



**Teacher Planning Manual** 

\*Please feel free to contact the Balarat office at any time if you have question or concerns. Office# (720)424-2940

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## **Balarat Contact and Website Information**

#### **Balarat Main Office**

Manual High School Room #309 1700 East 28th Avenue Denver, CO 80205 Tel 720.424.2940 Fax 720.424.2941

Office hours are 7:30am - 5:00pm. Monday through Friday.

#### **Program Director**

Patrick Emery Tel 720.424.1498 patrick\_emery@dpsk12.org

#### **Office Manager**

Elaine Van De Wege Tel 720.424.1492 <u>elaine\_vandewege@dpsk12.org</u>



#### Dear Fifth Grade Teacher:

My primary purpose in writing is to thank you for making the effort to give your students the opportunity for a residential outdoor learning experience. I know it is extra work for you and an additional demand on your time. Thank you for taking the time to help make it a rich learning experience.

Secondarily, I want to make sure that you feel as if you have an opportunity to get answered any questions you have about the excursion. A lead teacher will be assigned for your trip and can be your first point of contact. If for any reason, that contact doesn't work for you, I am available at 720-424-2940 or <a href="mailto:patrick\_emery@dpsk12.org">patrick\_emery@dpsk12.org</a>.

Our hope is that we can help your students make connections between the natural world and the studies they are pursuing in school. Please help us understand how we can do the best job possible with your students.

The accompanying manual is our initial effort to provide some pre-trip planning support. Please duplicate forms as needed and/or call our office additional requirements.

Again, thank you for your efforts and interest in utilizing Balarat as a part of your educational program. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Patrick Emery
Manager
Balarat Outdoor Education

# **Timeline Checklist**

Begin as soon as possible
□ Please look over Teacher Planning Manual.
$\square$ Schedule your Balarat instructor to come to your school for an orientation with your students parents, & staff. (Balarat instructor will contact you one month ahead of trip.)
$\square$ Notify your Balarat instructor of any medical needs, physical disabilities, special dietary needs or other concerns for your students.
□ Send a packet home that includes:
<ul> <li>Parent Meeting Notice</li> <li>Registration Forms</li> <li>What to Bring &amp; What Not to Bring</li> <li>Frequently Asked Questions From Parent</li> </ul>
*Don't forget to assign a due date for their return, i.e., 2 weeks advance of trip!*
At least two weeks prior to trip
$\Box$ Check student Registration Forms for completion (both sides). Make sure all Teacher / Adult Emergency Information are filled out.
□ Email patrick_emery@dpsk12.org, elaine_vandewege@dpsk12.org and your Balarat teacher any specific food needs or allergies. Our cook may accommodate some special needs; however, 2 weeks advance notice is required. Students may need to bring own food for dietary needs.
A day or two before your trip
$\square$ Create two copies of a completed Food Roster (one for your records and one to be handed to Balarat instructor upon arrival). Please do not bring money or a check to Balarat, turn money into your school office.
□ Complete (cut & fold) Student Handbooks & gather pencils for each student.
$\square$ Check Jamestown, CO weather to help prepare students on what to wear.

# **Planning Details**

**Cost of Trip:** The tuition is paid for by Denver Public Schools excluding food. The amount that a student pays varies depended on the Free & Reduced meal eligibility status. The cost per student for a two-day program is \$16.75 (full pay), \$13.75 (reduced), and \$13.00 (free lunch). The cost per student for a three-day program is \$33.50 (full pay), \$27.50 (reduced), and \$26.00 (free lunch)This cost covers six full meals. The school will not be billed until after your trip. Please do not bring money to Balarat. You can turn all money in to your school office.

**Transportation:** Denver Public Schools and Balarat provide transportation. Balarat will schedule the bus through Transportation for you. In most cases, there will be one DPS school bus per class. Classroom teachers are expected to ride the bus with their students. All personal vehicles are prohibited at Balarat unless given permission from Balarat administration.

**Parent Meeting:** Your Balarat instructor will offer an optional meeting with a goal to inform parents about Balarat and provide an opportunity for questions. The parent meeting usually takes place after school, in the afternoon or evening, and typically lasts about 45 minutes. Balarat cannot guarantee translation services for the parent meeting. You may schedule an interpreter through DPS's communications department: communications.dpsk12.org/translation.

**Student Meeting:** Your Balarat instructor will arrange a meeting with a goal to inform students about Balarat and discuss preparation for the trip. Typically, this meeting lasts about one hour. Your Balarat instructor may request use of a projector, or Promethean board, for a PowerPoint presentation.

**Teacher Meeting:** Your Balarat instructor will arrange a meeting with you and your co-teachers before or after one of the above parent or student meetings. The goal of this meeting is to discuss Balarat curriculum, goals and objectives of the trip, medical concerns, food allergies, physical disabilities, and plan Balarat activities. This meeting is crucial to the success of the trip. Please make sure all teachers who are coming to Balarat are present at this meeting.

**High School Leaders:** Denver Public School high school students have the opportunity to take an outdoor leadership class called Service Education Experience at Balarat to earn 5 credits, which evaluates their positivity, enthusiasm, assertiveness, knowledge of material, and group management. Balarat High School leaders are required to attend a leadership and information training at Balarat prior to instruction. Please keep in mind our High School Leaders are students just like yours and need similar coaching and encouragement.

**Student Handbooks:** Your Balarat instructor will demonstrate and provide information on how to create student handbooks. Please take the time to cut & fold handbooks before arrival at Balarat. (Students are great help for this task!)

**Registration Form:** Everyone coming to Balarat must have a completed Registration Form. The information on the form is used for emergencies and will be collected upon arrival at Balarat. All adults attending Balarat will need to complete a separate Adult Emergency Information form.

**Food Roster Form:** The food roster is extremely important for Balarat to receive federal funding. We need the form to be complete and accurate, including full names and student I.D. numbers (we prefer the roster to be completed on a computer rather than hand written). If Balarat does not receive the Food Roster, each student will be charged regular full pay cost of \$16.75 (2 day) or \$33.50 (3 day). Please create a copy for your records and a second copy to be handed to your Balarat instructor upon arrival.

**Medication and Special Medical Concerns:** Schools are responsible for obtaining parent/guardian permission, and the classroom teachers administer any needed medication while at Balarat. We need to know ASAP special medical concerns that may require additional services, i.e. nurse, injections, etc. Unfortunately, we do not have a nurse on staff. If a parent is needed to assist with medical issues they need to be a registered volunteer through Denver Public Schools Volunteer Services. This process can take up to three weeks. The DPS Student Medication Request Release Agreement, for the current school year, must be signed by a doctor and is required for all medications - prescription and/or over-the-counter.

**First Aid:** Balarat instructors are Wilderness First Aid and CPR certified, or higher. Balarat instructors carry wilderness first aid kits with them at all times. We have two AEDs on site. In the event of an emergency situation, if a land-line telephone is not available, our staff can communicate via two-way radio.

**Meals/Snacks at Balarat:** Except for lunch on the first day, Balarat will provide all meals during your stay. Please do not bring food or snacks to Balarat other than a portable lunch and snack for the first day. Food is not allowed in the sleeping lodges.

**Special Dietary Needs:** If any student or adult in your group has special dietary needs due to health conditions, allergies, or religious practices (not an issue of likes or dislikes), be sure those needs are included on the student's Registration Form and the Food Action form. The special dietary need Food Action Form should be emailed to patrick\_emery@dpsk12.org, elaine\_vandewege@dpsk12.org, and your Balarat instructor **two weeks** in advance of the trip. Our kitchen staff can accommodate some special needs; however, 2 weeks advance notice is required. (Students may need to bring own food for dietary needs.)

**Lodge Information:** We have three sleeping lodges (Spruce, Ponderosa, and Aspen) for the overnight program. Each lodge can accommodate nearly forty students. Each sleeping lodge is divided into a boy dormitory and girl dormitory.

- The students sleeping dormitories have bunk beds.
- There is a separate adult sleeping room in both the boy's and girl's dormitory.
- Each dormitory contains a bathroom, which includes two sinks, two toilets, and shower.
   (The shower is used for emergencies only.)
- Food is never allowed in the sleeping lodges.
- Adult supervision is required at all times.

**Balarat Behavioral Expectations:** It is extremely rare to send kids home from Balarat as a behavior consequence. We exhaust multiple options in consultation with teachers, parents, and administrators in the case of adverse behavior. We are in a location that does not welcome people "coming and going", particularly in mountain/ weather conditions.

**Classroom Teacher's Responsibilities at Balarat:** We invite classroom teachers to cultivate opportunities to team teach with the Balarat instructor and initiate behavioral expectations and provide disciplinary direction. It is necessary for classroom teachers to continually be present during all activities throughout the day and night. There are some occasions in which a classroom teacher will be asked to supervise a particular activity.

**Wheelchair Accessibility:** The buildings are accessible to people with disabilities, however some of the backcountry trails may be difficult to navigate. We can provide 4WD vehicles, driven by a Balarat instructor, to transport students or adults who use wheelchairs or walkers. We welcome and encourage all students to attend Balarat, but request to be informed in advance of any students with special needs. This will help our instructors plan a safe and valuable experience for each student.

**Packing:** Use the "What to Bring & What Not to Bring" form. We recommend that parents pack with their child and not for their child, in order for students to know where their items are located. Also, by including them in the packing process, the responsibility involved with being away at Balarat can begin at home.

**Bedding:** Students need to bring their own sleeping bag or warm blanket. We provide clean cotton mattress covers and the sleeping lodges are heated. Full sized pillows are not allowed, however small travel pillows and empty pillow cases are allowed.

**Overnight Bag and Daypack:** We can loan daypacks and overnight bags for students that do not have them. We require two-strap daypacks, and overnight bags without wheels and one soft side. Overnight bags need to be marked with Name Tags before leaving school, which are provided by Balarat. Overnight bags will be placed in luggage bays at the back of the bus, and students will not have access to them until after 4:30pm on the first day.

**Bedtime Routine:** We try to have lights-out in the sleeping lodge at 9:30pm so students can have a full night sleep before the next day activities.

**Security:** Balarat is a closed Denver Public Schools campus and we do not allow drop-in visitors. All Balarat staff members have had a background check and are Denver Public School employees.

**Telephone Use:** Please let students and parents know ahead of time that we do not allow students to have cell phones or use phones at Balarat. Teachers will be able to call parents in the event of an emergency or illness. All Balarat instructors carry radios in case of emergency. Telephones are available to adults, however please ask Balarat instructor to make a call out.

**Teacher WI-Fi:** Elk Lodge does have wireless internet access. We understand you may want to use your cell phone for photos/videos. As far as wi-fi in Elk Lodge, we ask that you take this time to "disconnect", especially during meals and lodge time with students.

**Balarat Meals:** Our Balarat chef serves kid friendly food in family style portions. Each class has its own dining room in the dining lodge. Students help assist dining room set-up and take-down.

**Lunches:** Excluding the first day, sack lunches are prepared in the morning to be taken out on student adventures.

**Coffee and Tea:** Freshly brewed coffee and tea are available in the dining lodge for adults.

**Kitchen Stewardship:** Our kitchen cannot run without your help! Students from each class are picked at each meal to work as kitchen helpers. Helpers show up early and set tables and help serve food during meal-time. After the meal students help clear each table and scrape dishes. Some students will be asked to stay and help with dishes and vacuuming.

# The Day of Your Trip

#### **Before You Leave Your School:**

- Your bus will arrive at the beginning of the school day. The Balarat office will have already assigned high school leaders, a bus number, and a driver to your class. Please do not make changes to those assignments.
- High school leaders will lend Overnight Bags (green army duffles) to those kids that do not have bags. Bus drivers will be responsible for collecting the borrowed Overnight Bags after the trip.
- Please make sure that every Overnight Bag has a tag with the student's name.
- Make sure every student has lunch and a filled water bottle in their Daypack (Backpack with two straps).
- Double check with school nurse that you have all the medications and know how to administer them. All the meds for your class should go in your personal Daypack. You should have a DPS Student Medication Request Release Agreement, signed by a doctor, for each medication.
- Take bathroom breaks before you leave the school! The drive is at least 90 minutes in length and our drivers cannot stop for bathroom breaks.

Your	(teacher) Daypack should be loaded with:
0	Lunch
0	Full water bottle
0	Warm layers
0	Pencils for each student
0	Student Balarat Handbooks
0	Completed Food Roster Form
0	Student Registration Forms
0	Student Medications
0	Teacher / Adult Emergency Information Form(s)
0	Optional: sunscreen, sunglasses, chapstick, camera, etc.

● The Registration Forms (Green or Yellow forms), Adult Emergency Information Form, and Food Roster should be in your daypack so that your Balarat teacher can collect them upon arrival.

#### On The Bus:

- The high school leaders will help to seat your students. Day packs go overhead on storage racks and Overnight Bags will be placed in luggage bays in the back of your bus. If students need to borrow a Balarat backpack for the trip, orders will be taken once on the bus.
- The first row of seats will be saved for the high school leaders, and we ask that you sit in back to help the leaders with supervision.
- The bus ride to the site is part of our educational experience. We view it as a classroom on wheels. This helps get the students in the mindset for learning when they arrive.

#### **Upon Your Arrival: Welcome to Balarat!**

- Your Balarat instructor will meet your bus when you get to the site. Every class will have their own small snack shelter to start the trip, and you most likely will not see the other teachers or students from your school until dinner time.
- When you get off the bus, there will be time for bathrooms and a quick snack before you and your students leave for an Ecology Hike.
- The bus driver will deliver all Overnight Bags to a sheltered area that is near the main lodge. Overnight bags will then be collected by students and teachers after 4:30pm on the first day.

# **Balarat 2-Day Program Sample Schedule\***

Time	Day 1	Day 2
6:30		Wake up! Get ready for Morning Walk
6:45		Leave for Silent Morning Walk
7:30		Breakfast in Elk Lodge & Clean-up
8:00 - 9:30	Balarat Bus arrives at school at the start of <i>your</i> school day. Load up & leave for Balarat	Get ready for the day, pack duffel bag, clean, and move out
9:30-12:30	10:30 Arrival Welcome, Snack, Bathroom. Eco Hike	2nd Balarat Field Activity & Lunch
12:30-1:00	Lunch	Handilla and Dhanna air ann an
1:00-4:00	1st Balarat Field Activity	Head Home 2 hours prior to your school's dismissal time
4:00-5:15	Hike to Sleeping Lodge, Move in, Meal Set-Up	
5:30-6:30	Dinner & Clean Up	
7:00-8:45	Silent Solo Night Walk	
9:00	Get ready for Bed Time	
9:30	Lights Out	

<sup>\*</sup>This is a sample schedule and subject to change.

# **Balarat 3-Day Program Sample Schedule\***

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
6:30		Wake up! Get ready for Morning Walk	Wake up! Get ready for Morning Walk
6:45		Leave for Silent Morning Walk	Leave for Silent Morning Walk
7:30		Breakfast in Elk Lodge & Clean-up	Breakfast in Elk Lodge & Clean-up
8:00 - 9:30	Balarat Bus arrives at school at the start of <i>your</i> school day. Load up & leave for Balarat	Get ready for the day	Get ready for the day, pack duffel bag, clean, and move out
9:30-12:3 0	10:30 Arrival Welcome, Snack, Bathroom	2nd Balarat Field Activity	4th Balarat Field Activity & Lunch
12:30-1:0 0	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00-4:00	1st Balarat Field Activity	3rd Balarat Field Activity	Head Home 2 hours prior to your school's dismissal
4:00-5:15	Hike to Sleeping Lodge, Move in, Meal Set-Up	Hike to Sleeping Lodge, Lodge Time, Meal Set-Up	time
5:30-6:30	Dinner & Clean Up	Dinner & Clean Up	
7:00-8:45	Silent Solo Night Walk or teacher activity+ Group Walk	Silent Solo Night Walk or teacher activity+ Group Walk	
9:00	Get ready for Bed Time	Get ready for Bed Time	
9:30	Lights Out	Lights Out	

<sup>\*</sup>This is a sample schedule and subject to change.

# **Frequently Asked Questions From Parents**

#### What is the Phone Number at Balarat?

The phones on site are for emergency purposes only. To reach the Balarat main office, call 720-424-2940. Office hours are 7am to 5pm.

#### Will my child be able to call home while at Balarat?

The students are not allowed to bring cell phones or to use Balarat phones to call home. In case of emergency, a staff member will contact you immediately. For many students, the overnight experience is as much of a learning experience as the curriculum. Often times calling home can make issues of homesickness worse.

#### Will I be able to visit my child at Balarat?

Visitors, including family members, are not allowed. We are a closed campus for the protection of all the students on site.

#### Will my child get plenty of food to eat?

Yes! All students receive three meals a day. Breakfast and dinner are prepared by our awesome chef and served family style, students can get seconds if they are still hungry. They also get a sack lunch on their second day of the trip so that they can eat a picnic lunch when they are out on their adventure for the day. Please pack them a lunch for the first day of their Balarat trip.

# What if my child has special dietary needs or food allergies?

If your child has food allergies or special dietary needs (for cultural or religious reasons) please include this important information in the Balarat Permission Registration form. Our kitchen staff can accommodate many dietary needs, but not without knowing of these needs well beforehand. We are also a peanut- and pork-free kitchen.

#### Where should I send the money for the trip?

Cash and checks are collected by your student's teacher. The check for your trip should be made payable to your child's elementary school. If there is a need for financial assistance, this should be handled confidentially by contacting the teacher or principal. Fees cover your child's food and nothing else. All other costs to operate Balarat come from Denver Public Schools.

# What should my child bring?

Use the enclosed "What to Bring & What Not to Bring" list as a guide. Please *help* your child pack and do not pack for them. It is important for them to know what they brought so it does not get mixed up with other students' belongings. Also, by including them in the packing process, the responsibility involved with being away at Balarat can begin at home.

#### What if my child doesn't have something they need to bring?

If your child does not have something that is needed, please contact your child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. They will work with Balarat staff to accommodate your child's needs.

#### Who works on the Balarat staff?

Balarat Instructors are all Denver Public Schools employees and educators who have undergone background checks. All of our instructors are CPR and Wilderness First Aid certified and are well trained, not only to teach, but to respond in an emergency setting. To learn more about our staff, check out the Balarat website http://balarat.dpsk12.org/staff/

#### What happens if there is an emergency at Balarat?

Our staff is trained to handle emergencies on site. The students' parents/guardians will be contacted and if medical attention is needed, the closest hospital is 25 minutes.

#### What are the sleeping accommodations?

Each 5<sup>th</sup> grade class will be assigned its own heated sleeping lodge. In those lodges there is a boy's dormitory and a girl's dormitory equipped with bunk beds. Each dormitory has a bathroom inside. The classroom teacher and Balarat Instructor will also sleep in the lodge for supervision. The adults will each have a separate room attached to either the boy's or girl's dorm.

#### What will my child learn during the Balarat trip?

We have worked over the years with teachers, parents, and administrators in DPS in designing our curriculum and activities. We have aligned our curriculum with Colorado education standards to help support and incorporate what students are learning in the classroom. We guarantee that while students are having fun, they are also learning, and visa versa.



#### What to Bring & What Not to Bring

Please make sure your child has adequate cold-weather clothing, including thick, warm socks, and a heavy winter jacket. Even in the Spring and Fall it may snow and it can get very cold, especially at night. We require two-strap daypacks, and overnight bags without wheels and one soft side. We can loan daypacks and overnight bags for students that do not have them.

#### Clothing you will need

Waterproof or insulated boots

Extra pair of sneakers

3 pairs of warm, tall socks, wool is best

2-3 shirts

Daily change of underwear

Long underwear if possible

2 pairs of long pants (pants must be worn, no

shorts)

Sweater or sweatshirt

Warm jacket

Warm pajamas

Sun hat & Winter hat

Gloves

#### Personal Items

Sleeping bag or warm blanket

Toothbrush and toothpaste

Washcloth

Chapstick, sunglasses, sunscreen

Brush

Deodorant

#### **Optional Items**

Books and writing materials

Camera (can't bring a cell phone, iPod)

Binoculars

Slippers (our lodges have a no-shoe policy)

Plant and animal field guides

#### What Not to Bring

Clothes or shoes that can't get dirty

Sandals or open toed shoes

Cell phones

Electronic games

Mp3 player/iPods/iTouch

eReader

Pocket knives

Weapons

Matches or lighters

Flashlight

Candy, soda, gum

Medicine that wasn't given to teacher

Perfume, Cologne, Body Spray

Aerosol Sprays

# What to wear on the day of your trip!

Thick, tall socks

Waterproof or insulated boots

Long pants (with long underwear if it is cold)

T-shirt

Long sleeve shirt

Sweater or sweatshirt

Warm jacket

## Pack these extras in your Daypack

Lunch and snack for the 1st day

A full water bottle (32oz/1 liter) Don't freeze!

Rain gear (Could be a large plastic bag)

Hat and glove

A few pencils

# **5th Grade Activity Options**

- NEW!! Inquiry-Based Science Explorations Watch students make their own discoveries in the natural environment as they learn to make deeper observations through exploration routines that are student-directed and highly engaging. Examples include Nature Journaling, Bark Beetle Discovery, Lichen Exploration, The Case of the Disappearing Log, and more!
- Western History This is our "Ranch House" learning module. Students spend their time rotating through three modules learning about early inhabitants of Colorado. Students learn about Native Americans by building and learning about the tipi as a shelter, "trappers and traders" by building snares, map making, and candle making, and pioneers by experiencing the pioneer lifestyle by baking biscuits and living in a pioneer kitchen.
- **Mining History** Our mining unit explores the hard rock gold extraction process. Students rotate through three modules to give them a better understanding of how gold was extracted. Students will work with hand rock drills, a sluice box hoist, visit the innards of a gold mine, and learn about the assaying process.
- Archery- Discover your inner toxophilite! Students receive instruction on archery skills, range rules, and safety, and then have the opportunity to hone their aim and form. May be combined with a science exploration or team games.
- **Peak Challenge** A six mile round trip hike up Fairview Peak. The Peak provides commanding views of the Front Range and the Indian Peaks and on a clear day, even Denver! This hike is a full day activity. The Peak Challenge provides an excellent opportunity for goal setting and accomplishment, as well as science explorations enroute.
- **Team Initiatives** Students are presented with a challenge and through practicing team skills attempt to move their team through the challenge. Students gain a better sense of working within a team to achieve a common goal.
- Compass Course- Students receive instruction in the use of a compass as a navigational aid and their pacing to measure distance and then set off on our compass course. At each stop along the course, students answer questions to reinforce their ecological knowledge of the Balarat site.
- Low Ropes Course- Students work together to move a teammate through a low challenge course. Team work, and personal challenge are emphasized in this popular activity.

The following activities are weather dependent and seasonal. They also may require additional adult chaperones from the school (teachers or paras) that are willing to actively participate in the safety systems. We strongly discourage classroom teachers from choosing 2 of these activities during the program in an effort to provide a more diverse experience for all learners.

**High Ropes Challenge Course (2+ Adults from School)** - After extensive instruction in the safety procedures that are critical, students participate in a "team belay" to help each other through the ropes course. Students set and attempt to meet personal goals as they push their limits in a safe, controlled manner.

**Big Swing (1 adult from school)** - A challenge element in which participants wear a full-body harness and swing over a gulch. Teamwork is essential to this activity as is developing a supportive environment.

**Zip Line (2 adults from school)**- A challenge element in which participants wear a harness and take a 300 ft. zip ride across the gulch.



Dear Parents,

Our Fifth-Graders are going to be attending an overnight program with Balarat Outdoor
Education soon. We are hosting a meeting for parents in order to provide information about
this excursion. This meeting, with a Balarat teacher and classroom teachers, will provide you the
opportunity to ask questions and learn about the program specifics.

Parent Meeting Date/Time	Location of Meeting
Excursion Dates:	



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Parent Meeting Date/Time	Location of Meeting
	9
Excursion Dates:	



Estimos Padres,

Los estudiantes en grado quinto van a ir en un excursión a la programa al aire libre en Balarat. Vamos a tener una junta con el maestro de Balarat y los maestros de su escuela quienes llevarán a su hijo/hija a Balarat. Esta junta la dará información específica sobre la logística y los propósitos educacionales de la excursión, y ofrecerá una amplia oportunidad para discutir y hacer preguntas.

Fecha/Hora de Reunión	Location
La Fecha de Excursión:	



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