



**Davis Hill Elementary School  
Wachusett Regional School District**

80 Jamieson Road  
Holden MA 01520  
508-829-1754  
FAX: 508-829-2057

Mark Aucoin  
Principal

Jay Norton  
Assistant Principal

To: Parents and Guardians of the Fourth Grade Class  
From: Mr. Aucoin, Principal  
RE: Update on our trip to Ferry Beach Ecology School  
Date: April 5, 2010

**UPDATE AND FACT SHEET ON FERRY  
BEACH TRIP 2010  
GRADE FOUR**

Over the last four years as principal of Davis Hill, I have seen benefits brought to so many of our students who have attended one of Davis Hill's Adventure Camps. In the past it was Sargent Center in New Hampshire, and now it is Ferry Beach Ecology School in Saco, Maine.

As a principal, and more importantly as a father of a child who attended two years ago, I know that my wife and I gave much thought, and asked many questions, regarding why a school commits itself to this experience. So many of the concerns that you ask of me are the same my wife and I had. Our daughter did attend and had a great time. At the parent meetings we have heard overwhelming positive comments regarding the success of past trips and the commitment of our staff.

I have enjoyed the conversations that have been generated at our parent meetings and have heard a few questions asked over again. Included with this memo is a review of the most frequently asked questions as well as a non-affiliation letter from the Ferry Beach Ecology School.

Finally, I want to thank all the parents who attended the Ferry Beach Fund Raising meeting last week. Your attendance and help is greatly appreciated. I also know that not everyone can attend meetings. If you could not, please contact the Ferry Beach Fund Raising Committee and offer your help on one of the many events we have planned.

Their next meeting is this Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> in our school's cafeteria from 6:30 – 7:30pm.

If you have any further questions, please call my office any time.

Sincerely,

Mark Aucoin, Principal



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**1. What is taught at Ferry Beach Ecology School?**

Each morning and afternoon students attend 2-hour long lessons; evening lessons are an hour and a half. After students arrive on Monday morning, their first afternoon lesson is the ABC's of Ecology, during which the themes and concepts for the week are introduced. Subsequent lessons may include Astronomy, Abiotic Adventures, Beach & Dunes, Marine Lab, Salt Marsh, Forest, Nature at Night, Tide Pools, and Student Choice. The final lesson, Connections, is an overview of the relationship between humans and their environment, with an emphasis on sustainability. Between lessons students have a chance to relax in their dormitories, enjoy supervised play on the beach, and recreate on the volleyball and basketball courts and playground. Students eat three meals each day, family-style, in the Dining Hall. Meal time also serves as a lesson time with skits and performances that are based on ecology.

**2 What is a typical day like at Ferry Beach?**

(The Group in charge of supervision indicated in parentheses)

7:00	Students wake up (Teachers)
8:00-9:00	Breakfast (All)
9:00-9:30	Recreation Time (Teachers)
9:30-11:30	Morning Lesson (FBES, Ferry Beach Education Staff)
11:30-12:30	Free Time (Teachers)
12:30-1:30	Lunch (All)
1:30-2:00	Rec. Time (Teachers)
2:00-4:00	Afternoon Lesson (FBES)
4:00-5:30	Free Time (Teachers)
5:30-6:30	Dinner (All)
6:30-7:00	Rec. Time (Teachers)
7:00-8:30	Evening Lessons (FBES)
8:30-9:30	Clean-up for the night, showers, reading, getting ready for bed (FBES)
9:30	Lights out (Teachers)



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**3 What are the meals like?**

- There is a full time chef who prepares three meals a day. The menu is kid friendly and there is always plenty of food. The children also may go into the Dining Hall during the day and evening to get fresh fruit, at any time. Special diets are also attended to and are coordinated by our nurse and the camp in November prior to going.

**4 How are medical/ emergency needs met?**

- A nurse is on site 24 hours a day while camp is in session and a hospital is about five minutes drive away. The camp staff carries radios and your children are always supervised by adults. They may not enter a cabin without a teacher present.

**5 Where do the kids sleep?**

- There are heated cabins with rooms that sleep up to six children. Each child has either an upper or lower bunk of a bunk bed. There are lamps in each room and each floor has its own private bathrooms and showers. Teachers and Administrators from Davis Hill stay on each floor of the cabins in their own separate rooms. They are in charge of the kids overnight.

**6 Is Ferry Beach Ecology School owned by a church? Is the property owned by a church?**

- No. The Ferry Beach Ecology School is not owned by a church. It is an independent, non-profit educational organization. If you surf the web and look up Ferry Beach, the first hit happens to be a church. The Ferry Beach Ecology School leases the Ferry Beach Park Association summer conference facility campus for the spring and fall. I have included a letter of non-affiliation along with this memo.

**7 What provisions are made for the students who choose not to participate in the experience?**

- Lesson plans are developed on an individual basis depending on each student's educational needs, and the strength and weaknesses of each child. A parent of a child staying here would be meeting with me to ensure that his/her needs are being met. These plans are developed by students' teachers in October and are taught by a certified teacher on staff at Davis Hill. The plans would cover the core curriculum that meets grade level expectations for that time of year.

**8 Do the lessons at Ferry Beach meet the Massachusetts State Frameworks?**

- Absolutely. The administrative staff of Ferry Beach includes former school teacher **Meg Edstrom** who taught 3rd-5th grade for three years in Maine. Meg's teaching certification and experience in the classroom required an ability to deliver and guide curriculum under the auspices of No Child Left Behind standards. Meg, along with our Residential Program Director, aligned all of our current lessons to meet individual state learning standard requirements. Download MS Word documents of how FBES is meeting the NCLB standards from their web site at <http://www.fbcs.org/docs/index.html>.

**9 What if my child has a food allergy or other medical?**

Our nurse at Davis Hill communicates often with the nurse at Ferry Beach who works closely with the food service to accommodate the dietary needs of children with food concerns. As each child and allergy is unique, they deal with them on a case by case basis. They will work with you and your child to ensure that their dietary needs are met. Children with other health needs such as asthma and diabetes are also closely watched and their needs met.