

Preparing Students to be Outdoors

Using the outdoors as a classroom has many inherent benefits and many teachable moments. With all the benefits, there are also added circumstances to deal with, such as inclement weather, temperature conditions, and ticks. Saint John's Arboretum appreciates your help in educating your students about how to be outdoors safely before their field trip. Together we can make their field trip experience a safe learning environment!

Weather:

- Appropriate clothing is the key for any weather conditions! Remind students that the less they are worrying about being cold or hot, the more fun they will have and the more they will learn while on the field trip!
- We recommend leaving students that are not dressed appropriately for the weather, especially in inclement conditions, back at school if possible.
- General appropriate clothing in any weather includes:
 - Sturdy tennis shoes or boots
 - Long pants
 - Layers that can be easily taken off and tied around waist
- Specific weather clothing recommendations:
 - Cold/Snow: hats, mittens, scarf, winter coat, snow pants, winter boots, clothing in layers
 - Rain: rain coat or poncho, hat
 - Hot: light colored and light weight clothing

Ticks:

- Both deer and wood ticks are found at Saint John's. Tick-borne diseases are spread through deer ticks, not wood ticks.
- Deer ticks must be attached for at least 24 hours before they will transmit disease.
- Minnesota Department of Health recommends that when going outside in areas that ticks are found, wear long pants, tuck pants into socks, spray with up to 30% DEET-based product (with parent permission), and checking frequently for ticks.

Sun Exposure:

- Sunscreen is recommended, especially for the summer months.
- Water bottles are allowed on the trip, but please keep in mind the limited restroom availability along the trail. A number of teachers have water available for on the bus at the end of the field trip.

Poison Ivy:

- Most of the areas the field trip will travel in do not have poison ivy; however it is a good outdoor skill to be able to identify poison ivy.
- Characteristics to look for include: 3 leaflets; the middle leaflet as a longer stem than the other two; woody stem.