



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to *A Mountain Classroom*, the Appalachian Mountain Club's residential school program. In operation since 1990, we currently serve nearly three thousand students per year with our hands-on, environmental education curriculum. Our programs are based out of AMC facilities throughout the White Mountains and in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. All are in spectacular locations that provide plentiful opportunities to explore the natural world and experience the challenges of hiking.

Our experienced instructors lead hikes, lessons, and activities designed to engage students in the natural world, increase environmental literacy, and facilitate personal growth and foster a sense of community. Your child's teacher will also choose curriculum themes to compliment what students are learning in the classroom; these can include watershed studies, forest ecology, geology, climate and meteorology, and map and compass. Instructors are certified in first aid and trained to manage their groups in wilderness situations.

Your child will be hiking and/or backpacking on the trip. This is a physically demanding but incredibly rewarding experience, and our instructors are committed to helping all students succeed. The weather in the mountains can be very unpredictable and sometimes winter conditions occur in the spring and fall. Our lessons are geared to the outdoors regardless of the weather. We have included an equipment list of required items for your child to bring. Many can be borrowed from friends or family members, or the AMC can provide some items such as backpacks or sleeping bags (see the equipment list for details). If your child will need equipment, please discuss this with the teacher in charge of the trip and they will contact us. Hiking boots may well be the most important item on the clothing list. Students will be hiking on rocky and potentially wet or snowy trails, which may ascend or descend steeply. Your child's teacher should explain the trip itinerary. Please read below for descriptions of our facilities.

Joe Dodge Lodge at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center (located on Route 16 in Gorham, NH), **The Highland Center** (located on Rt. 302 in Twin Mountain, NH), and **Cardigan Lodge** (located on the Shem Valley Road in Alexandria, NH) have heated bunkrooms with two to six bunks and bathrooms with showers located in each hall. Meals are served family style and lunches may be eaten on the trail. Classrooms are located throughout the facilities. If your child is staying at one of these facilities only, he/she will be going for day hikes.

The AMC Huts are remote facilities located throughout the White Mountains between 1.5 miles to 4.5 miles from the road, depending on the hut. They are rustic and have no electricity and, in cold seasons, no running water (huts do have indoor composting toilets). The sleeping areas are in unheated bunkrooms with pillows provided on each bed. A sleeping bag (20 degree or below) is required for some of these trips depending on the season (see clothing list). In many cases, students will be carrying their own food (provided by the AMC) to the hut and will, under supervision, help prepare the food for the group. This is a backpacking experience.

You have received Medical/Release, Acknowledgment of Risk, and Photo/Media Release forms. **It is absolutely necessary for you to complete these forms for your child to attend.** Please return them to the organizing teacher as soon as possible. Although injuries are rare, there is an inherent risk to outdoor activities. Should a medical emergency arise we will need the information on these forms. Also, please be advised that your child will be away from immediate hospital access and wilderness evacuations may take hours. If you have any questions about the equipment list or forms, direct them to your organizing teacher who will forward them to us if necessary.

We look forward to making your child's trip an exciting and memorable learning experience!

Sincerely,

Andrea K. M. Muller

North Country Youth Education Director

Mike Dufilho

Program Coordinator, Pinkham Notch & Huts

Heidi Magario

Program Coordinator, Highland Center and Cardigan Lodge

Cary Rhodes

Coos County Program Coordinator

Main office • Five Joy Street, Boston, MA 02108-1490 617-523-0655

Pinkham Notch Visitor Center • Route 16, Box 298, Gorham, NH 03581-0298 603-466-2721

Highland Center at Crawford Notch • General Delivery, Route 302, Bretton Woods, NH 03575-9999 603-278-4453

www.outdoors.org