VISITING STAFF TRAINING

The Ebersole Environmental Center (EEC) operates on a license from the State of Michigan, Department of Consumer and Industry Services. To comply with rules and regulations governing this license, all visiting staff members must meet the following criteria and participate in a pre-program training session.

*Staff to student ratio must be at least 1 to 10 during the day. Ratio for handicapped students must be at least one adult for every three students. A person must be eighteen years of age or older to serve as a staff member and be counted in this ratio.

* The lead teacher and the Ebersole Center must evaluate all staff members in regard to character, emotional stability, health, ability, and experience. In order to make this possible all staff members must have a completed personnel record on file with the Center's main office two to three weeks prior to arrival at the Ebersole Center.

*Instructors in any potentially hazardous activity (archery, canoeing, skiing, low ropes course) must have specialized training and be approved by the Ebersole Center planning specialist.

Staff Training Meeting Itinerary:

Each visiting staff member must receive the pre-program training outlined in this guide. They must also sign in at the training meeting and are given a copy of this guide to take home.

Greetings, sign in. Introduce group leader, teachers, and other staff members. Have everyone to introduce themselves.

Show Ebersole video, *Environmental Education and Group Building*. This will familiarize staff members with facilities, natural features, and basic camp philosophy. The lead teacher will be able to answer questions that arise after the video. Any questions that can't be answered at that time will be forwarded to the Ebersole Center staff for a response.

The camp's philosophy and objectives can be summarized in its mission:

> "To inspire learners of all ages to embrace nature, to engage their minds, and to acquire an awareness of responsible stewardship for our planet."

Visiting staff members are responsible for direct supervision of students. At no time should children be unsupervised. Visiting staff must work together to ensure student health, safety, physical and emotional well-being.

All students must be screened during their first 24 hours at the EEC. As part of this screening visiting staff must observe the children's physical state, paying particular attention to potential contagious diseases and possible abuse. The Michigan Child Protection act requires that cases of suspected abuse be reported to the proper authorities, in this case, the lead teacher for your group or the Center Director.

Any child leaving camp for any reason must have a release form signed by the adult picking them up. The camper health form on file in the Ebersole Center office notes any restrictions as to whom the child may be released. Before leaving camp this health form must be checked and a release form completed.

Behavior management
Behavior management should be pro-active. In other words, activities and situations should be structured to minimize opportunities for negative behavior and encourage positive behavior.
A camper shall not be deprived of food or sleep, shall not be placed alone without staff supervision, observation, and interaction, or shall not be subjected to ridicule or threat.
A camper shall not be subjected to corporal punishment, excessive physical exercise, or excessive restraint. Simply stated, physical pain must not be used as a method of behavior management.

Developmental Needs
Each school has a list of developmental needs for the student population served in that school. This is available from the school administrator and should be presented so all staff have a better understanding of the campers they will teach.

Camp policies and operating procedures
A detailed list of camp policies and operating procedures is included in, *A Volunteer for all Seasons, A Handbook for Visiting Staff*. This handbook is available in the "forms" section of our website at http://ebersole.lansingschools.net . Printed copies are also available by request at the Center office. The following operating policies should be covered at this time:

Medicines: All prescription and non-prescription medicine must be under lock and key at camp. For children under the age of 18 this medicine must be locked in the Center clinic. Adult staff members may keep their personal medicine locked in their staff room or in the clinic.

Do not medicate anyone other than yourself while at camp. The Center health officer holds regular office hours four times a day. Children or adults needing attention should be seen at that time.

Food: The Center serves three meals each day and an evening snack. Adult staff members serve as good role models for the children and encourage them to enjoy the food, share with each other, and clean up after the meal. Two or more adult staff members will be asked to take the role of dining hall supervisor during the camp stay.

If group members bring snacks with them to camp, please work with the group leader to make storage arrangements since all food must be kept in the dining hall.

Beverage Machines: There is a soda and a juice machine located in the main lodge of the Ebersole Center. These machines are for use by adults only, not students, unless arrangements have been made prior to camp with the lead teacher. The Ebersole Center does not have change available for these machines. Visiting staff should bring one-dollar bills if they are planning to purchase beverages from these machines.

Cleaning: Ebersole Center fees are kept low partly because groups clean up after themselves and leave the Center ready for the next group. Staff members should approach cleaning in a positive way with the children and it should not be used as a

punishment. Campers are encouraged to "leave it like they found it or better". Not only do children learn how to work together, they learn good camping ethics that will prepare them for other experiences.

Natural Areas: A goal of the Ebersole Center is to keep natural areas undisturbed. The boardwalk trail system is not only convenient to get through wet or muddy areas, it also protects the environment by limiting the disturbance of people passing through. We ask that visitors follow these guidelines:

Stay on trails unless accompanied by a naturalist.

Enjoy nature and study it closely, but please don't pick plants, leaves, flowers or seeds at the Center. A famous naturalist saying explains our philosophy, "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints".

All animals at the Center are wild. Encourage students to recognize the fact that they are guests in the animal's home and should treat all animals with respect. If an animal appears tame it may be sick and students should leave it alone.

Please do not go on the lake, winter or summer, without permission from the naturalist. A certified lifeguard must accompany anyone under 18 years of age if they go on or into the water.

Communication: An Ebersole Center staff member is available to help your group 24 hours a day when you are in camp. Group members are encouraged to go through their lead teachers if they need help from the Center staff.

The Center's phone lines go directly to the Lansing area. However, long distance calls out of the Lansing area cannot be dialed directly. If long distance calls need to be made, we suggest that groups or individuals purchase a phone card prior to coming to the Center or plan to call collect. Adult cell phone use is unrestricted and is often a good long distance solution, but we ask that children do not bring phones to camp.

Since it is important that phone lines remain available for any incoming emergency calls, we ask that personal calls be limited to about ten minutes per person. The Center's normal business hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., all calls after 5:00 will go to voicemail.

After business hours parents can call the Center's Emergency Number at (517) 755-5004. <u>This number is for emergencies only.</u>

You can send and receive letters at camp. Each group has a mailbox in the main office.

The Center does not have computers available for individuals to use.

Emergency Devices: The Center has a fire warning system that includes smoke and heat detectors as well as manual pull stations. Should the fire alarm system be activated, horns will sound and everyone should leave the building they are in and meet at the volleyball net in front of the dorm they are staying in. Everyone should be accounted for

immediately and the group leader would work with the Center representative to initiate a search for any missing persons.

The bell, located between the main lodge and classroom building, is rung as a signal to return to the bell for further instructions. The bell can be heard on all parts of the Center property and will be rung continuously for a minute to signal an emergency return to camp.

Specific assignments and duties.
Every staff member has a job, immediate supervision of campers, but there are several additional roles for various staff members. In addition to teaching or assisting in a class, there is also the role of dining hall supervisor, dorm or departure day cleaning supervisor, or a variety of other important jobs.

Each staff member must know what his or her responsibilities will be. Lesson plans are available for those who have teaching duties. Guidelines are available for many of the other specific jobs at the Center. Please review the written general description for the role of all visiting staff members is included in the *Volunteer for all Seasons Handbook*.

Lines of Authority.
Each visiting group at the Ebersole Center has a designated lead teacher. This person serves as the primary decision maker and supervisor for other visiting staff. The Ebersole Center will at all times have an acting camp Director who is responsible to ensure licensing rules are adhered to, and in this sense is the authority for both visiting and permanent staff. The Center Director is responsible to a supervisor within the Lansing school district and visiting school groups may also be responsible to administrators in their home district.

Contact numbers for follow-up and further questions:

Volunteer staff members should contact their lead teacher or designee. Group planners are encouraged to contact the naturalist assigned to their group, the Ebersole Center office at the local Lansing number, (517) 755-5000 or by email ebersole@lansingschools.net.

Conclusion and thanks. The program wouldn't be possible without volunteer staff, teachers, or community members. Thank you.