



DEAR ESAR FAMILIES,

Welcome to our King County Explorer Search & Rescue (ESAR) community. My name is David Dunphy and I am the ESAR Youth Coordinator. My role is to help support our youth members (18 years and younger) as they develop their leadership skills and abilities to self-advocate as full members of our search and rescue team. Below you will find helpful information for families to discuss regarding this volunteer opportunity. Please review this information along with all the basic training information and evaluate whether ESAR involvement is suitable for your child. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

I look forward to meeting you soon,

David Dunphy
youth@kcesar.org

*I have reviewed the Youth Member section and Volunteer Packet with my Youth and I authorize them to participate in King County Explorer Search and Rescue.

Parent or Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

** I have reviewed the Youth Member section and Volunteer Packet with my Parent or Guardian and agree to communicate and advocate for my needs, as understood and agreed upon with my Parent or Guardian, while participating in activities affiliated with ESAR.

Printed Name _____

Youth Member Signature _____ Date _____



KING COUNTY EXPLORER SEARCH & RESCUE

PARENT PACKET

YOUTH MEMBERS

King County Explorer Search & Rescue is proud to offer our youth members meaningful growth opportunities by integrating them fully into search and rescue operations. Our mission and training activities offer unique challenges that require creativity and leadership. They also require significant professionalism and responsibility. In all regards, we have the same expectations of our youth members and hold them to the same high standards as our adult members. As such, the level of accountability and maturity required to participate in ESAR may not be appropriate for every adolescent. Youth members and their parent or guardian should review the ESAR handbook together. Afterwards, they can decide if participation as a whole within ESAR and/or particular activities that ESAR supports may or may not be a suitable fit for them.

SELF ADVOCACY

Rules and responsibilities are the same for youth and adult members in our organization. We expect youth members to have conversations with their families prior to beginning training and self advocate for the condition and capacity in which they and their guardians have agreed for them to participate in ESAR. Members are not required to participate in all missions; they self select depending on availability and desire. If a youth member responds, we assume that this was with the permission of the parent or guardian.

COMMUNICATION

ESAR strives for open and clear communication with our members. For our youth members, this includes both what they want and what they have agreed to with their parent or guardian.

- We expect youth members to be able to communicate questions/concerns/limitations on missions and training.
- As part of our youth development mission, We want to encourage youth to communicate directly with the training staff and unit leadership. We don't mind trainees using parents' emails, or CC'ing parents on communications, but the youth members should be authoring emails and be the one to make phone calls.
- When Parents have questions or concerns the youth coordinator can help direct them.

SELF LIMITING

We expect members to understand the limits of their training and personal experiences. Care should be taken to not put themselves in situations in which they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. As an organization, we expect that members make these decisions for themselves and that everyone's limits are different. While as an organization we will make risk-management decisions, the ultimate decision lies with the individual. Thus at any point a person can decide they do not want to do a task, we call this self limiting. This can be harder for youth members but is imperative. They are in an environment that is challenging them to continue and they will frequently be teamed with adults. It is important that they feel empowered to say that they need to stop, change, or modify an assignment. Conversations between youth members their guardian's expectations ahead of time about situations in which they might need to live up to the expectations of their guardians and self limit. Thoughtful preparation will increase youth confidence and make them better equipped to decide if and when to self limit in the field. Our organization has a culture of members, team leaders and unit leadership supporting self limiting.



Potential List of Conversations

General

- Self advocating and asking for clarification and help
- Knowing your limits, reporting to team leader when you feel unsafe
- Responding during school hours or other commitments
- Communicating with other adult volunteers through text messages or social media outlets
- Limited cell phone communication during missions
- Weather, slippery slopes and other inherent hazards during wilderness travel

Transportation

- Transportation to missions, who drives and how many people can be in a vehicle
- Returning from missions
- Late night missions
- Carpooling with other members (adult and youth)

Overnight

- Co-ed sleeping arrangements
- Late night missions
- Overnight on missions

Missions:

- Type of missions: (Trail, walk-aways, evidence searches)
- Body Recoveries
- Environmental hazards (cold, wet, snow, rock fall etc)
- IST (incident support team) information resource.

***every family will decided upon their own preferences in regards to the above examples. If you would like more information about this list we can connect you to other ESAR parents or you can talk to the youth coordinator.*

SUPERVISION

Due to the dynamic nature of search and rescue training and mission activities, there may be times when youth members will not be directly supervised by an adult. In general ESAR organizes volunteers into teams of two or more which may consist solely of youth members or any combination of youth and adult members. Teams may also be co-ed. More information about team composition requirements during training can be found in the Orientation Packet.

TRAINING

You can learn more about our training program at our website link below. Training is physically and mentally demanding. Youth members will spend a significant amount of time without direct adult supervision. After reviewing the information below and attending our course A, which parents are welcome to join, you will have a better understanding of the training process and what to expect.

Outline <https://www.kcesar.org/recruiting.html>

Orientation packet https://www.kcesar.org/siteassets/ESAR_TrainingPacket.pdf?



ABUSE PREVENTION:

ESAR does not allow or tolerate abuse or harassment of any kind, for any reason, and follows best practices to help prevent abuse from occurring. ESAR members are background checked by the King County Sheriff's Office, and our training staff receive additional training in identifying and preventing abuse. During training, as much as possible, we organize members of similar age and identified gender in the same groups. Our organization has an established reporting and investigative process of all allegations of harassment, abuse or breach of our code of conduct and standard operating procedures.

SOCIAL OUTINGS AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

In addition to ESAR training and mission activities, youth members can elect to participate in outings. These are often organized through our partnership with the YMCA of Greater Seattle or other local partners. This also includes participation in our youth advisory committee. To get connected to these opportunities email youth@kcesar.org

WHO TO CONTACT:

We are always willing to answer questions. Please reach out:

Youth Coordinator	youth@kcesar.org
Director of Training	training@kcesar.org
Director Of Operations	operations@kcesar.org
President	president@kcesar.org