

Nevada Outdoor School
Student Behavior Management Policy

Nevada Outdoor School has adopted a behavior and discipline policy that emphasizes physical and emotional safety for all program participants, positive discipline, clear expectations, and appropriate consequences. The policy is implemented through guidelines, general health and safety rules, preparation, proper introductions, positive reinforcement and teaching techniques, warnings and consequences, team contracts and trail rules. The word staff in this policy refers to both staff and AmeriCorps national service members.

Guidelines

Students should be introduced to the three Respects:

- *Respect for others
- *Respect for place (environment/materials)
- *Respect for self

At NOS, we work with youth in a variety of settings and behavior management strategies and techniques may change depending on the setting and the type of programming, but some techniques and our behavior management policy are relevant no matter what setting or program.

This policy needs to be shared with and understood by all teachers, parents/guardians (and campers for summer camps). It is EXTREMELY important that it is followed in a fair, consistent and professional manner.

Overall Health and Safety Rules:

1. Remain with adult supervision at all times.
2. Walk instead of run, unless permitted to do so as part of an organized activity.
3. Tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, and weapons of any sort (including knives) are prohibited by the Nevada Outdoor School.
4. Students may not bring electronic devices of any sort, except watches, and flashlights. Disposable or digital cameras okay. Please also tell students about loss/damage likelihood (mostly related to summer camps).
5. Swearing or foul language will be prohibited.
6. Insubordination will not be tolerated by the staff at any time.
7. No play fighting and/or physical horseplay.
8. Students are expected to participate in program activities at all times.

(Other rules will be established and communicated to participants for particular activities as required).

Preparation

Behavior management begins before you ever step into the classroom, or start a field trip or summer camp: it starts with proper planning and preparation.

Effective behavior management starts with a confident and well prepared teacher/councilor. Make sure you have thought through all aspects of your lesson/station/camp and have all the proper materials gathered and in the proper place so that they are easily accessible. Think through the flow of your presentation paying careful attention to your introduction (setting up clear expectations and laying out your goal), transitions (minimizing opportunities for youth to get distracted or off task), and the conclusion (wrapping it all up in a clear and effective way revisiting your goal).

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

The expectation for NOS programs is professionalism. This involves practicing your presentation (multiple times) to work through (predict and plan for) any potential problems, memorize the flow, practice transitions, perfect timing and double check materials.

Wear your NOS provided uniform and name tag (with AmeriCorps logo) at all times to all programs.

Introduction:

All NOS lessons/field trips/summer camps must have a proper introduction where you introduce yourself and the expectations for the program. This includes NOS's 3 R's (See Guidelines - Respect yourself, Respect others, and Respect the environment/materials) as well as the attention getter (Established classroom or NOS's Bump, Bump). During this introduction, give clear expectations (if you want kids to raise their hands before talking, make sure you tell them that is your expectation and then STICK TO IT!), and practice the attention getter until all students are able to demonstrate their mastery.

Your introduction should also clearly state your goal for the program ("Today we will....")

Positive Reinforcement and Teaching Techniques:

Behavior management can be as simple as paying attention, giving clear instructions, walking around the room, and offering positive reinforcement for good behavior ("Thank you for raising your hand", "I love how my smart scientists are all sitting quietly waiting for the next instruction", "Johnny, thank you for sharing your materials with Suzy," etc.). When there is a behavior problem that is disrupting the program, the first thing to try is proximity control: walk over near the student and stand by them (sometimes hand on their desk is also effective - this shows the kid that you want them to get on task without needing to say anything or drawing everyone else's attention directly to them). This proximity control is especially effective if you are mobile during your instruction (managing while moving around). During some programs this might be more difficult, sometimes a firm look (the "teacher stare") is all a kid needs to snap out of misbehaving. Other times, a quick redirection is effective: look at the kid, or say his/her name and redirect them to what they need to be doing, "Johnny, please get to work, you need to be drawing your planet."

Whenever possible, Nevada Outdoor School staff will use positive reinforcement of good behaviors as a deterrent to undesirable student behavior. Student actions which are annoying, but not necessarily disruptive or dangerous should be ignored whenever possible to avoid giving attention for negative acts.

There are other instances where misbehavior needs to be addressed directly and in a more formal way. This needs to be done when positive reinforcement, redirection, proximity control, etc. does not work.

If this is the case, you need to follow NOS's 4 step Behavior Management Warning System. This system is similar for all NOS education programs, but is slightly different for school-based programs (lessons/ field trips) when there is a teacher present verse summer camps. When following these policies, all conversations need to be professional, calm, composed, positive and whenever possible one-on-one (sometimes including teacher/parent). Never yelling, cussing, belittling or nagging.

Warnings and Consequences:

If a student violates a rule or acts in a way inconsistent with the guidelines, he/she may receive a warning. These warnings may be given by any Nevada Outdoor School staff. All formal warnings will be recorded on the Discipline Log (summer camps), which is maintained by the program leader. Though warnings may be given informally and not recorded, the practice of verbally warning a number of times without follow-through is strongly discouraged. There may be consequences associated with warnings, but the consequence must be logically related to the violation. This may include a time-out, apology to other participant(s) affected or loss of privilege.

SCHOOL-BASED (classroom lessons/field trips) Warning System:

- 1st Infraction: Verbal warning – pull student aside or go over to where they are and clearly state what they are doing wrong and what you expect them to be doing instead. “Johnny, you are distracting the class by blurting out without raising your hand, my expectation is that students raise their hands in class and wait until they are called on to talk, that way I and everyone else in class can hear whoever is talking.”
- 2nd Infraction: Verbal warning x 2 – if you need to address the student again, repeat step 1, this time checking for understanding, “do you understand?” and explain that if this happens again, you will get the teacher involved, “if this happens again, I will get [teacher] and you may be asked to sit out.” Make sure to check in with the teacher at this point if they haven’t stepped in yet and let them know the next time this happens, you need them to be with you.
- 3rd Infraction: Teacher involvement – If the negative behavior persists, get the teacher involved and have them talk with the student/follow classroom discipline (you should have this conversation on the side with the teacher before this happens, after you issue your second verbal warning). Make sure it is clear to the student and the teacher (if the teachers allows them to continue with the program) that if this behavior happens again, the student will not be allowed to participate in the rest of the program.
- 4th Infraction: Removal from program – have the student go sit with the teacher, out of the game, lesson, etc. At this point the teacher needs to take responsibility for the student.

SUMMER CAMP Warning System:

- 1st Infraction: Verbal warning (still needs to be recorded in discipline log) – pull student aside or go over to where they are and clearly state what they are doing wrong and what you expect them to be doing instead. “Suzy, at camp we use positive language and work together as a team. I expect you to only speak nicely about the other campers and be a positive member of our group. If this continues, I will have to write you up for violating our camp contract, do you understand?”
- 2nd Infraction: Written warning – if the behavior continues and needs to be addressed again, you need to pull the camper aside and write up a written warning, which will be kept in the camp folder. This written warning will state the problem, what your agreed upon solution is and what the consequences are if it continues (ex.- Suzy has repeatedly used negative language and been rude to her fellow campers including saying things like, “you suck” or cussing when she doesn’t get her way. This is harming the group dynamic and positive atmosphere of camp. In the future, when Suzy feels upset she will take 3 deep breaths. If needed, she can take a quick break from the activity and return when she has calmed down. If this behavior continues, Suzy’s parents/guardian will be called and informed they may need to come pick her up if it happens again.” At this point, you and the camper should sign this form. All councilors at camp should be made aware of the situation. A timeout or loss of privilege may be appropriate at this time.

- 3rd Infraction: Written x 2 and call home – If the negative behavior persists, pull the camper aside and review the previous written warning. At this point, discuss the agreed upon solution for the problem and update/come up with a new solution if needed. This second warning/conversation needs to be written down as well. With the camper present, call their parent and explain the situation (use your written warning as a template for what to say: “This is what’s happening and why it’s a problem, this was the solution we agreed upon, it continued to happen, we reviewed/updated our solution, if this happens again, you will need to come pick up [camper] from camp. Both campers and NOS leader need to sign the second written warning. (Note – After you issue a second verbal warning and call the parent, you must also call the NOS office/your supervisor and inform them of the situation. If you cannot get in touch with a parent (make sure to call all numbers you have - there should be an emergency contact number to call as well), make sure to let your supervisor/someone at NOS know that they may need to help out.
- 4th Infraction: Possible removal from program – pull camper aside and call parent/guardian. Inform them what has occurred and tell them that unfortunately, they need to come get their child. Have the camper “sit out” while waiting for their parent. When parent arrives, make sure to check-in with them. Bring your written warning forms to explain what happened and show how you followed NOS’s behavior policy. Answer any questions and say good-bye. If the parent has any questions or is upset, have them go to or call the NOS office.

PLEASE NOTE: The decision to send a student home will be made by the program director working closely with the activity leader. Whether a student is sent home at this time depends upon the nature of the behavior that resulted in the warnings, the attitude of the student, the student’s home situation, and the time until the end of the program. The student may be isolated from other students by staying with a person from the Nevada Outdoor School staff for the remainder of the program.

Any student may be given multiple warnings at one time for intentionally unsafe behavior. This includes but is not limited to: fights which result in, or are clearly intended to result in, injury to other students; intentional scaring of other students on a hike; and intentional misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications.

At no point will a NOS staff member/AmeriCorps yell, cuss, degrade, physically harm or speak negatively about/to any student, camper, teacher, parent, or co-worker.

Consequences will always be either related to the specific behavior or directed toward improving behavior. If the student, working with the program director and/or activity leader, agrees to a consequence intended to correct the physical or emotional impact of a violation of guidelines or rules, the consequence must be logically related and must be safe.

Though warnings will never be removed, the consequence at any level or future levels may be mitigated by the nature of the violation and the student’s attitude.

Food, candy, or gum confiscated from students will not be returned due to the difficulty of storing these items. Other items confiscated will be returned to the student at the appropriate place and time once the event is over.

Behaviors that may result in being sent home:

1. Violent acts against staff or students.
2. Theft or Vandalism.
3. Possession of alcohol, tobacco products, narcotics, or dangerous drugs.

4. Possession of a weapon.
5. Overt sexual behaviors toward students or staff.
6. Running away from supervision.
7. Not adhering to agreed upon camp rules and behaviors

At summer/eco-camps and other outdoor youth programs, other types of behavior management techniques and rules need to be considered and applied including team contracts and general trail rules.

Team Contracts:

Whenever possible and particularly for multiday programs, students should be involved in the process of establishing behavior guidelines for their group. One effective way to do this is a team contract. Students are more likely to understand and commit to following rules which they have had a hand in creating.

General Trail Rules:

1. Stay on the trails and between the leader and tail, unless instructed by the leader.
2. Remain reasonably quiet throughout field study. Be alert to the presence of wildlife and respectful of the rights of others to learn and be listened to.
3. Do not pick plants or touch animals unless instructed by the leader.
4. Come prepared for every field study with the appropriate footwear and clothing, (long pants and closed toe shoes mandatory for outdoor activities) and water.

RESOURCES:

<http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/top-10-behaviour-management-strategies/>

<http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/bill-rogers-behaviour-management/>

<http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/structuring-your-teaching/>