

Mount Madonna Middle School
ANNUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPING TRIP - 2025

Dear Middle School Families,

Mount Madonna Middle School will be going to Portola Redwoods State Park for our annual beginning-of-the-school-year field trip from **Monday, Aug. 25, 2025 to Thursday, Aug. 28, 2025**. Our 8th grade will separate for one-night to embark on a special backcountry excursion from Tuesday morning to Wednesday evening. If you are an 8th grade family please review the attached packing list carefully (page 4), as your child will require a few important additional items for the experience.

We will hold Field Trip Orientations for parents and students on August 18, 2025 at the Upper Campus.

Please lookout for an invitation this summer, which will include specifics such as room and time. All MS families are welcome to take part in the Field Trip Orientation. To ensure that each child is well prepared for the experience, we recommend that all 6th grade families and all new Middle School families attend.

The middle school will leave from MMS on Monday, Aug. 25, 2025. The school day will begin at 9:00 am at the amphitheater. Students who normally ride the bus to school will do so Monday morning with all of their luggage. Students who ride with a guardian or carpool should arrive at school no later than 8:45 am in order to allow time to place belongings in the appropriate location and gather at the expected meeting spot. Upon arrival to campus all middle school students will unload baggage at the bus turnaround. This excludes their daypack - which they need to keep with them as it should have their lunch and water in it. After unloading their baggage, students should go straight to the outdoor amphitheater for the 9:00 am orientation with faculty and chaperones. After our morning orientation students and chaperones will depart together to the campgrounds.

We will leave the campgrounds on Thursday, August 28 and we expect to return to MMS between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm. All students will be expected to help clean up and put away shared camping gear at this time. If your child is riding the bus home, they will leave campus at 3:25 pm. Children who are riding home with a guardian or carpool should be picked up at 3:25 pm at the end of the school day. Please indicate your choice of transportation option when completing the permission e-form.

Packing & Supplies

Please review the Clothing and Equipment List carefully (page 3). Additional important details are below:

- All students should pack belongings small and tight for easy transportation. 8th graders will need a backpack that can contain everything needed for the overnight excursion.
- **No electronic devices will be allowed on the trip, with the exception of cameras and flashlights.** We recommend students leave their devices at home for safekeeping. Devices brought to school will be collected at campus and stored safely for the duration of the trip.
- Pack a lunch and snacks for Monday only. We will provide food and snacks after Monday's lunch until the end of the trip. Students will need to keep their lunches in their daypacks, as birds are quite skilled at pecking through paper bags. They should keep their daypacks with them until we arrive at the campgrounds.

Sleeping & Tent Arrangements

A primary objective of our MS camping trip is for students to build strong connections with their peers through the shared outdoor experiences. Because the ability to live and exist in shared spaces with others is a valuable life skill, we allow the opportunity for students to share tents with peers if they desire to. Students may also opt to sleep under the stars on a tarp or sleep alone in a single tent without roommates.

Our first priority is each individual's physical and emotional safety. We will share some ground rules about conduct, safety, inclusion, quiet hours, privacy, and respect on the camping trip during our morning orientation before we embark. Students may share tents with peers as long as all shared agreements, expectations, and rules are honored throughout the trip. All tent arrangements must be approved based on the discretion of faculty chaperones and may be altered by faculty at any time in order to facilitate positive and safe experience for all campers. In order to encourage the spirit of inclusion, we ask that students do not plan tent arrangements with peers prior to camp arrival. Flexibility, adaptability, and open mindedness are vital to keep the spirit of inclusion central to tent arrangements.

In addition, we ask that you indicate your preferences for your child's sleeping arrangements ahead of time on the trip permission e-form so that we can facilitate inclusive arrangements that honor each camper's needs. Prior to completing the e-form we strongly encourage you to check-in with your child about their needs and comfort levels, and to discuss the expectations of flexibility, safety, and inclusion in shared spaces. If you or your child have questions about sleeping arrangements or expectations please don't hesitate to contact Blythe Collier at blythe.collier@mountmadonnaschool.org.

Attendance

The days we are camping are considered part of the school year and as such there are requirements that must be met if a student does not participate in the trip. If a student chooses to not participate for any reason other than illness or a pre-approved reason, they are required to come to school to participate in 4 community service hours per school day missed. If your child will not be attending the middle school camping trip contact Blythe Collier at blythe.collier@mountmadonnaschool.org to discuss.

In order for your child to go on the trip you must submit the Middle School Camping Trip Permission Form in the PowerSchool Parent Portal by August 20, 2025. All students must be in full compliance with current California state laws for immunizations.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST – LABEL EVERYTHING WITH STUDENT’S LAST NAME!

All Middle School Students please bring the following:

- Medications - prescription or over the counter***(SEE REQUIREMENTS ON THE E-FORM REGARDING MEDICATIONS)
- Tent with ground cloth (**highly recommended** due to mosquitoes and other pesky creatures). It is **highly recommended that the student practice putting the tent up before the trip**, both to learn how to do so and to make sure that there are no missing parts. They will have any needed help to erect their tent while on the trip.
- **Warm** sleeping bag
- Inflatable or foam sleeping mat
- Daypack - large enough for lunch, journal, rain gear and water bottle. It is recommended that 8th graders bring a daypack that can fit inside their multi-day backpacking pack.

In their daypack students should bring:

- Lunch and snacks (for Monday only)
- Water bottle – unbreakable, leak-proof one-quart or 1-L bottles with lid that seals fully (8th graders should bring one or more water bottles that allow them to carry at least 2 L of water.)
- Bandana – to be used for games, as a damp cloth to cool off, and as a lunch placemat/napkin
- Hat for sun protection
- Journal and pen or pencil
- Rain Gear – complete rain suit or poncho (coated nylon is best)
- Sunscreen – SPF 30 or higher
- Insect repellent – there are many varieties at drugstores and natural food stores
- Footgear – sturdy, ankle supporting, and preferably waterproof for hiking
- Footgear – a second pair of shoes (for in-camp)
- Water shoes that are secured to the feet (not flip flops)
- Bathing Suit
- Jacket – a lightweight lined parka with a hood is a good choice
- Pants – 2-3 pair, including 1 pair of shorts
- Shirts – short and long-sleeved, to accommodate the changes in weather
- Sweater – fleece or wool is best
- Socks – 1-2 pair per day
- Underwear
- Toiletries – toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, washcloth, bath towel
- Reusable plate, knife, fork, spoon, cup & bowl in a mesh bag (**unbreakable and LABELED WITH NAME!!!**)
- Small flashlight
- Lantern for tent
- A bag of quarters (\$0.25) for showers. Note that showers are 50 cents to start and 25 cents for every minute.

Optional:

- Small pillow
- Sunglasses
- Pajamas
- Camera
- Medical face masks (we will have backup masks in case of necessity)

8th grade, please bring the following IN ADDITION to the items on the previous page.

Parents: if your child packs on their own, please review all that is packed against the list outlined below. Each one of these items is very important. Eighth graders will all be carrying food in their backpacks as well, distributed to the group on the morning of the backpacking trip (so students should leave room in their pack for food to be added to it on Tuesday morning).

- **Multi-day backpacking pack with a padded waist belt large enough for all the items they need to pack.** The backpack should have the capacity of 3000 cubic inches or more for sleeping bag, food, clothing, personal gear, foam sleeping mat, and tent (optional). It is very important that your child is comfortable with their fully loaded pack. They should wear it around for a few hours at home to make any adjustments so it is comfortable, and to reconsider whether those “extra” items are necessary.
- Hiking boots/shoes – sturdy, broken-in and waterproof. VERY IMPORTANT: If your child has new hiking shoes or boots, please allow a break-in period during the summer!
- Waterproof stuff sack for your sleeping bag. A thick sturdy plastic garbage bag is OK.
- Toilet paper - in zipper lock plastic bag
- long underwear (optional, but recommended if a student tends to be cold at night)
- rope - 5-10 feet for securing equipment
- Water containers able to contain at least 2 L of water, this could be the 2, 1-L water bottles listed above or a separate water bladder.

In general, all items must be able to fit as tightly and lightly as possible. If you are acquiring new gear or choosing from gear you already own, every choice can help make this as easy as possible. For example: travel sized toiletries, thin/light camping towel, a sleeping bag compression stuff sack, lightweight camping dishes, etc.