

## Outdoor Education: Personal Gear

Choosing equipment for your son or daughter's Outdoor Education Program can be confusing and expensive. This doesn't need to be the case, and these few tips should make assembling the correct gear a fairly painless process.

You may already have some, or all, of the gear that is necessary, particularly if an older sibling attends Hillbrook, or you are an outdoors type family. In addition, Hillbrook supplies students with some of the basic equipment requirements. Feel free to talk to one of our Outdoor Education staff before going out and spending a lot of money on equipment that may not be necessary or appropriate.

If it does come to purchasing gear remember the old adage "you get what you pay for". Quality outdoor gear is worth the outlay and will last a long time if looked after properly. Hillbrook has negotiated a discount from some suppliers on the equipment that may need to be purchased.

Please remember that the right equipment could mean the difference between a comfortable, enjoyable experience in the outdoors and one that isn't. Below is a basic gear list that Hillbrook recommends, with some things to consider. The items in **bold** are essential.

<b>Broad Brim Hat</b>	Hats are compulsory on all Outdoor Education days & camps. Students need a broad brim hat that has a drawstring for windy days. As these are essential, if students don't arrive with one, they will be provided one to keep and parents billed.
<b>Sleeping Bag</b>	Remember that on senior camps, sleeping bags will need to be carried on overnight or multi-day walks in a backpack (along with tents, food, clothing, etc) so <b>packed size</b> is important. Getting a sleeping bag with a winter, or 0 degree rating, will ensure comfort.
Sleeping Bag Liner	Triples the life of your sleeping bag and reduces the need for sleeping bags to be laundered. An old double sheet folded in half and hemmed along two sides is a good alternative.
<b>Sleeping Mat</b>	For comfort and insulation, a must. For year 7 Camp, any will do. If you are buying one - <b>pack down size matters</b> , so either go for the basic non-inflating blue foam rolls, or a small self inflating style one that folds in half longitudinally before it is rolled.
<b>Day Pack</b>	This should be at least 35 litres in volume, have 2 padded shoulder straps, a waist belt and be fairly robust. Can his/her school bag do the job? <b>NOTE:</b> Hillbrook can supply the larger expedition backpacks for senior programs. You will not need to purchase one of these for future years if you do not wish to.
<b>Raincoat</b>	An essential. A good raincoat is at least mid-thigh length, has an attached hood and is actually waterproof (not all are!). Ponchos and Ski Jackets are not suitable.
<b>Thermal Wear</b>	Made from polypropylene, merino or equivalent. These are light, warm and quick drying. The older cotton style thermals are not suitable. These are important for camp and activity days.
<b>Long Sleeve Shirt</b>	This is important for sun protection. It must have long sleeves and a collar.
<b>General clothing</b>	<b>Cotton should be avoided – remember in the outdoors “cotton is rotten”.</b> Quick dry clothing packs smaller in bags and (obviously) dries a lot quicker after water activities, rain, etc. PE shorts are perfect – any other shorts must be this length or longer.
<b>Footwear</b>	No need to go out and buy expensive boots as a comfortable pair of sturdy runners will do the job. For canoeing and swimming, students are required to wear covered footwear, an older pair of runners is most suitable ( as long as they still fit comfortably!)
<b>Personal Cutlery</b>	For meal times; a plate, bowl, cup, knife, fork, spoon & tea towel, preferably in a carry bag. Plastic or metal are best, something that won't break easily. <b>No sharp knives</b> , they are provided at meals.
<b>Water Bottle</b>	Water bottles are a must! 2 x 1litre soft drink bottles are hard to go past, and they are better than most alternatives.
<b>Head Torch</b>	Head torches are compact and allow the students' hands to be free for the many activities they will encounter on camp.
Watch	As students are not allowed to use their mobile phones during Outdoor Education activities, which can make keeping track of time difficult. A cheap, waterproof watch is highly recommended.
Camera	Not essential, but as mobile phones are not allowed on OE activities, a shockproof, waterproof camera is recommended for recording all those wonderful memories.
Tent	On the junior camps, <b>tents are provided</b> by Hillbrook. Students may wish to buy a tent for the senior camps, and if you are considering buying one now, make it a small "hiking style" tent - compact and lightweight, suitable for 2-3 campers. Look for vestibules, seam sealing and ventilation.