



# High Trails

*Understanding how we can all fit together on one healthy planet*

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## Parent's Guide

**THANKS VERY MUCH FOR ALLOWING YOUR CHILD TO ATTEND HIGH TRAILS!** *We know that sending your loved ones away to a place you have never seen, and entrusting them to people you have never met, is a tough thing to do and a huge leap of faith. Our primary concern at High Trails, above everything else, is safety; everything else is secondary and all of our programs and policies are designed with this in mind. The best way to learn about and prepare for camp is to thoroughly read this entire guide. Then you should explore our web site, [www.hightrails.com](http://www.hightrails.com) to learn more about the programs, people, policies and forms that make everything come together for a safe, educational, and fun week up in the mountains.*

### OUR MISSION

"Learning how our communities and the environment can all fit together on one healthy planet". We want your students to step into the wilderness and see a beauty and diversity they have never imagined before, and learn the importance of both understanding and protecting it. We want your students to learn more about themselves and their potential, and to discover how to work and communicate with their peers. High Trails is a week in the wilderness, in nature, where children are given the opportunity to explore and shine.

### STAFF

What sets us apart from most outdoor education centers is that 95% all of our staff are college degreed professionals. The ones that don't have a degree are using High Trails as an internship so they can complete their university degree. They are recruited from all over the United States to teach Southern California elementary students. During the day groups are led by Field Instructors, who take them out into the woods and help them to experience nature firsthand. At dinner our Cabin Instructors take over, leading evening programs and focusing on the development of communities in cabins, and then sleeping overnight with the students. The next week of camp our staff rotate; the Cabin Instructors become Field Instructors and vice versa. This keeps our staff fresh and makes sure that everyone knows 100% of the camp experience and student needs. During the year, we focus on continuing education and improvement for our instructors, making evaluations, projects, and inservices a mandatory part of life at High Trails.

To apply to work as High Trails, potential instructors must submit a cover letter, resume, and a response to our "Tough Questions". If everything looks good we spend some time talking on the phone, trying to get to know who wants to work with us. Next step is to see what other people think; a minimum of three work and personal references are verified and rated. Our primary concerns when looking for staff: a responsible love of teaching children, a passion for the outdoors, and a demonstrated professionalism in an outdoor camp environment. If selected, staff are invited to a two week training, where they will be screened in person and given the chance to demonstrate their teaching competency. Fingerprinted background checks on every staff member are completed to verify their clean criminal background, and their First Aid and CPR certifications are verified. Now they are ready to step into the role of a High Trails Instructor.

### CLASSES AND PROGRAMMING

The classes and programming that your school participates in are chosen by school teachers before camp arrival. Some of our classes are adventure based, like archery and the adventure course, and others are science based, like water study and plant study. Your child will get a well rounded outdoor environmental based education at High Trails. Groups average between 10 and 16 students per Instructor at camp.

### SUPERVISION POLICIES

Your child is directly supervised by a High Trails Instructor 24 hours of the day. The only time supervision is not direct is when they are in the restroom or shower. In this situation instructors are nearby in the case assistance is needed.

### THE SITE AND FACILITIES

High Trails leases camp sites in the San Bernardino National Forest. Though rustic, the sites offer fully modern facilities like hot water, private showers, and heated cabins. On the sites themselves we have an archery range, a climbing wall, a challenge/adventure course, and a orienteering course.

### FOOD

Meals are served three times daily, with kid friendly food and vegetarian options. Because so many things are new to the students at camp, we try to make the food as familiar and fun as possible. For a sample menu please look at our website [www.hightrails.com](http://www.hightrails.com).

### WEATHER AND CLOTHING

We are at 7,000 feet, so it will get very cold in the evenings and during the winter. Snow will fall, but because of the unpredictability of Southern California weather, we can never predict when or how much. **Please follow the Packing List very carefully and take extra care to make sure your child comes to camp with warm clothes, long underwear, plenty of socks, and a warm hat and gloves.** Should the weather decide to snow on us, we are ready with extra boots, waterproof pants and jackets in case your child is not adequately prepared.

## DISCIPLINE

To keep camp safe and make it a positive learning experience for all involved, we have rules that we must adhere to and are consistent in enforcing. Some of the rules are discussed on the Discipline Form, and others students will learn about when they arrive at camp. If your child has difficulty observing these rules, we may call you and ask for your assistance and advice with helping them have a more positive experience. If they cannot change their behavior and become a detriment to the program and other students, we will ask you to come pick them up from camp. **If you send your child to camp, you must be ready and willing to come pick them up, day or night, if they become a discipline issue.**

## THE MEDIC

Our medical team is a combination of a Registered Nurse and Wilderness First Responders. Their primary job in camp is to cater to the needs, both medically and emotionally, of your child. They check in with the students at meals and they maintain a stocked infirmary in the center of camp. The medic carries a UHF based radio to maintain communication with Instructors at all times.

## MEDICATION

We will be happy to dispense your child's medication for you, provided that you fill out the Medication Form completely. Remember that if you send up prescription medication, you need to have a physician sign this form as well. The Medic is limited to giving oral medication only and cannot give your student an injection. If your child needs to have injections daily, they must be able to give the injections themselves.

- If a student is bringing over the counter medicine, only the parent needs to sign the form.
- If the medication is prescription, a doctor's signature is required as well as the parent's.
- All of the medication, including the over the counter medication, must be in its original container.
- The dosage amounts on the package must be identical to those on the Medication Form.
- When you arrive at camp, the medication must be in a clear ziplock bag along with the Medication Form.
- No medication should be in the student luggage.
- If you are sending Over the Counter Medication, check the age requirements on back of the package. If the box says the child must be 12 years old to take the medication and your child is only 11, we cannot administer it!

## IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

Occasionally children don't feel so well at camp, and when this happens the medic steps in. The medic will first talk with your child to see what is wrong, and then take their temperature. If the temperature is above 100 degrees, they are immediately taken to the infirmary to get some rest, and you are called to talk about what might be wrong and ask you to come pick up your child. **If you send your child to camp, you must be ready and willing to come pick them up, day or night, if they become sick and need you.**

Our general theme with children and the infirmary is that the more communication with the parents, the better. Don't be surprised if we call to check in with you and ask you a seemingly simple question about your son or daughter.

## EMERGENCIES

We spend a good deal of time preparing for emergencies. During our training and weekly inservices, we discuss evacuation and treatment procedures and initiate detailed role plays to simulate situations. Within 24 hours of arrival, all students and instructors participate in an emergency evacuation drill. All instructors carry with them a complete first

response kit, with supplies ready to deal with emergencies. They also carry with them a flashlight and a UHF based radio, allowing them constant contact with support personnel at camp.

**PLEASE NOTE:** We are located in the middle of the San Bernardino National Forest. It is possible that access to an emergency facility and emergency service response time could be delayed in excess of one hour due to our remote location, road conditions, and weather emergencies.

## STUDENT PARENT CONTACT

Mail sent by the students will be delivered to a post office every day, so encourage your child to write home. Because we have so many students at camp and so few phones, students are not allowed to make or receive phone calls except in the case of an emergency. And because we believe that camp is a place for children to discover more about themselves in a new environment, parents are not allowed to visit camp while their child is present. If you would like to take a look at the camp before your child's week at camp, let us know and we can arrange a good time for you to visit.

## CAN I MAIL MY CHILD A LETTER?

While at camp, you are welcome to mail your child a letter. We will deliver all letters (no packages, emails or faxes) on a daily basis, generally right before bedtime. Letters should be sent at least 5 days in advance. Letters arriving before your students' stay at camp will be kept until they arrived. Letters arriving after students leave will be marked Return To Sender and placed back into the mail system. Please ensure that your letter does not require a signature upon receipt. We have two sites, so ask your school which of the below addresses you should use:

Child's Name, \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary School  
High Trails  
PO Box 2640  
Big Bear City, CA 92314

## THE PARENT'S ROLE

Your role as a parent is paramount to your child having a great experience at camp. Please take the time to talk with your child about the camp experience and then complete these items:

1. **Health/Consent Form:** please make sure this is completed and signed.
2. **Medication Form:** if your child is bringing medication of any kind, even over the counter or vitamins, please complete and sign this form. If the medication is prescription, remember to have your doctor sign it as well. **GIVE ALL MEDICATION DIRECTLY TO YOUR TEACHER!**
3. **Discipline Form:** please make sure both you and your child read and sign this form.
4. **Packing List:** please carefully follow this to make sure your child is prepared for camp.

## MORE QUESTIONS?

*If you have more questions, first ask your teachers, and then check out our website at [www.hightrails.com](http://www.hightrails.com). Here you will find pictures of the camp and activities, road and weather updates, details on our staff, and more.*