

Wilderness School

How to Enroll a Student on an Expedition Program



Who to Contact:

All correspondence regarding student enrollment should be directed to the Wilderness School Enrollment Office.

Phone: (860) 653-8059

Email: bonnie.sterpka@ct.gov or aaron.wiebe@ct.gov

1. Referring Agent:

All applicants will work with a Referring Agent to enroll. Referring Agents can be social workers, youth counselors, juvenile justice workers, mental health providers, mentors, school teachers, counselors or coaches. Referring Agents should assist in determining student appropriateness by sharing information with the Wilderness School on the Background Interview Form. Referring Agents also help the applicant with setting goals and understanding the Student Contract Agreement.

Referring Agents assess:

- The applicant's understanding of the program and motivation for attending the course
- The transition and relationship between the Expedition and Follow-Up Program
- A review of the Student Contract, Basic Expectations (Behavioral Policies, Basic Safety Rules and Rules for Participation), Procedures for Student Removal From Course for Behavioral Policy Violations, and Contract Agreement
- The applicant's medical history, including physical difficulties presenting potential problems on the course.
- The applicant's behavioral history, including history of sexual offense, violent offense, severe emotional disturbance, running away.
- Psychiatric history and current medications
- Court history
- Substance abuse history
- The applicant's developmental appropriateness

2. Watch the Expedition DVD:

The Wilderness School Expedition DVD ([DVD Presentation](#)) is available online for all prospective Wilderness School applicants and is **required** for all Expedition applicants prior to beginning the application process. The [DVD](#) may also be received on an individual disk by contacting the Enrollment Office as above.

3. Complete a Telephone Pre-Screening:

All potential applicants are **required** to be screened against the Wilderness School Enrollment Policies (See Policy section of website) by a telephone pre-screening with the Enrollment Office. Parents, Referring Agents, Social Workers or providers may call to complete the Telephone Pre-Screening. This should be completed prior to completion of application materials. At the end of the Telephone Pre-Screening there will be a better understanding of the best option for the youth.

4. Application Requirements:

Please complete the required application materials. To ensure enrollment in a desired Expedition course date; Referring Agencies and families should submit Application Materials as early as possible. When courses are fully enrolled, new applicants will be placed on an alternate list in the order that Application Materials are received. Agencies and families will be notified as space becomes available.

5. Orientation Programs:

Attending an Orientation Program is **required** for acceptance to a 20-Day Expedition. 5-Day and 7-Day Expedition applicants may attend an orientation as requested by the student, family or agency; or as deemed necessary by the Enrollment Supervisor. Orientation Programs take place at the Wilderness School base camp and are intended to provide an opportunity to gain hands-on experience of courses at the Wilderness School. Orientations will include discussion, group adventure activities designed to introduce applicants to Wilderness School programs and expectations, an introduction to the wilderness setting, as well as direct experiences involving course equipment and food. Instructors spend time individually with each applicant to review the Student Contract and to assess motivation and readiness for the expedition. Applicants should be prepared to demonstrate an ability to respond positively to instructor supervision, safety procedures, peer interactions and environmental factors such as weather, insects and terrain.

6. Student Acceptance:

Applicants will be accepted to the Wilderness School 20-Day Expedition Program upon successful completion of the Orientation Program. 5-Day and 7-Day applicants will be accepted at the completion of the screening process. Letters of acceptance will be issued to the applicant, family and Referring Agent.

Guidelines for Completing Enrollment Forms:

Application Materials for Parent/Guardian to complete:

- *Student Application*: Parts I-VI (4 pages). Please note: parent/guardian signatures are required in Parts II-VI.
- *Wilderness School Enrollment Process Checklist* – A guideline for Enrollment (does not need to be submitted). Be sure to communicate desired course dates to the Enrollment Office.

Medical Forms needed:

- Please submit a copy of a recent (within 2 calendar years of course start date) school physical (State of CT Department of Education, Health Assessment Record) – 3 pages (please include Part I, medical history to be completed by parent/guardian).
Link to form: https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/licensing/camps/har3_2017.pdf
- *Non-Prescription Medication Authorization (OTC)* – to be completed by Pediatrician for any non-prescription medication (ibuprofen, Tylenol, vitamins, other) that the applicant may need during the expedition.
- *Prescription Medication Authorization (PEDIATRIC)* – to be completed by Pediatrician for any prescribed medication that the youth will need.
- *Prescription Medication Authorization (PSYCHIATRIC)* – to be completed by Psychiatrist/general prescriber for any Psychotropic medication that the youth will need.

Application Materials for Referring Agent to complete:

- *Referring Agency Background Interview Form*
- *Student Contract* – to be completed by Referring Agent/Social Worker, youth and parent/Caregiver.

(Additional Application materials may be required as needed during the application and screening process – forms will be supplied to Referring Agents and Parent/Guardians when needed)

