

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY - LORADO TAFT FIELD CAMPUS**  
**OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Purpose:** The purpose in conducting the Outdoor Education Program is to provide outdoor learning experiences and hands-on extensions of the classroom to school children in the Northern Illinois University service area.

**Contracts:** A completed and signed contract must be returned by the school system within one month after dates are offered. If no response is received by then, the date may be offered to another school.

**Cancellations:** If cancellation is necessary, the school must notify the Outdoor Education Coordinator at Taft Campus as soon as possible. The following cancellation charges will apply: zero to forty-five days prior to scheduled arrival, 50% of the total anticipated bill; forty-six to sixty days prior to scheduled arrival, 25% of the total anticipated bill; more that 60 days prior to scheduled arrival, 10% of the total anticipated bill will be charged.

**Pre-Planning the Trip:** A staff member from Taft Campus will meet with school personnel to jointly plan the program. This can take place at Taft Campus, at the school, or via phone/email. The plan will contain activities and experiences appropriate for the students, the facility, and the staff. **A final count of students and staff/chaperones by gender must be given to the Taft Coordinator at least one week prior to the trip.**

**Accessibility:** Lorado Taft Field Campus supports the Americans with Disabilities Act and will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of students or adults. Most of the buildings and two of the dormitories are accessible. As part of this Act, prior notification is required.

**Staffing:** The school will provide a minimum of one adult for each 10 students. The adult staff are expected to be present at the field campus at all times and be responsible for the supervision of students during the outdoor experience including classes, meals, dorms, and breaks. School staff are responsible for the supervision of sick or injured students in the dormitory when bed rest or immobility is necessary. School staff must accompany all students who need to visit the nurse in the clinic.

**Teaching Responsibilities:** Taft staff provide one-half of the instruction during the day and evening programs while the school staff teach the other half of the day and evening programs.

**Programs:** Taft offers a wide range of activities in many outdoor subjects including, water study, team building, forest ecology, pioneering, Native Americans, birds, mammals, weather, astronomy, night hikes, campfire, geology, orienteering, survival, and crafts. Most activities have lesson plans that can be sent for school staff to use.

**Arrival Time:** Please do not plan to arrive earlier than 10:30 AM on the first day.

**Instructional Periods:** Day programs are scheduled for 9:00-11:30 AM and 1:00-5:00 PM. Evening Programs are scheduled from 7:00-9:00 PM. (This includes snack.)

**Program Safety Considerations:** A Personal Flotation Device must be worn whenever a student wades into the river. Only Taft staff may lead teams course activities.

**Group Size:** There will be 12-15 students in each group. Class size should not exceed 15 students.

**Meals:** Meals are served family style in the dining hall. Typical meal times are 8:00 AM, noon, and 5:30 PM. Students will set the tables, bring the food to the table, and clear dishes at the end of the meal. On Wednesdays, or change over days, departing schools will eat an earlier lunch and arriving schools will eat a later lunch. Evening snacks are provided. Other food or snacks (gum, candy, soda, etc.) are prohibited.

**Facility Use:** Collecting plants or capturing animals, except under the supervision of a Taft staff member, is not allowed. Any activity that might cause excessive environmental impact is prohibited. The cost of repairing excessive damages to facilities or grounds will be charged to the school.

**Fires:** Campfires must be in established fire rings or fireplaces. Campfires and the pioneer class fire must be attended at all times. Campfires should be only as big as needed for the activity. If no one can stay with the fire, it needs to be extinguished with water or by spreading the coals.

**Quiet Hours:** Quiet Hours are between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

**Health Forms:** Health forms are to be completed and signed for each student and mailed to the nurse at Taft Campus at least one week prior to arrival; two to three weeks in advance is preferred.

**Nurse:** Taft Campus has a nurse that is on duty from 7:30 AM to 3:00 PM. She will package all medication and dispense morning and noon medications. School staff will dispense evening medications.

**Alcohol and Smoking:** Alcohol is not allowed on Lorado Taft Field Campus. The presence of alcohol or its use by school staff will result in the removal of the school from the Taft program. As required by Illinois state law, smoking is prohibited on any public university campus, including Lorado Taft Field Campus.

**Firearms:** NIU maintains a weapons and firearms free campus. As an NIU Campus, no one may possess a weapon or firearm on the premises of Lorado Taft Field Campus, even if one has a FOID card and/or concealed carry permit. Weapons and firearms may be transported into our parking area, but must remain locked and out of sight, in a case, in the vehicle. Exceptions to this policy can be made, with prior approval, for weapons or firearms used in connections with a weapons safety course or weapons education course. For questions regarding this policy, please call the NIU Department of Police and Public Safety at 815-753-1212.

**Departure:** School groups are expected to assist in facilities clean up before departure. The Taft Specialist will assign a place for luggage to be assembled on the morning of departure. All luggage should be moved to the assigned location by 9:00 AM. The school contact person will meet with the Taft Specialist to fill out the "End of Stay" report to verify student and adult numbers, additional charges if appropriate, and billing information. Departure time is usually no later than 1:00; a later departure time can be prearranged at the time of contracting.

**Bus Parking:** All buses must park in the service road behind Heckman Dormitory or in the main parking lot out of the way of through traffic.

**If you have any questions concerning these policies and procedures, please, contact Melanie Costello at (815) 732-2111, ext. 112.**

**For additional information, look on our web site [www.niu.edu/taft](http://www.niu.edu/taft).**