

Whole Earth Nature School

Cabin Assignments Policy

Whole Earth Nature School strives to provide safe, inclusive, and supportive overnight accommodations for students. We acknowledge the need for designated cabin space for boys, girls, and gender-expansive students, and to ensure our camps are accessible to all. Our staff are trained to support students in navigating shared spaces respectfully, and we encourage the use of private spaces, such as single-stall restrooms and showers, for private changing areas. In most cases, campers who feel anxious at first are able to relax quickly and go on to have a fantastic week!

Definitions:

1. *Gender: Refers to an individual's self-asserted deeply-held sense of their gender, which may differ from the sex assigned to them at birth. Gender includes boy, girl, non-binary, etc.*
2. *Transgender: Encompasses individuals whose gender does not align with the sex assigned to them at birth.*
3. *Non-binary: A gender that falls outside the traditional binary classification of male and female, encompassing a range of gender expressions and pronouns.*
4. *Gender Expansive: Individuals whose gender identity and expression transcend traditional societal norms and expectations associated with their assigned sex at birth.*
5. *Sex assigned at birth: the label, male, female or intersex, that is assigned by a doctor at birth based on genitals.*

As a contractor for Oregon public schools, Coyote Outdoor School adheres to Oregon Department of Education's [Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance for Schools](#) including Federal Title IX Civil Rights Law and Oregon Civil Rights Law (ORS 659.850, 659.855 and 659.860). Additionally, Whole Earth Nature School must adhere to the Oregon Equality Act, which prohibits workplace discrimination based on gender identity.

Gender-based Cabin Assignments

At Whole Earth Nature School, we respect the gender identity asserted by the student. Whole Earth will not require that staff or students disclose their sex assigned at birth.

For Coyote Outdoor School programs, teachers will be making cabin assignments based on their own expertise in pairing students in their class and a student's gender. Students that identify as a boy will be placed in boy cabins. Students that identify as a girl will be placed in girl cabins. Students that do not identify within the gender binary or are intersex will be placed with male or female cabins according to their friend group, in a non-binary cabin, or assigned by their school teacher or guardian.

For Summer Overnight Camps and FOREST overnights: Due to smaller group size, gendered groups may not always be possible and site leadership may create sleeping groups based on

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criteria other than gender. If guardians prefer their student to only share sleeping space with others of their same gender, this must be communicated to staff prior to camp.

Students and guardians are welcome to ask questions and discuss concerns with the respective Director of the program. The Director may offer clarification or creative solutions to individual concerns. If a camper or guardian is unsure which cabin assignment will feel most supportive, we encourage you to contact us to discuss options. Based on the discretion of the Site Director, alternative options may include only participating in day portions of the program if the parent/guardian arranges transportation, staying in a private yurt, changing cabin assignments, or staying in a specific cabin with a family member, friend, or teacher.

All overnight programs include the use of supervised shared sleeping spaces with a parent/guardian chaperone, high school volunteer, or Junior Counselors (JCs). Cabin supervisors are assigned to cabins based on their asserted gender and receive training pertinent to maintaining a safe, comfortable, and harmonious cabin environment. All chaperones over the age of 18 receive a background check.

We recommend you prepare your child for overnight camp:

1. Talk to your child about respectful behavior in a cabin and review our overnight policies.
2. Brainstorm ways students may access private space for changing or other personal needs.
3. Provide an opportunity for your child to practice by having a sleepover with a friend or family member.
4. Plan for a family member to be available to pick up your child should they need to come home.

(Updated policy approved by Board of Directors 3/13/25)