

What does it mean to be an Ebersole Chaperone?

Let me begin by saying “thank you” for providing our students with this wonderful opportunity. The fact of the matter is that camp simply cannot happen without the commitment and dedication of our chaperones. A trip to the Ebersole Center is more than just a “field trip” or a night or two at “camp”. It is an immersive experience with the potential to be one of the most significant events in a child's 13+ year educational journey. As you consider this opportunity, we have tried to layout the expectations for our chaperones so that you know exactly what you are committing to from the beginning. This guide is organized as a series of questions and answers. If you have questions that are not addressed here, please feel free to reach out to your lead teacher for additional information. Thank you in advance!



What is my role as an Ebersole Chaperone? An Ebersole Chaperone is a leader. Expectations from fellow staff and chaperones will be high, but when the job is done well, the personal rewards can be great. Be prepared to be the type of chaperone that you would like watching your own child. Note that all chaperones will have to complete the LSD's Volunteer Background Check (fill out a form) prior to arriving at camp. Below are some of the specific expectations for Ebersole Chaperones:

- Be familiar with (and follow) the Center's policies and procedures (you will learn these during your on-site orientation when you arrive);
- Actively supervise camp activities, help campers follow the rules, and stay safe;
- Participate, actively, in all camp activities with the campers;
- Be friendly, enthusiastic, and fun to be with;
- Be considerate of campers' medical and/or emotional needs; and
- Act as a role model for campers.

What are the physical demands of an Ebersole Chaperone? The majority of camp activities take place outdoors on our beautiful 158-acre campus. Chaperones do not have to be in supreme condition, but should be prepared for physical activity that may be more than an average day at work. Below are some specific physical requirements:

- Walking around the camp facilities is a requirement of chaperones. Although some accommodations can be made for those individuals who are less mobile, those positions are few since most of our activities occur at various sites throughout the 158-acre campus;
- Overseeing (with support) a small group of campers for upwards of 8 to 10 hours a day. Note that our days typically begin around 7:00 AM and end around 10:00 PM; and
- Camp activities are rarely cancelled due to weather. As such, chaperones are required to be able to manage the elements (spring and summer heat, rain and mud, fall and winter cold, bugs, etc.) in order to spend most of the day outside.

Who makes a great Ebersole Chaperone? Really any person (over the age of 18) that loves working with kids and likes the outdoors! We often have family members (mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, aunt, uncle, cousin, older brother or sister, etc.) that like to chaperone with their family member's class. Male chaperones are particularly great because we often struggle to males.

Will I be supervising/leading students on my own? Usually no. We make every attempt to pair our chaperones with another chaperone, school staff member, or Ebersole staff member. However, there may be times when you are asked to supervise a small group of students on your own for a short period. In terms of leading activities, again, we make every attempt to design the itinerary in such a way that it minimizes the

amount of time that chaperones are responsible for leading camp activities. If, however, you have a unique skillset or experience (and desire) that makes leading an activity feasible or possible we will try and accommodate if possible. In most cases, our chaperones are the second or third adult in each group.

Will I be responsible for the behavior management of campers? At the Ebersole Center we have very clear and specific guidelines for managing camper behavior in a positive manner. The primary person responsible for behavior management is the lead teacher for your trip, with the Ebersole staff serving in a supporting role. As a chaperone, we would expect that you are able and comfortable redirecting negative camper behaviors in a positive manner, in order to ensure that campers remain engaged and safe while participating in camp activities. We would also expect that you act as a role model for campers through your own active engagement in camp activities.

Will I be grouped with my family member (e.g., son/daughter)? The honest answer is ... it depends. Each lead teacher has a slightly different approach to this question and sometimes the circumstances dictate that family members that are chaperoning be separated, and at other times they can be grouped together. What we have found is that camp is a great place for students to build independence, and while for some students' it is nice to have a family member chaperone at camp it is often not necessary for them to spent every moment together. In fact, in some cases campers tend to behave better and remain engaged longer when they are not grouped with a family member. Each case is a little different so, the short answer is that there are no guarantees that a chaperone will be grouped with his/her family member.

Are there costs for being an Ebersole Chaperone? Because having a strong cadre of chaperones is so important to the overall camp experience, in most cases, we do not charge chaperones anything for attending camp. In most cases, chaperones are able to participate in all camp activities and will receive 3 meals a day (plus a snack) ... at no cost. We know that for many chaperones they will be taking time off of work or time away from home. We recognize that sacrifice and want to do our part to make sure we are not further burdening chaperones by asking them to pay for the experience. It is our small way of saying "thank you" for their time and commitment to the campers.

Am I allowed to bring my cell phone? Of course, as an adult, you are allowed to bring your cell phone. However, cell service is very limited. Verizon is really the only carrier that consistently works at camp and most students are not allowed to bring their phones. We ask that if you do bring your cell phone please plan on limiting your use of the phone so that you can focus on building relationships with campers and making sure that the campers that are in your care remain engaged and safe.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and fully understand the role of an Ebersole Chaperone. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the lead teacher for your group, or to the Ebersole Center Director at 517.755.5001 or ebersole@lansingschools.net. Thank you!

Signature

Date