

Dear First Grade Families,

Your child will soon be taking an all-day field trip to Kensington Metropark as part of our life science study.

Kensington Metropark is an excellent site for learning about animals in winter, especially the birds that do not migrate. The trip is designed to expand on the classroom material and allow children to see animals and signs of animals up close. We will spend part of the morning walking the trails to observe animals, their tracks, their homes and other clues to their presence. The highlight of this time on the trails is hand feeding the birds, primarily chickadees. In addition to outdoor activities, there is usually a presentation indoors by the Kensington Nature Center staff and time to explore the exhibits. In the afternoon we visit the Kensington Farm to observe farm animals. An Environmental Education staff member and some volunteer naturalist guides will accompany the class on the field trip. This will allow us to be in small groups in the field.

In the event of dangerously severe cold, high winds or hazardous driving conditions, the trip will be canceled. However, a cancellation decision will normally not be made until the morning of the trip. Therefore, we ask that you send your child fully prepared on the day the trip is planned. We will generally conduct trips even in very cold weather because we are able to spend time in the heated Nature Center.

Clothing: dress for the weather! Please make sure that your child is dressed adequately for the field trip in terms of the weather and other conditions. Please follow these guidelines to prepare for the trip:

- **Boots** - insulated, waterproof WINTER boots (not rubber rain boots)
- **Socks** - layered (be sure there is still wiggle room for toes)
- **Pants** - snow pants over regular pants or long underwear is preferred. Less ideal options include: regular pants with long underwear; or sweat pants with waterproof shells.
- **Shirts** - layered, ideally a t-shirt with long underwear or fleece over top
- **Coat** - winter coat
- **Mittens** - two pairs of mittens, ideally wool mittens inside a windproof/waterproof shell
- **Hat** - waterproof hat with ear covering. Less ideal is jacket hood (tends to be cumbersome)
- **Neck warmer or turtleneck shirt** – less ideal is a scarf

Lunches: keep it simple with minimal packaging. A “low-impact” lunch is easy to eat on the bus and has minimal packaging for disposal. Avoiding peanuts and tree nuts is appreciated, as the bus transports children from across the district who may have nut allergies. Boxes, containers, etc. will be brought home for recycling/reuse. A small bottle of water helps off-set thirst. There will be no food or drinks available for purchase during the trip.

Equipment: extra equipment is not necessary. Equipment such as binoculars, cameras, etc. can get damaged, wet, lost, etc. Students also tire of carrying extra items in the field.

Chaperones are welcome on the field trip! Special responsibilities include helping students listen on the bus, helping with lunch and bathroom breaks, and keeping student groups together on the trails. Unfortunately, younger siblings may not attend environmental education field trips. To avoid confusion, chaperones should plan to ride the bus.

We look forward to facilitating this meaningful outdoor learning opportunity for your child! Thank you!

AAPS Environmental Education - www.a2schools.org/ee

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