
Dear Parents of Students Scheduled for Balarat,

We are delighted that your student will be spending time learning and living with us at the Balarat Outdoor Education Center. The purpose of the residential/overnight trip is to provide students with an opportunity to explore the natural world and to link those experiences to the work they do in their classrooms. We are working with your student's teacher to plan the specific agenda for their class, with the aim that the trip is a learning adventure that students will always remember.

By way of a brief introduction to Balarat, it is a program that has been a part of the Denver Public Schools (DPS) since 1969. Fifth grade students have been doing overnight programs at Balarat since 1975. All Balarat personnel are DPS employees.

While at Balarat, students live in modern buildings that are heated and have standard bathrooms with running water. The sleeping quarters are dormitory style (multiple bunk beds in a large room), separated such that boys and girls are on opposite sides of a building. An adult, a Balarat instructor or classroom teacher, will have direct supervision of the dormitory space. High school student leaders who have done some specific training at Balarat will assist the teacher.

Breakfast and dinner will be served, family style, in our dining hall. Students will be responsible for assisting with the setting of tables, cleaning up afterwards and washing dishes. Lunches will be put together by our food service personnel and then packed by fifth graders, to be eaten at a location away from the Lodge.

During the day, students will be engaged in learning activities that are led by the lead Balarat instructor, high school leaders and/or the classroom teacher. The activities are directed at helping students better understand the local flora, fauna and human history and to connect their classroom studies to the outdoors. The classroom teacher and/or the Balarat instructor will be supervising/leading all activities.

You can help your student and us by:

- Using the packing list as a guide for what to bring and what to leave behind;
- Making sure that your student is prepared for wet or cold weather;
- Filling out, signing and returning the Balarat Registration Form as soon as possible. Please include information that will be helpful for us to know about your student in advance of the trip;
- Remind your student that Balarat is a learning place. We would like them to bring their wonder, interest and excitement about the natural world and the people with whom they will interact.

If you have any questions that cannot be answered at your student's school, please don't hesitate to contact me at 720-424-2940 or patrick_emery@dpsk12.org.

We look forward to having your student at Balarat.

Sincerely,

Patrick Emery, Manager
Balarat Outdoor Education