



JUNIOR DOCENT TEACHER HANDBOOK 2023

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Welcome to the Junior Docent Program!

Junior Docents at The Hermitage is a superb adventure! Not only will students learn facts about the daily lives of children on a plantation, they will have the fun of sharing their knowledge with visitors from all over the world. Children share stories, tell jokes, answer questions, and provide an excellent visitor experience. This program has been offered by The Hermitage for thirty years and it remains one of the most popular field trip opportunities. Visitors to The Hermitage regularly comment on how the students have enriched their visit.

Scripts and stations are designed with a variety of student abilities in mind. There is a role for everyone in Junior Docents.

The program was extensively updated in 2021, with a goal of strengthening some stories and interactions. Teachers who have done the program before will notice some modifications from previous years' scripts. The language was adapted to help students understand the experiences of their historic counterparts—enslaved and free. **Please discontinue the use of any handbook or scripts before the 2021 handbook.**

The coordinating teacher is responsible for making sure the procedures and rules are understood and followed. Please copy and distribute the handbooks to each teacher who is directly involved in the program.

Please read the handbook carefully and reach out to the staff with questions at any time!

Parents and Chaperones

Parent/Chaperone Tickets

Chaperones are defined by The Hermitage as those adults responsible for the students during the field trip. This includes teachers, aides, paraprofessionals, and parent volunteers. Chaperones **must always stay with the students** and are expected to assist Hermitage Educators in managing group behavior for the entire visit. One free chaperone is awarded for every ten students on the field trip. Teachers and other school staff count towards this free number. Bus drivers are always free. All chaperones will receive an identifying sticker which allows Hermitage staff to monitor student safety.

Parents are defined as those adults who accompany the group but are not necessarily responsible for any of the students beyond their own child. Their assistance in managing groups is appreciated but not expected. Beginning in fall of 2023, Parents will not be able to take the Mansion tour with the students. Parents, siblings, and family members are welcome to purchase a Grounds Pass online or upon arrival for \$20.

Permission Slips

The Parent/Chaperone Information and Permission Slip (last page of this document) must be sent to each child's parent or guardian. Please stress the importance of understanding how the program works and the rules of participation. Parents must understand and accept our guidelines before consenting to their child's participation. Any parent who has a problem or concern with any part of the program should discuss his/her concerns with the teacher before the field trip day.

The permission slip includes a photo waiver. This waiver allows a representative of Andrew Jackson's Hermitage to photograph the student as they perform their part in the program. These photos may be used for a variety of purposes, such as educating future Junior Docents. The permission slip must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the teacher. The teacher will give them to the Education Department staff on the day of the field trip. Even though you may have your own school permission slip, our form is required for participation in the program.

Preparing for the Field Trip

Assigning the Scripts

Thirty scripts have been provided, and each one corresponds with a specific station on the grounds. It is very important for teachers to assign the best student for each station. Teachers know their students' personalities and abilities and will make the most appropriate assignments for the various stations.

All students must have their parts memorized before coming to The Hermitage. Please practice at school and at home. One teacher mentioned she has her students perform their speeches at a school assembly to give them an audience to practice on!

Here are a few practical tips for assigning stations:

- Assign no more than two students to each station.
- Consider assigning two students to Stations 20-24. These stations are the furthest away from the Mansion.
- Confident and outgoing students are especially good for Stations 4, 5, and 18. Station 5 (Mansion Porch) and Station 18 (Alfred's Cabin) should be your best public speakers or storytellers.
- The student at Station 30 (War Road) will make the *last* impression on our guests. He/she should have a friendly personality and speak well.

Script Delivery

The Hermitage has an official interpretation, written by historians, curators, and educators. Students should recite the scripts as written. Please do not allow the students to add any additional information unless it has been pre-approved by the Education staff.

Public Speaking Tips

- Students sharing a station should divide the script in half or take turns doing the whole script. Many of our elderly visitors have trouble understanding children speaking in unison.
- Students may share their name in the introduction. However, do not allow students who are dividing a script to introduce a second person in the middle of the recitation.
--Correct examples: "Hello, I'm Sue (begin script)," or "Hello, we're Sue and Tom. We'd like to tell you about the Kitchen."

Student Accommodations

No child will be excluded from the program because of developmental or physical needs! Over nearly thirty years, we have accommodated students with wheelchairs, nonverbal autism, and other challenges.

The List of Stations (Starting on pg. 7) has marked specific stations with an asterisk to indicate which stations are recommended for children with accessibility needs, but the Teacher has the final say on student placement. Wheelchairs can be placed along any of the paved paths and in several grassy areas. Although children in wheelchairs can be placed at any station on the property, a few stations are a little more accessible than others. Students who rely on a Speech Tablet or other Augmentative or Alternative Communication Device (AACD) can program their device with their script and present it to visitors.

No child will be excluded from the program because of language difficulties! An ESL or non-verbal/limited-verbal student can be placed with another student and say a small portion or few words at the end or beginning of the script. He/she may only say, "Good morning," "Welcome," "Hello," or "Thank you." A sincere and friendly welcome to The Hermitage is just as important as a well-delivered speech. AACDs can help in this case.

No child will be excluded from the program because of their personality! The extremely shy child can be placed in the same manner. Place this person with one who is more outgoing. Both children will benefit.

No child will be excluded from the program because of their race or ethnicity! Junior Docents will talk about the presence of enslaved workers on the plantation and other issues that challenge our audience. If a student has hesitations about their script or their assigned location due to their race or ethnicity, we will partner with the teacher to find the situation that best suits that child.

Junior Docent Attire

The Hermitage's Historic Interpreters wear formal attire when they speak to the public. Junior Docents follow their example by wearing nice, neat clothing and a special, souvenir button.

Girls should wear:

- Long pants, skirts, or dresses. Clothing should be clean and tidy.
- Comfortable dress shoes, boots, white canvas shoes, or sneakers are permissible
- No shorts or flip-flops
- Hair should be clean and tidy. All styles are welcome.

Boys should wear:

- A solid color shirt with a collar (short or long sleeves, dress shirt or polo type shirt).
- Long pants (dress pants preferred, jeans with teacher's permission)
- Comfortable dress shoes, boots, or sneakers are permissible
- No shorts or flip flops.
- Hair should be clean and tidy. All styles are welcome.

Preparing for Weather Conditions

Field trips happen rain or shine. However, safety will always be our priority. We reserve the right to cancel field trips when the threat of severe weather or lightning is present. Hermitage Educators will remain in close contact with Teachers if rain is called for and will make every attempt to reschedule.

For unseasonably cool weather, we recommend:

- Additional layers of clothing such as thermal underwear, long-sleeves, heavy tights, sweaters, or jackets
- Coats, gloves, or scarves as needed

For unseasonably warm weather, we recommend:

- Clothing with short sleeves
- Skirts or dresses for the girls
- Light fabrics for boys' pants
- Water bottles are permitted at their stations

For rainy conditions, we recommend:

- Poncho or rain jacket
- Umbrella

Field Trip Day!

Arrival

Arrivals can be a bit chaotic and noisy. Kids and adults are excited and ready to get the day going and so are your Hermitage Educators! Observing the following steps can make this part go as smoothly and quickly as possible:

- Buses should pull up to the breezeway located at the Visitor Center. Do not allow the students to unload until directed by a Hermitage Educator!
- The coordinating teacher should step off the bus and meet the Hermitage Educators who will be waiting. He or she will be directed to the Ticket Office to check the group in.
- Hermitage Educators will board the buses to welcome the school group and review the Museum Manners with students.
- Students will unload and form lines according to their group assignment.
- Lunches should be unloaded at time of arrival and can be stored at the picnic table area located adjacent to the Education Building. Chaperones should be ready to assist.
- **All backpacks should remain on the bus.** School personnel with medical or other necessary supplies will be permitted to carry in a backpack, tagged by the Educators. Backpacks of any kind will not be permitted inside the Mansion itself. The staff at the Mansion will assist with this.
- Hermitage Educators will divide the groups according to the day's itinerary. Once the coordinating teacher gives the go-ahead, Educators will direct them to start their visit

Behavior

Students are representing their school and The Hermitage. Good behavior is expected of all students for the entire visit. Junior Docents are seen by all visitors, and they must project the best possible image. Children who do not behave properly at their stations or break the rules will be removed immediately and returned to the teacher to supervise for the remainder of the time.

Please review the following Rules for Students before arriving:

- Speak loudly and clearly
- Do not leave your station without a chaperone's permission
- Stand up the entire time. Do not sit down or lean against fence posts, trees, buildings, etc.
- No candy, gum, or food allowed at the stations (only bottled water)
- Do not accept money from visitors. Please say, "No thank you."
- Do not end the script with "Do you have any questions?"
- Stay at your station until a Hermitage staff member picks you up.

At the Stations

This is the fun part of the field trip! Junior Docents are placed in their designated station by Hermitage Educators for approximately one hour. This is their opportunity to shine! Parents and chaperones are welcome to move around the property to see the students, but they should not interrupt tours to take photos or remain directly beside the Junior Docent. Occasionally, parents or grandparents arrive at The Hermitage after the field trip begins. If they know their children's station name, it is much easier to direct them to the right spot.

Children often get a little nervous when faced with public speaking. Here are some good, practical tips to share with them. We will review them before taking them to the stations.

A good Junior Docent:

- Waits until the visitor is in a comfortable distance to begin talking. This way the visitor can hear.
- Speaks to visitors while standing up! It is disrespectful to talk to visitors while sitting, leaning, or slumping. Students observed doing this will be asked to return to their teacher.
- Enjoys sharing knowledge with visitors.
- Lets a visitor walk away if they don't want to listen your speech. They might be short on time or have trouble hearing. It is NOT because you are doing a bad job.
- Does not end the script by asking, "Do you have any questions?" Students might be stumped with questions they can't answer.
- Has the right to refuse to have their picture taken by a guest. Visitors like to do this because they think the students look nice and did a good job. But if a student is uncomfortable or not allowed to have their picture taken, they may ask the visitor not to do so.

Conclusion

Hermitage Educators have set a very specific schedule for your group so that we can accommodate other Junior Docents groups on the same day. We are paying attention to the schedule! At the conclusion of Stations, Hermitage Educators will retrieve students from their stations. **Please do not assign parents to pick up the students!** The students will be assembled for parents and chaperones to take a group photo. The location of the group photo (usually on the Mansion back steps) will be announced before students are taken to stations. After the group picture, the students will be led back to the Education Building where they will have a few minutes of wrap up. Each student will receive a scrapbook packet to write down fun facts about their field trip experience. The student will then resume the rest of the field trip as scheduled: lunch, tours, etc.

Junior Docent Stations

Review pages 3 and 4 of this packet for recommendations about assigning stations. Teachers: if you have done this program in the past, please pay attention to several changes to station names and numbers!

Stations marked with ** are designed for children who have special needs OR can easily accommodate students with mobility devices.

Station 1 – South Fence Entrance

Welcome to The Hermitage! Today you will hear many stories about this farm and what a child's life was like growing up here. Andrew Jackson bought 425 acres of land here in 1804, before he had any children. At its peak in the 1830s, the farm had grown to over 2000 acres. As you approach the carriage driveway, you will see many new Eastern Red Cedar trees that were planted to replace the ones destroyed by a tornado in 1998. Please continue to follow the path. Thank you.

Station 2 - Carriage Driveway

Many dignified guests such as Sam Houston, James K. Polk, and Martin Van Buren visited The Hermitage. This is the carriage drive they used. The trees help explain the meaning of the name "Hermitage." Hermitage is a French word that means "Secluded Retreat." Visitors would continue along the curving path to the Mansion. Please continue to follow the path. Thank you.

Station 3 – Orchard

Look off to the fields on your right as you walk along this path. It's likely the Hermitage fruit orchard was here. Receipts of the time tell us the Jacksons purchased apple, plum, and peach trees for the farm. They could make their own cider, jams, and jellies. In the springtime, the rows of trees would be a blur of fragrant pink and white blossoms.

Station 4 - Mansion Waiting Area (Demonstrate toy while talking.)

More than 100 free and enslaved children grew up at The Hermitage and all of them had at least a little time to play. Most of their toys were simply made of wood, metal, string, and paper. Popular games for kids included marbles, dominos, jacks, and this toy, called "Jacob's Ladder." This toy is called "Jacob's Ladder," and it would have been popular during their time period. Would you like to try it?

Station 5 - Mansion Front

Rachel Jackson chose this location for her home, but she never saw the mansion as it looks today. It was built in the Federal style between 1819 and 1821, and Mrs. Jackson died in 1828. After a fire in 1834, the house was rebuilt in the present Greek Revival style. When President Jackson retired, he returned to this home and lived here with his son, daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren until his death in 1845. I hope you enjoy your tour of the mansion.

Station 6 – North Fence Entrance

In 1834, the Mansion caught fire. Its cedar roof was very dry from lack of rain, and strong winds caused the fire to spread from one corner of the house to the other. The entire second story and parts of the first story were burned completely. Three-year-old Rachel Jackson told her grandfather that the fire burned up all her clothes and almost burned her pet parrot. After the fire, a metal roof that can withstand fire and water was put on. Thanks for coming!

Station 7 – Mansion Kitchen

Because of the heat from cooking and the risk of fire, the kitchen was separated from the rest of the house. The cooks had to start working at dawn to have the main meal ready later in the day. Betty, an enslaved person, served as the head cook for over fifty years. Enslaved children were responsible for carrying wood and water, chopping vegetables, and cleaning up. Food was cooked in the fireplace, and fruits and vegetables were stored in the root cellar under the table. Thank you.

Station 8 - House Bells

Enslaved house workers lived close to the mansion and were on call twenty-four hours a day. If one of the Jacksons needed something, he or she turned a crank inside the house. This was connected to a wire strung through the walls that went out to the bells. Each bell was a different size, so its distinct ring could tell an enslaved person which room was calling. Enslaved children would be called to run errands for the family such as bringing drinks, delivering packages, or adding wood to the fires.

Station 9 - Smokehouse

There were no refrigerators at The Hermitage, so meat had to be preserved by salting, pickling, and smoking. The meat for the Jacksons and the enslaved families was cured in the smokehouse. About 25,000 pounds of pork were preserved each year, and every part of the hog was used except the "squeal!" Children were given the pig's bladders to play with, since they blow up like a balloon. Thank you.

Station 10 - Back Steps

This boot scraper was placed here to help keep the floors clean inside the mansion. Men would wipe the mud off their boots before entering the house. (Demonstrate.) The cellar was used as a cool place to store foods (show direction). Every year before Christmas, it was cleaned out so the annual shipment of goods from New Orleans could be stored there. Thank you.

Station 11 - Back Yard

When Andrew Jackson lived here, the back yard was a work area with lots of buildings that are no longer standing. Chores such as washing clothes and making soap and candles would have been done here. Children tended pigs and chickens who roamed freely in this area. Enslaved people gathered here to receive their weekly rations of food. Thank you.

Station 12 - Garden Gate

This is the original site of the garden. Andrew Jackson hired William Frost, an English gardener, to design a formal garden for Rachel when the mansion was being built. The bricks that line the paths were made on the Hermitage property. They were longer than ordinary bricks so they could be placed deeper in the ground to keep rodents out of the garden beds. Please enjoy the garden.

Station 13 - Center Garden

The Hermitage garden covers an acre of land. Mrs. Jackson loved the garden, and her favorite flowers were roses and violets. To my left, you'll see a row of herbs and spices which were grown to make home medicines, season food, and scent bath water. Vegetables were also grown in the garden. Thank you.

Station 14 - Garden Necessary

This brick shed along the garden fence is a bit of a mystery to Hermitage historians. When the Hermitage opened as a museum, there was no indoor plumbing available. This building served the bathroom needs of visiting tourists up until the 1920s but no one really knew the original purpose of the building or even when it was built.

Station 15 - Rachel and Andrew Jackson's Tomb

Rachel Jackson died suddenly on December 22, 1828, at the age of 61. Andrew Jackson described Rachel's heart disease in a letter to a friend. Three years after her death, this tomb was completed in her memory. Andrew Jackson wrote the message on Rachel's tombstone. It is made of Tennessee limestone. When Andrew Jackson died in 1845, he was buried next to his beloved wife. Thank you.

Station 16 - Family Cemetery

This small cemetery plot contains the graves of seventeen Jackson family members and friends. Buried here are Andrew Jackson's son and daughter-in-law, his grandchildren, and several of his great-grandchildren. Ralph Earl, the artist who painted so many portraits of the General, is also buried here.

Station 17 - Alfred's Grave

Alfred, a former enslaved person, served as the first tour guide when the mansion opened as a museum in 1889. He was born at The Hermitage and lived here his entire life. He had two children named Sarah and Gus. Alfred was about 98 years old when he died. Thank you.

Station 18 - Alfred's Cabin

This was the home of Alfred Jackson in the late 1800s, a former enslaved person who stayed at the Hermitage after the Civil War. In 1867, Alfred bought some of the General's furnishings, including one of his beds. He had to cut off the legs to get it in the cabin! Normally, 8-10 people lived in a cabin this size, and children slept upstairs in the loft.

Station 19 – Magnolia Tree

The Magnolia tree keeps its beautiful green leaves throughout the year. In late spring, it has large, white, sweet-smelling flowers. Andrew Jackson planted a magnolia tree from The Hermitage on the White House grounds in memory of his wife. There are several buildings for you to see in this area including Alfred's Cabin, The Springhouse, and the First Hermitage cabins. Enjoy your tour!

Station 20 – Yard Cabin

The stones here outline where a wooden yard cabin once stood. The cabin had one larger room and one smaller room connected by a brick chimney. The smaller room may have been an office, or it may have been used for living or working space for enslaved people. Several other buildings used to stand here behind the mansion, including a blacksmith's shop, a carpenter's shop, and a carriage house. Thank you.

Station 21 - First Hermitage Site

Welcome to the First Hermitage! This is where Andrew Jackson and his family lived for 17 years after he bought the property in 1804. These cabins have recently been opened to the public after being closed for over 50 years. Today you can step inside and see a glimpse of the past. Thank you.

Station 22- Jackson Farmhouse

When Andrew Jackson lived in this cabin, it was a two-story farmhouse with French wallpaper and nice furnishings. After the Jacksons moved to the new brick mansion in 1821, this house was converted to a one-story slave dwelling. When you step inside, you'll see the rooms that used to be the second story of the Jackson home. Thank you.

Station 23 – First Hermitage Kitchen

This cabin was built soon after Andrew Jackson moved to The Hermitage. The north room with its six-foot wide fireplace served as a kitchen for the Jacksons, and the other room housed the cook and her family. You can read more about the people who lived here and see some of their personal items on display in the cabin. Thank you.

Station 24-The Cotton Patch

Cotton was the main cash crop at the Hermitage. The pod that holds cotton is called a boll. Cotton was harvested close to Christmas time, once the bolls popped open. An enslaved adult was expected to pick between 200 and 300 pounds of cotton per day. Cotton bolls are dry and prickly and picking it is painful work. We plant a cotton patch here every year for you to explore up close!

Station 25 - Enslaved Garden

Tennessee's laws said enslaved people were to be given one quart of grain and five ounces of protein each day. But that is not very nutritious food for children, mothers, and people working fourteen or sixteen hours each day. The garden behind us is modeled after the plot of land given to the enslaved people to grow some of their own food. They would also use this food to make extra money at the local market.

Station 26 - Triplex

The foundation you see was once a triplex slave cabin that housed three families. As many as ten to twelve people lived in each room. Artifacts found in this area suggest that head seamstress, Gracy, lived at the triplex with her husband Alfred, the head waggoner. Gracy was bought by Andrew Jackson while he served as President in the White House. Lots of pins, buttons, needles, and sewing items have been excavated here. Thank you.

Station 27 – Icehouse

In 1993 a pit fifteen feet deep was found at this spot, leading The Hermitage to believe that this was the Icehouse. The ice was likely cut out of the Cumberland River in the winter in large blocks. The pit was used to store and insulate ice in order to cool food and drinks in the spring and summer. Thank you!

Station 28 - Well**

This student greets visitors on their way around the house. A polite smile and gesture toward the well would be great. If comfortable the student can say,

This is the Hermitage well! Thank you for visiting the Hermitage! *or* Please watch your step!

If you feel the student can do a little more, please modify to the following script:

This is the Hermitage well. It is over 26 feet deep. Historians are unsure when it was installed but their best guess is after the Mansion burned. Please watch your step! Thank you!

Station 29 – Mansion Back Door**

The kitchen and dining room can be seen down this way. Please walk to your left. This way, please.

Note: adapt as needed. A pleasant smile and a gesture toward the kitchen would also work very nicely.

Station 30 - War Road **

This alley of trees was created in 1914 by The Ladies Hermitage Association to line an entryway for automobiles (show direction). It was called the "War Road" because the trees came from battlefields associated with Andrew Jackson. Although most of the trees are original, some have been replaced over the years. This path will lead you to the mansion. Thank you for coming to The Hermitage today. I hope you enjoy your visit!

After the Field Trip!

Students will receive a packet to take home. The packet includes scrapbook pages to capture their memories, funny happenings and stories, information about the guests they encountered, and places to put pictures. Students will keep their souvenir buttons.

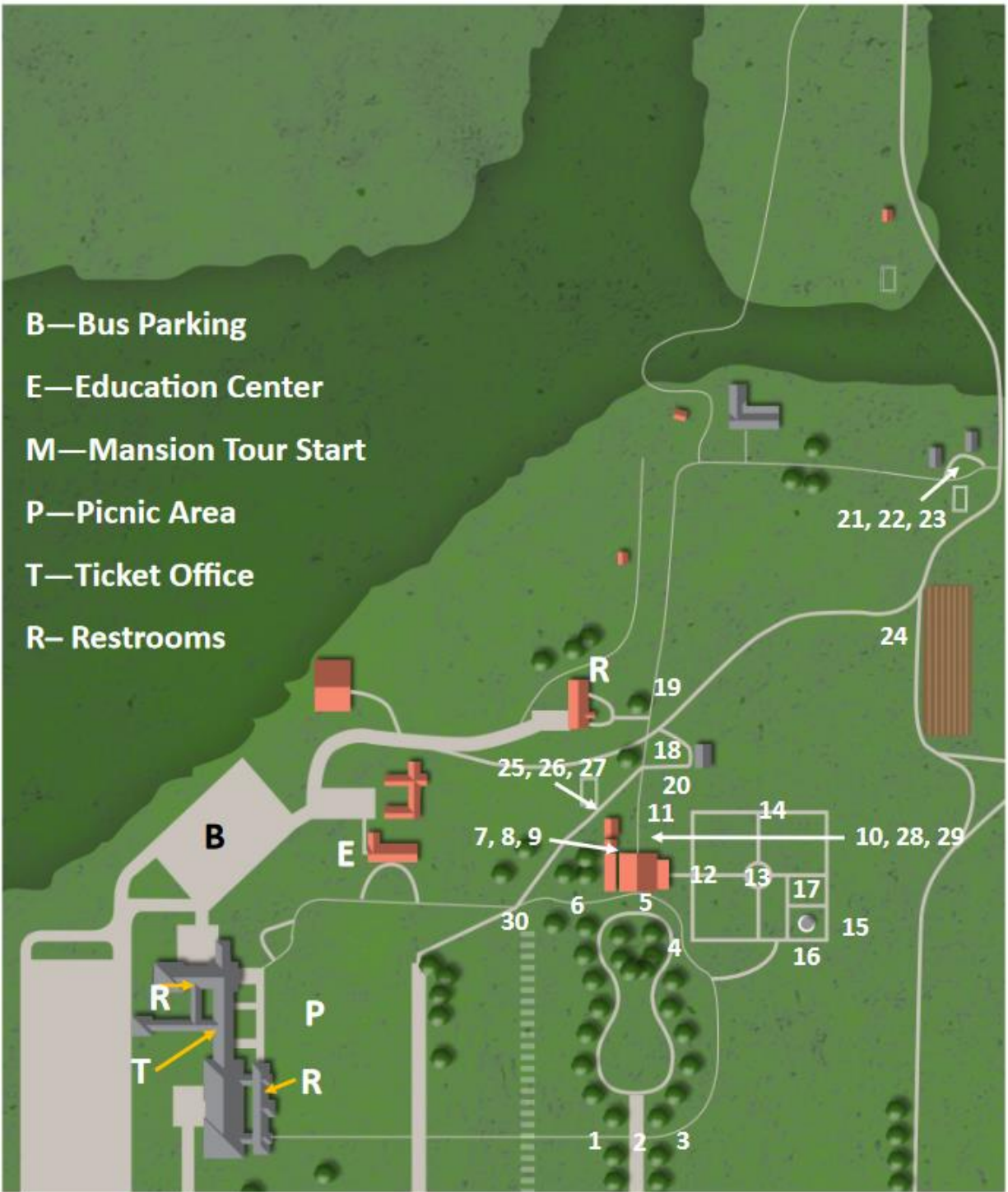
Checklist for Teachers

- _____ Read this handbook and send to additional teachers! Bring a copy with you on the field trip day
- _____ Distribute Parent and Chaperone Information to all parents and chaperones
- _____ Collect signed permission slips from parents and give to education staff on the field trip day
- _____ Require each student to memorize his/her part before arriving
- _____ Please designate chaperone placement in advance of your visit to avoid decreasing time onsite
- _____ Discuss the attire students need to wear. Check the weather forecast!
- _____ Pack your camera, permission slips, and itinerary

Helpful Items to Bring With You:

- Sunscreen
- Coolers to store lunches
- Bug Spray
- Picnic Blankets
- Bottled Water
- List of assigned stations and students
- Copies of all itineraries, maps, and invoices

For more information, or to reserve your class' program, please contact Schools Coordinator Sjobor Hammer at 615-889-2941 x241, or shammer@thehermitage.com.





Parent/Guardian Permission to Participate in Junior Docent Program

(Please return this form to your child's teacher)

Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Phone Numbers: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Relationship to Student: _____ Phone Number: _____

Does the student have any allergies, medical conditions, limitations or special needs:

Yes

No

If yes, please explain: _____

Is there anything else we need to know about your child? _____

Does the Hermitage staff have the right to photograph your child during the Junior Docent program? Images may be used for website and social media posts.

Yes

No

I have read and understand the *Junior Docent Handbook*. I agree to the rules of participation and give permission for my child to participate in the program.

Parent's Name (please print): _____ Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

School: _____

Teacher's Name: _____