

Frost Valley Environmental Education Mission Statement and Goals



Concern for the Earth's environment has become a dominant social issue of our time. The problem is no longer definable in the traditional terms of conservation of natural resources. It is now the quality of human life...the livability of the environment, particularly the urban environment. The challenge is as vast as an atmosphere free of cancer producing chemicals, and as small as a child joyously playing in a stream of water free of disease, bacteria and poisons. It is a basic reaffirmation of human values and dignity, as promise that the future need not be more and more of worse and worse. To this end, humans must understand not only the natural world, but must master the communication skills necessary to solve problems in human history.

Therefore...

The mission of the Frost Valley YMCA is to offer an Environmental Education Program which will create in the most rapid and efficient way possible, an environmentally literate citizenry – a citizenry who understands it's interdependence with and responsibility for the total environment, natural and human-made, and which possesses the knowledge and concern to solve existing problems and prevent future environmental degradation.

Goals...

The Frost Valley Environmental Education Center will provide learning experiences designed to guide participants towards:

- An understanding of the unique ecology and natural resources of the Catskill region;
- An understanding of the human processes of managing, conserving and consuming natural resources;
- An exposure to the skills that encourage the low impact use of the natural areas, to lifetime sports that foster a healthy life-style, and to activities that inculcate a positive stewardship towards the natural environment, and;
- An awareness of their responsibility as citizens to acquire knowledge of environmental issues and the necessity of becoming involved in the policy making process influencing these issues.

Frost Valley Environmental Education Planning Guidelines



The Woodruff J. English Environmental Education Center at the Frost Valley YMCA provides unique opportunities to explore new ideas, new environments, and new people! Our philosophy guides people towards sound environmental ethics and positive personal relationships, crucial needs in today's society. We will strive to create an experience for your students that will fit with your school curriculum and compliment your entire school year. We take our purpose seriously, and we promote our mission fully. Thank you for being part of the Frost Valley experience.

First Steps To Planning Your Trip

Read and use this Planning Guide - it has been assembled as a result of our experience working with and helping to plan successful learning programs for over thirty-five years.

Please familiarize yourself with our camp policies. To help your students, parents and fellow teachers understand expectations, *anything in this Planning Pack can be reproduced and distributed with acknowledgments to Frost Valley.*

Take some time to identify the purpose of your trip. This is an essential step towards having a successful experience. To assist you in purposeful goal setting we have included two forms you should complete and return to us at least two months prior to your trip:

The School Information Form (section E) is used by your Program Coordinator to make sure supplies, equipment and speakers needed for your experience are ready and available;

The Program Notes (section E) are used by the Frost Valley instructors to customize the lessons we will teach your students. The Program Coordinator can help you make appropriate choices during the planning process. Please tell us about your students, about your community, and about any other environmental education experiences they may have had.

Working With the Frost Valley Program Coordinator

To ensure that your schedule is planned correctly, Frost Valley has three Environmental Education Program Coordinators (PC'S), one of whom will be assigned to your school. In addition to logistics, your P.C. will provide a smooth transition from the indoor classroom to the outdoors. In order for the program coordinators to do their job effectively, *they will need your assistance.* Please complete and return the School Information Form as soon as possible, perhaps most importantly, please include the phone number and times you are best reached during the school day (or perhaps a home number).

The planning meeting with the Program Coordinator to discuss your choices and overall schedule is typically done over the phone. Some schools choose to visit Frost Valley to see new programs and discuss plans for their trip in person. Frost Valley staff are also available to come to your school to meet with teachers, parents and students. Contact your Program Coordinator for more information.

Please have this information ready when you talk to the Program Coordinator:

- Approximate numbers of students and adults that will be attending
- The goals you hope to accomplish during your trip
- Ideas or requests for your classes
- Ideas or requests for evening programs
- Special materials or equipment you may need
- Share your expectations — your hopes
- Questions!!

Returning schools please take note — we take copious notes on your school's experience, but sometimes we forget each small detail. *Please remember to share with us:* the ways you have always done things, the rooms you have always used and the flow of events you have come to expect. Please keep in mind that we are continually upgrading and improving our program - so try something new.

For new schools we strongly suggest either a visit from Frost Valley staff or a school staff visit to Frost Valley (this is best done at least two months before your trip). You can schedule a staff planning day or weekend trip to Frost Valley. This will help you get to know the site, programs, and staff. Call the Frost Valley Environmental Education Director for more information.

The Program Coordinator will create a tentative schedule after talking to you and receiving your planning information. When this schedule is completed s/he will forward a copy to you. Please review this schedule carefully and contact the Program Coordinator with any questions you may have. Since we organize our teaching schedule one week in advance, last minute changes can be difficult. For that reason, we hope to work out all scheduling details well before you arrive.

Preparing Your Students and Staff

Educationally — The Frost Valley Environmental Education Center is a school in the outdoors, all our experiences (including eating in the Dining Hall) have an educational foundation. In preparation you may want to perform special units of study, discuss current events, or work on journals back at school. For additional ideas, review the Pre-Trip Activity Ideas in this planning pack.(Section I)

Logistically — *Please make sure that all participants are prepared for an outdoor classroom experience ~ raincoats, warm clothing in the winter are a must!* Discuss what to expect (that this is a school experience!). Share the purpose of the trip and the selected activities with your students and teachers. Make sure that all necessary forms have been sent home and that parents have the Frost Valley phone number in the event of an emergency.

Emotionally — Our 6,000 acre setting in the Catskill Forest Preserve is unique and apt to be different from what your students are used to at home. We have no television, daily newspaper, soda or candy machines. Because the experience at Frost Valley is so short and intense, we ask you to address students behavior before you arrive. Many schools have found a behavior contract signed by students and parents to be a great idea! Examples of behavior contracts are available in section F.

Environmentally — We ask that you and your students respect the Frost Valley environment inside and out. Collecting plants or animals is not permitted without prior permission and purposeful vandalism is severely dealt with. Furthermore, we try to integrate our philosophies into every part of our program, including the Dining Hall. Activities such as weighing food waste can be a dramatic lesson about wasteful lifestyles. We feel a visit to Frost Valley can help to instill positive environmental attitudes in our students. We will strive to practice what we preach, and we ask you to help us in this effort by preparing your students for our alternative living/learning environment.

Final Steps

Remember to bring a vehicle for use in case of an emergency.

Use the Program Planning Checklist to ensure nothing is 'left behind'.

Familiarize your staff with the Health Care and Emergency Planning section (C) in this packet.

To ensure a smooth first day, please make sure that every child knows what Activity Group they are in, what Lodge they are in and which table they will sit at in the Dining Hall - *before arrival*.

A confirmation phone call with the Program Coordinator one - two weeks prior to your trip will assure a smooth and successful experience.

Questions or Problems??

Environmental Education Director...specific billing or problems.
(845) 985-2291 ext. 219, email: eedirector@frostvalley.org

Environmental Education Registrar...scheduling dates, school visits, general questions.
extension 362, email: eprice@frostvalley.org

Program Coordinators... will be assigned to your school ~ taking you through the entire environmental education experience, from pre trip planning through evaluation. Ask for extension 221, email: eepe@frostvalley.org

Frost Valley Health Care, Please contact the Health Center regarding any health care questions.
extension 225, email: nurse@frostvalley.org

Phone Number (845) 985-2291, or fax (845) 985-0059
email: enved@frostvalley.org

Look for the Frost Valley home page at <http://www.frostvalley.org>

Frost Valley Environmental Education Program Planning Checklist



Done	Things To Do	When
	Return Frost Valley contracts	By return date on Contract
	Arrange bus transportation to Frost Valley	6 months before trip
	Complete and return School Information and Program Notes to Coordinator	2 months before trip
	Discuss choices for classes and evening programs with Coordinator	2 months before trip
	Meet with participating teachers, students and parents about Frost Valley program (Power Point presentation is available)	2 months before trip
	Distribute "Bring Along" list to students (section F)	1 Month before trip
	Distribute Health Forms and releases to parents (section G)	1 Month before trip
	Make arrangements for an emergency vehicle	2 weeks before trip
	Organize the students into groups of 15 with at least one chaperone per group	2 weeks before trip
	Assign lodges and rooms to students and chaperones	2 weeks before trip
	Assign tables in groups of 10 including the chaperone(s)	2 weeks before trip
	Assign dining hall duties for each meal	2 weeks before trip
	Finalize the number of students and adults attending	2 weeks before trip
	Receive Schedule and confirmation letter from Coordinator	1-2 weeks before trip
	Schedules to the students including lodge, activity group, dining hall table and set-up duties	1 week before trip
	Check bus schedule for return trip	Before leaving
	Count students and adults	Before leaving
	Bring copies of schedule for all adults	Before leaving
	Bring lists of students by activity groups, lodges, and tables	Before leaving
	Bring all health and hospital release forms	Before leaving
	Bring alphabetized list of all students for Frost Valley nurse	Before leaving
	Bring the directions to Frost Valley (Section D)	Before leaving

Sit back relax and enjoy the trip – See you at Frost Valley

Frost Valley Environmental Education Policies for School Groups



School Groups must provide an emergency vehicle.

School groups must either bring a nurse for their program, or arrange for Frost Valley Nursing Service.

Students must be supervised by an adult in every building (including cabins).

Students must be supervised at all times, including during their “free times” before and after meals.

State law requires one adult supervisor for each 8 students up to 6th grade and one adult supervisor for each 10 students beyond 6th grade.

Groups are strictly prohibited from walking on the county road at Frost Valley. When leading hikes teachers and students must stay off the road, using the field or designated trails.

Buildings will be examined before and after each usage. In the event of damage to buildings, schools are responsible for the cost of repairs, including but not limited to the following:

- Fire extinguishers discharged - \$25.00 each
- Graffiti - \$10.00 per sq. inch
- Broken windows or screens - varies with size of window
- Buildings requiring more than normal cleaning - \$5 per hour per staff required

Quiet hours are 10:00 PM to 7:00 AM, and are strictly enforced in lodges and the Castle.

Please refrain from smoking in any building or while attending programs at Frost Valley.

Knives, firearms, radios, CD players, mp3 players, tape recorders, and junk food are not allowed at Frost Valley.

Collecting of plants, animals or other natural materials should be cleared through the Environmental Education Director.

Student discipline is a responsibility shared between school teachers and Frost Valley staff. Please prepare your students for a “school experience”. You may want to use or prepare a behavior contract similar to the one found in the Section F, "Forms to Distribute to Students and Chaperones."

Students and teachers are not allowed in or near the lodging of other schools.

Please supervise and orient your students concerning expected behavior. Should a situation arise between students such as fighting or theft, Frost Valley reserves the right to have the students sent home.

**Please share this information with all adults and students attending
Frost Valley.**

Frost Valley Environmental Education Note to Group Leader Regarding Chaperones



Enclosed (in section F) is a Chaperone Guide for Frost Valley's Environment Education Program. Please review this information and provide a copy for all adults that will be coming up to Frost Valley with your school.

Adult Chaperones, whether teachers or parents, play a crucial role in the success of your trip. Their assistance with supervision of your students is invaluable. Chaperones also have great potential for sharing their knowledge and skills with the group and thus helping to make the trip that much more meaningful. They will be with your students virtually 24 hours a day and have numerous opportunities to provide positive adult interactions for your students. Encourage them to get involved—being a chaperone is a big job, but a very rewarding one.

Here are some suggested guidelines to follow as you prepare your chaperones for the trip:

- Meet with all the chaperones before the trip. Go over concerns and expectations. You may want to give them the Chaperone Guide beforehand so they can begin preparing for the trip and come to the meeting with questions.
- Explain the importance of being a good role-model. The students will look to them for leadership and follow their example. If they want the students to dress for the weather, pay attention, be polite and not complain, they need to do the same.
- Create a chaperone assignment schedule which includes lodges, tables, classes and free-time. Your school must provide supervision for students **AT ALL TIMES**; you will undoubtedly find that assigning chaperone responsibilities ahead of time will avoid a lot of confusion and also prevent a few people from doing the work of many. Try to work some time off into the schedule so that everyone is responsible for an equal amount of time and also gets a break.
- If a parent or teacher is not assigned to go along as the extra adult on a class but they choose to anyway, please advise them that they must still adhere to the guidelines for classes in the Chaperone Guide. If they wish to socialize with other adults, they should find an appropriate place to do so away from the activity groups.
- If there is more than one adult in a cabin or lodge, we suggest assigning specific students to each adult. This gives each student a primary person to check-in with and also creates a small core group for sharing and processing their experiences. Keeping this group together for classes and/or meals is optional and depends on the goals of your trip.
- Take good care of your chaperones. Make sure they get a chance to relax and enjoy themselves. Be sensitive to their needs and show that you appreciate them. Even with lots of preparation, some chaperones get overwhelmed by the intensity of a resident experience. Work together as a team so that there is plenty of help and support to go around.

Thank you for your leadership!

Frost Valley Environmental Education Wellness Philosophy



Wellness involves making choices. It means taking responsibility for your own health and for the way things turn out in your life. Wellness, unlike illness, is moving beyond the neutral state of health, to an even more positive state in which you can reach your fullest human potential. This wellness philosophy is an integral, positive part of every Frost Valley experience. At Frost Valley, we promote positive choices and healthy lifestyles in many ways. Our wellness concept has six dimensions:

1. Relating to others

We promote life-skills of good communication, cooperation and decision-making. These positive group interactions can enhance the classroom and family atmosphere.

- Initiative activities and group problem-solving activities
- Ropes course
- New Games, lots of fun while de-emphasizing competition

2. Enjoying fitness

We maintain an active pace at Frost Valley. Exercise is an integral part of many of our activities. The benefits of good fitness can be seen in improved strength, endurance, energy, better cardiovascular health, weight control and the ability to sleep better.

- Hikes
- Cross-country skiing / snow shoeing
- Recreational sports
- Boating / canoeing

3. Being part of the world

Leadership development, community involvement and sensitivity to the natural environment all contribute to the vitality of our society.

- All of our environmental education classes provide experiences which we hope will lead to a greater sense of stewardship and responsibility to our natural world.

4. Taking care of ourselves

Respecting and caring for our bodies has a direct effect on our physical, mental and emotional health.

- Frost Valley is smoke free. There is **no smoking in any buildings or at programs**
- **Candy and soda are not for sale at Frost Valley.**

5. Enjoying life

Frost Valley is a fun place to be! We balance hard work with time to play. We see value in relaxation, stress management and recreation.

- Tobogganing / tubing
- Ice fishing / broomball
- Basketball / volleyball / tennis
- Square dances
- Arts and crafts
- Opportunities for quiet time alone

6. Eating well

Frost Valley supports the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, which recommends eating a variety of foods.

We serve:

- Full salad bar at lunch and dinner
- Alternatives to highly sugared breakfast cereals, including hot and cold cereals.
- Fresh fruit continuously available
- Real juice and low-fat milk
- Homemade whole-grain breads

With this in mind, we request that you discourage your students from bringing junk food.

Frost Valley Environmental Education Typical Day



Typical Day at Frost Valley

- 7:00 Rise & shine
 - 7:45 Send one table waiter per table to the Dining Hall for set-up
 - 8:00 Breakfast
 - 9:00 Return to lodging, clean-up, dress appropriately for the morning
 - 9:30 Morning Class Period begins
 - 11:30 Morning Class Period ends
 - 11:45 Table waiters to Dining Hall
 - 12:00 Lunch
 - 1:00 Return to lodging to prepare for afternoon...and/or field time (supervised by school)
 - 1:15 First Afternoon Class Begins
 - 3:00 First Afternoon Class ends, bathroom break
 - 3:15 Second Afternoon Class begins
 - 5:00 Second Afternoon Class ends
 - 5:15 Table waiters to Dining Hall
 - 5:30 Dinner: hot meal and salad bar
 - 6:45 Field time, or back to lodges (supervised by school)
 - 7:30 Evening Program (this time is somewhat flexible)
 - 9:00 Snack (usually in dining hall)
 - 10:00 Lights out
- Our quiet hours are from 10:00PM to 7:00AM

Typical 3 Day Schedule

(four and five day schedules add in addition day two's)

Day One

- 11:00 Arrive, move in
- 11:30 Orientations
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:15 1st Class
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 2nd Class
- 5:00 Break
- 5:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Evening Program
- 10:00 Lights out

Day Two

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:30 3rd Class
- 11:30 Break
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:15 4th Class
- 3:00 Break
- 3:15 5th Class
- 5:00 Break
- 5:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Evening Program
- 10:00 Lights out

Day Three

- 8:00 Breakfast
- 9:30 6th Class
- 11:30 Break
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Depart for Home