



Eagle River Nature Center NATURE STUDIES PROGRAM for ALASKA'S SCHOOLS

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CHAPERONE'S GUIDE

Thank you for chaperoning our field trip to the Eagle River Nature Center on _____. We will be leaving school at _____, and return to school at _____. *Remember to pack a lunch and outdoor gear for yourself and your child/ren.*

DIRECTIONS: From Anchorage, take the Glenn Highway North until the exit Eagle River Loop Road/ Hiland Road. From the exit, allow 25 minutes to drive to the Nature Center. Stay on Eagle River Loop until it intersects Eagle River Road, where you take a right at the Walmart Store. Drive 10 miles on Eagle River Road until the road dead-ends at the Nature Center. See back of this page for a **road map**.

Note that the Nature Center does not charge chaperones. Receive a free parking pass at the front desk.

PREPARATIONS: Please stress the need to dress appropriately for the weather (rain gear, layers...) If it is **below freezing**, remind students that "cotton kills". Students will need extra insulating layers, as they will be outdoors for a much longer period than a typical school recess. Snow boots, hats and gloves are a must! *A cold child's brain is unable to learn and enjoy the outdoor experience.*

ARRIVAL at the CENTER: Typically, students first gather inside the Nature Center, where they have a chance to use restrooms as needed. Backpacks and lunches can be left at the Nature Center during the hike. There are displays of local fauna and flora and a close-up corner for the students to explore (touching is allowed!). *The Gift Store (not open when center is closed to public) has some limited food items for sale, as well as hot water and a microwave oven. Your teacher has instructed the students **not to buy candy** and stay out of the store area (at least until after the program)!*

SCIENCE PRESENTATION: When it is time for the presentation, we ask students to gather around the wood stove and be quiet. Our staff naturalist will make introductions, give a science overview, and go over safety rules and expectations. Chaperones are asked to help keep distractions down, so that students can concentrate on learning.

ON THE TRAIL: We require a minimum of one adult chaperone for every 10 students (Note that ASD requires 1 adult per 5 students). Teachers and chaperones are responsible for student conduct and any special needs, such as asthma or allergies. *Refer any serious medical or behavioral issues directly to the teacher.* Once outdoors, we stress the importance of safety and ask that students always remain on the trail and **behind** the naturalist guide. In a large group of children, we do not allow sticks, snowballs or running.

CONTINGENCIES while outdoors: Should a need arise for a student to return to the Nature Center, a chaperone should accompany the student, while the teacher stays with the class. If the field trip is held in winter on a day that the Nature Center is closed to the public, then the Nature Center will be locked while we are outside: you will need to ask the naturalist for the key.

LUNCH: The class will be eating sack lunches at the Center. There are picnic tables and benches available outside. Indoor space is limited and we usually only allow eating inside if it's cold or raining: students will need to sit on the floor. We expect the students to leave the area as clean as they found it. If time allows and no other classes are scheduled, the students may continue to explore the exhibits until departure time.

DEPARTURE and RETURN TO SCHOOL:

We need to depart from the Nature Center at _____.

Remind students to clean up their lunch area, check for personal belongings, and use the restrooms before departure. Thank you for being part of making this field trip a memorable outdoor learning experience.