



August 2011

Dear Seventh grade parents,

Greetings to you all. It's hard to believe that I will be with your children next month. This year the class starts the year with the trip to Camp Glen Brook in New Marlboro, New Hampshire from September 12th – 16th. We will be leaving Monday the 12th after Main Lesson, and returning Friday, September 16th in time for pick up. Soccer practice is optional for the students.. If your son or daughter is playing soccer, please plan on picking him/her up after soccer practice at 4:45 p.m. on Friday. Otherwise you can pick up at 3:30 p.m.

Our trip to Glenbrook will take on a new form this year. We will be camping at their facilities and cooking meals over a fire for the week. The emphasis will be paddling skills and canoeing on lake and rivers Hiking the majestic mount Monadnock. will also occur Evening activities will round out the day. Based on my experience with students in these recent years I feel that this program will give the students an experience that is much needed. Mr. Sblendorio will still have the opportunity to teach Main Lesson while we are there.

The fee for the 5 day/4 night stay at Camp Glen Brook is around \$275 per child; this will appear on your next bill. If this fee presents a financial hardship to you, please let me know. Call me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely yours,

Krista Palmer

c. Business office

Clothing List for Fall Trips to Glen Brook

Since weather conditions can vary widely, we recommend layering clothing rather than bringing one-purpose clothing. All clothing should be marked with students name. This is an active outdoor program and valuable clothing or jewelry is highly discouraged. Fashion statements are superfluous to this trip, and grass stains and mud are very possible. **DO NOT OVERPACK**. The more you pack the tighter the bus ride!

2 pairs of shorts
2-3 t-shirts/short-sleeve shirts – no writing on shirts
2 pair jeans/pants
1-2 long sleeve shirt (1 flannel or turtleneck is nice)
1 sweatshirt or polar fleece
Laundry bag or pillowcase
Medium-weight jacket (a wind-proof one is especially good)
Rainwear (poncho or jacket)
Reading book for free time
underwear
4-5 pairs socks
Pajamas
Thermo rest or sleeping pad
Sleeping bag (in stuff sack)
Swimsuit/Towel
Towel/Washcloth
Toiletries
Medications (Contact your teacher for information how these are handled)
Two pair of shoes (one of which is a good sturdy shoe or boot for hiking
and sneakers or sandals)
Water Bottle (at least 1 liter)
Day pack
***NEW** – cloth napkin and holder (we are doing away with paper napkins)

OPTIONAL

Flashlight
Hat

YOU MAY NOT BRING:

Camera, radios, disc. players, i-pods, computers, or any electronic devices
junk food (none is allowed in the dorm rooms)
pocket knives

Camp Glen Brook
Marlborough, New Hampshire 03455

Dear Parent,

Your son or daughter will have the opportunity to experience a challenge ropes course during the upcoming trip to Camp Glen Brook. The lessons learned within one's own self through such a course can be quite remarkable. The program can strengthen and harmonize the group as well as increase individual self-confidence and self-esteem. While there are risks, they are statistically low. The level of challenge, however, can be high, and so, therefore, is the magnitude of the growth from meeting that challenge.

This letter describes the nature of the course, a typical sequence, and some safety issues. You are asked to sign and return to your child's teacher the attached informed consent.

Program

First and foremost, this activity is Challenge by Choice. Participants are never forced to do something against their will, nor will teasing, sarcasm, etc. be allowed should someone pass for the moment. On the other hand, our job as a community will be to encourage and make each member feel safe enough, physically and emotionally, to push themselves to new heights. The group must also realize that one person overcoming a fear to climb a simple ladder may actually be a greater triumph and personal milestone than another climbing one of the Alps. Quantity or speed are not as important as setting and working toward personal goals.

A typical sequence begins with a series of warm-ups, games, and trust activities. This is followed by several initiatives—obstacles and problems that the group must solve by increasingly sophisticated teamwork. Next we see the low ropes course where team members navigate a series of rope bridges and obstacles that are just a couple of feet above the ground. During this phase they begin to use the personal safety gear (helmets, harnesses, etc.), learn safety protocols and communications, face moderate challenges of balance and coordination, and build the idea of individual responsibility for the safety of the whole team and the team's responsibility for individuals.

They then graduate, if ready, to the high ropes course—a similar series of bridges and obstacles with the added challenge of being thirty feet high in the trees. All is done with an elaborate safety network of cables, ropes, and hardware. This can be physically, mentally, and emotionally strenuous and is intended to be a “peak experience.” The fruits of successfully pushing beyond a seemingly impossible mental and physical challenge are especially long lasting, especially self-image and personal growth.

Ropes courses have long been used in camps, schools and colleges, but they are also used increasingly by the corporate world for management training. The lessons of team building, communication, decision-making, and self-confidence are significant.

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Safety

All participants on the high course wear and learn to properly use personal safety gear including helmets, climbing harnesses, and belay ropes and devices. The course is sequential and is designed to steadily build trust, self-confidence, skills, and knowledge necessary to meet ever-increasing challenges. The instructors, Louis Bullard and James Madsen, are trained, tested, and certified as a ropes course instructors and managers. The course was built by one of the leading ropes course engineering firms in the business. The high elements are designed for working loads of thousands of pounds, many times even the heaviest adult. The course is thoroughly inspected and certified annually by an outside contractor, the instructor inspects course elements daily, and the personal safety gear is checked immediately before each participant ascends.

In an insurance study sponsored by Project Adventure of ropes course programs spanning two decades and millions of participant hours on hundreds of courses, it was found that these type of programs are statistically many times safer from injury per hour of activity than school physical education programs, team athletics, and even the time spent in the vehicle riding to school. To the best of my knowledge the only two ropes course deaths ever recorded in the U.S. were heart attacks in older males. The only injury of note that has occurred here during twelve years of Glen Brook ropes course programs was a pulled shoulder muscle. So, while actual risk of injury is relatively low, the perceived risk level can be high when you are up there in the trees, which is exactly what makes success so powerful.

I would be glad to answer any specific questions you might have at 603-876-3342.

Yours truly,

Louis Bullard, Director

Return the form below to your child's teacher.

My child, _____, has permission to participate in the Challenge Ropes Course and other related class activities during his/her program at Camp Glen Brook. I understand that Camp Glen Brook will take measures in accordance with generally accepted practices to minimize risk of injury, but I also understand that all outdoor and practical education has inherent elements of risk of injury associated with them.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____