission to pick your child up from Great School Escapes. If you would like to add someone to that list, you may call us at 970-491-1661 or email us at elc@csuelc.org or inform your child's Great School Escape instructor during drop off.

If someone who is not on the approved list arrives to pick up your child, our staff will call you to confirm they have permission to do so. We cannot release your child until we have your permission to do so. We apologize for any inconvenience, but we do this to ensure the safety of your child.

A photo ID is required to pick your child up from a Great School Escape. Please ensure that whoever is picking up your child brings their photo ID.

Our staff will give you or the person picking up your child a brief summary of the day's activities. Since we have many children to check out we keep these summaries very brief. If you would like more details about your child's day, please feel free to stick around and our staff can have a longer conversation after the rest of their group has been picked up. Our education staff want to hear your feedback and work with you to make the experience a great one for everyone. Please don't hesitate to bring up any questions or concerns.

How will children be split into groups for Great School Escape?

Each group will be limited to 12 children with one lead instructor. Groups will be created in advance and will be determined by age. If you have two children attending a Great School Escape and would like them to be in the same group we will do our best to accommodate this request. If your child has a friend they would like to be placed with, we can try to place them in the same group. **Once the program begins, we cannot move children between groups.** Please email your requests to elc@csuelc.org with enough time to make changes before the Great School Escape begins.

What should my child bring to Great School Escapes?

Please ensure your child has the following with them for each program:

_____ **Clean cloth face covering**

*Either a mask, bandana, or buff and please write your child's name or initials on it. Please make sure your child's face covering can stay in place securely. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child's face covering is washed daily.

_____ **Sack lunch**

_____ **AM and PM snack**

*We find that kids get hungry playing outside all day, so please pack plenty of food for your child.

_____ **Reusable water bottle**

*Hydration in hot weather is very important. Please pack a reusable water bottle with at least 750ml of capacity. Your child can refill it at our spigot throughout the day. Please write your child's name or initials on their water bottle.

_____ **Sunscreen**

*The ELC will provide a generic Target brand sunscreen with SPF 30 or greater. We can only apply this sunscreen to your child if you give us permission to do so on your child's medication form.

_____ **Mosquito repellent**

*The ELC will provide a mosquito repellent that contains DEET. We can only apply this repellent to your child if you give us permission to do so on your child's medication form.

_____ **Hat / Cap**

*Please write your child's name or initial on their hat.

_____ **Weather appropriate clothing**

***Please ensure your child/children come dressed to play outside. We spend as much time as possible outside – no matter the weather.** Clothes and shoes will get dirty.*

_____ **Raincoat**

In general, keep in mind that our primary mission at the ELC is to connect people to nature. We spend the majority of each day outside exploring the land, no matter the weather. We do our best to ensure the comfort of your child, but you can help by making sure that they are prepared for the weather and various activities.

Can my child bring toys to Great School Escapes?

We kindly ask that your child leaves all toys at home. We assure you we will keep them busy.

What does a typical day look like at a Great School Escape?

Example Schedule

8:30am – morning activity or game as children arrive
9:00am – name games
9:30am – time on the trails with activities related to the day's theme
10:45am – morning snack
11:00am – games and activities related to the day's theme
12:15pm – lunch and free time
1:00pm – game to refocus
1:30pm – time on the trails with activities related to the day's theme
2:30pm – afternoon snack
2:45pm – debrief and review
3:00pm – clean-up and organized game/activity
3:30pm – children depart

Do you provide before/after care?

No, we do not provide before/after care. Please drop off/pick up your child during the specified times. Early drop off and late pick up are not permitted.

What do you do in bad weather?

We have a small, rustic building on site that provides shelter in case of thunderstorms, hail, heavy rain, etc.

In case of cold weather, the program may be moved to the CSU main campus, in which case drop off and pick up would take place on campus. Parents will be notified of this change and provided with a specific drop off/pick up location 24-48 hours in advance.

How do you handle poor air quality?

Due to an increase in wildfires in the west over the past couple of years, we now monitor the air quality daily using data from [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#). If the air quality is poor, we may modify our activities to reduce exertion levels and take more breaks throughout the day.

In extreme circumstances, and following official recommendations from Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, we might need to cancel programs. We will communicate with parents about any cancellations as far in advance as possible.

Will food be provided for my child?

We ask that all children bring AM and PM snacks and a sack lunch. These will remain in children's backpack all day, refrigeration and re-heating is not available.

We will have individually packaged snacks available for children in case they eat everything they brought to Great School Escape and are still very hungry. We will not have adequate stores of these snacks to provide them for every child every day, please pack your child plenty of food.

Are there mosquitoes at the ELC?

Due to our proximity to the river, mosquito populations can be quite large at the ELC. Mosquitoes are impossible to completely avoid on our property, though we will steer clear of areas of high mosquito concentration when possible (e.g., tall grass, swampy areas). We will spray insect repellent (either ours or yours, if you prefer) on children before any outings on our trails. For greater protection against mosquito bites, we recommend having your child wear lightweight, long-sleeves and pants to Great School Escape. For more information on mosquitoes in Larimer County, including information on West Nile, please visit, <http://www.larimer.org/health/cd/westnile.cfm>

Are there ticks at the ELC?

Though not common on our property, we do occasionally come across ticks in the spring and summer. We recommend that you do a 'tick-check' on your child(ren) each night. For information on ticks and how to do a 'tick-check', visit <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>

How are your staff trained?

We train our staff extensively in the weeks leading up to the start of the fall program season, covering safety and risk management, and principles of outdoor education.

Our education staff members are CPR and First Aid certified. Unless you have indicated on your registration form that you decline response from our staff in the case of an emergency, staff members will respond to emergency situations up to the level of their certification. Staff are also trained in our site-specific emergency response.

All staff members undergo a thorough criminal background check during the hiring process.

Can my child come to a Great School Escape if they are sick?

Please keep your child at home if they are sick with any symptoms including but not limited to: fever, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. If your child appears sick at check-in then we will ask you to take them home. Please plan to have alternative childcare options in place. We recognize this may be difficult for families, and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience. Our primary responsibility is the health of our staff and all Great School Escape families.

We have procedures in place to limit the spread of disease during Great School Escape, and we appreciate your help with this effort. If you discover that your child has a highly contagious condition (such as lice), please alert ELC staff as soon as possible. We will alert all Great School Escape families about the potential outbreak, while maintaining strict confidentiality.

What if my child needs to have medication on site during Great School Escape (e.g. inhaler, epi pen, etc.)?

We will need you to complete a [Medication Prescriber/Parent Authorization Form](#) in order for your child to bring any medication (including over-the-counter) to Great School Escape. *This form requires a licensed health care authorization and signature.*

Medications must be delivered to your child's Great School Escape instructor in the morning during check in. All prescription medications must be in their original, labeled containers with the name of your child, the pharmacy and prescribing provider.

Please only provide the amount of medication your child will need during each day of Great School Escape. Your child's instructor will carry medications at all times.

How do you manage risk during Great School Escapes?

Outdoor activities can never be made 100% risk-free. That said, we do everything we can to manage the risk inherent in outdoor activities. Staff are trained extensively in risk management and concerns that arise are promptly addressed.

We believe in the power of allowing children to take small risks in a supervised setting. Therefore, we allow children climb trees and build forts, always with clear boundaries and constant adult supervision.

River play, in particular, is covered in detail during our staff training. Staff are trained on required adult:child ratios, diligent supervision and choosing appropriate sites. Snowmelt and water diversions make it tricky to predict the level of the Poudre River at the ELC. We will not be playing in/around/near the river on our property if the river is high and swift. We may muck around in puddles and small streams when this is the case.

What is your discipline policy?

We operate with a fairly simple rule at the ELC, respect. We ask that participants respect three things: themselves, others, and the environment (both man-made and natural). Our definition of respect is 'treating other people and other things the way that you would want to be treated.' Participants are introduced to the respect rule at the beginning of every program.

If a child breaks the respect rule, we implement our 'three strike' policy. The first 'strike' is a warning that includes a one-on-one discussion about the behavior in question as well as a plan for avoiding the behavior in the future. The second 'strike' is a time out and another one-on-one discussion. The third 'strike' is a call home and, depending on the offense, a request that the child be picked up from Great School Escape. Rarely do we come across this situation, but we do want you to be aware.

How will you communicate with parents and guardians leading up to and during Great School Escapes?

Our primary mode of communication prior to programs is email. You can expect several emails from us prior to the program date with the required forms and important information. We will use the email address provided during registration, please check this email account regularly to stay informed.

We strive to develop a personal connection with each family who attends our programs. At the end of each program, we will do our best to give you, or the person picking up your child, a brief summary of your child's day. If sign-out is particularly busy when you arrive, however, this might not be possible. Feel free to stick around if you would like to speak to a Great School Escape staff member; we are all more than willing to respond to any questions or concerns.

Your child's instructor and the program director are always available via cell phone during Great School Escape hours. These phone numbers will be provided to you in an email prior to program date.

If important announcements need to go out to parents (e.g. notification of lice in Great School Escape) these will be communicated via email.

What does access to bathrooms and handwashing look like during Great School Escapes?

There is one vault toilet on site, similar to what you find at other trail heads or natural areas. Our vault toilet is cleaned regularly. Please note that this restroom is also open to the public.

We provide outdoor hand washing stations. These hand washing stations consist of two plastic buckets and a foot pump that runs water over a person's hands. Staff will instruct children on the proper use of handwashing stations and how to wash hands properly. Children will be encouraged to wash hands regularly throughout the day.

Each staff member will also carry a bottle of hand sanitizer at all times and provide it to children when hand washing isn't possible (i.e. on the trails).