



## Parent Handbook

## **Before choosing our program, please consider the following:**

Our environment is a child-led and nature based. We are not an institution type of school. Barefoot Barn Nature School is a homeschool assist program. Our primary focus is teaching your children fundamentals of life. Academics will be taught, however we are not following state guidelines or following time lines. The goal of our program is to socialize the children and grow their love for community and learning. Society has changed what school should be. It has molded parents into thinking what standard their child should be meeting. Our goal is to give our children the time they deserve to flourish and be a kid. We do not perform any daily reports, progress reports or grades. School should be a time for children to develop their own personal growth and form an environment belonging to them. Our program leads with the Waldorf and Reggio Emilia philosophy using hands on learning and play. We allow children freedom of choice, movement, and an abundance of outdoor time. Our children get to play in the mud, rain, sun, and water. They get to do yoga, dance, create, explore and be barefoot. We allow them to get dirty, experiment, play, and have fun! If you choose our program, these values should be important to you as well.

## **Our Mission:**

Bare Foot Barn Nature Schools goal is to guide each student on their path of development by providing a carefully prepared environment which nurtures the mind, body, and spirit of each child.

Goals:

- To awaken a love of learning, passion for knowledge, and joy of creativity in each student
- To support the development of independent, self confident learners
- To foster a strong sense of self, respect for others and an ability to work as part of a group
- To develop life skills
- To provide developmentally appropriate physical activities and healthy nutritional habits
- To encourage regular practice of self-reflection and nurturing the peace within

## **What is Barefoot Barn Nature School?**

Barefoot Barn Nature School is a homeschool assist program welcoming young minds from 3 -10 years of age. We believe all children are born with the passion to learn and the ability to thrive when given the opportunity to use their strong bodies, inquisitive minds and wild hearts. Our program incorporates curriculum, nature, play and life lessons to insure your children are ready to achieve all their dreams and beyond. Barefoot Barn Nature School is passionate in supporting the whole child, fostering a life long love for learning and a sense of wonder for the world.

Barefoot Barn Nature School combines the Reggio Emilia and Waldorf philosophy to our teachings.

In a Reggio Emilia education children are in need of a more holistic kind of education. It is based on the belief that every child is unique and will express their interests in many different ways. Creating a co-learning environment where teachers learn with the children and work in a lateral relationship as opposed to a hierarchical one. That partnership is also intended to encompass the parents and community of each child.

Reggio Emilia philosophy emphasizes the use of children's senses—sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell—to facilitate learning. As a result, Reggio Emilia classrooms differ from traditional ones, featuring large common spaces, natural elements, and a plethora of accessible and curiosity-sparking materials.

In Waldorf education, the learning process engages the head, heart, and hands—or thinking, feeling, and doing. Waldorf teachers nurture and engage each child through a curriculum and methodology that integrates academics, arts, and practical skills. Young children up to age seven primarily learn through their senses and imitation. Waldorf early childhood educators provide sensory-rich environments and play-based activities that encourage investigation, exploration, and imaginative development.

#### **Admission Policies and Procedures for Children (Ages 3-10):**

1. Children must be at least three years old by their start date.
2. Children should be toilet trained.
3. Children should not exceed ten years of age by the start date.

Every child undergoes a trial period and evaluation.

#### **Children with Special Needs:**

- Children with mild physical, mental, or educational differences are considered for admission. Reasonable accommodations are provided, provided they don't require significant changes to the program or pose risks to themselves or others.
- A recent diagnostic assessment by qualified professionals may be requested to identify the child's needs within a mainstream environment.
- Periodic assessments may be required during the school year and prior to re-enrollment to evaluate the child's progress and ensure the environment supports their developmental needs.
- Barefoot Barn Nature School reserves the right to determine if the environment can accommodate the child's needs independently, without outside opinions.

#### **Application Procedures:**

- Prospective parents are invited to visit the school website and campus for a tour accompanied by the child enrolling.
- A yearly \$250 registration fee is required for supplies and curriculum materials.

#### **Enrollment:**

- Barefoot Barn operates on a school-year basis, running from August to May.
- Enrollment is open throughout the year until capacity is reached.
- Families must provide a 60-day written notice if they wish to withdraw their child from the school. Early withdrawals are non-refundable without exceptions.

#### **First Day of School:**

- All required forms must be completed, including submission of an immunization record or exemption.
- Tuition payment plus the registration fee is due on the child's first day of school.
- Students are required to bring a filled reusable water bottle, packed lunch, and a labeled set of extra clothes.

**Tuition:**

- Tuition and registration fees must be paid via check on the child's first day of school. Subsequent tuition payments will be automatically deducted from the designated bank account on the 1st of each month.

**Nondiscrimination Statement:**

Barefoot Barn Nature School is committed to welcoming all students and families without discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability, in hiring, admissions practices, or any other form of access.

**Discipline Policy:**

Our disciplinary approach prioritizes redirection and positive communication, avoiding punitive measures such as timeouts or reprimands. Our goal is to listen, understand, and guide children towards appropriate behavior choices.

While our educational program emphasizes freedom of movement and choice within established limits, we recognize that some children may require a more direct instructional approach. Parents of children exhibiting impulsive or aggressive behavior may be advised to seek alternative educational environments.

In instances where external discipline is necessary, the following guidelines are observed:

- Ground rules and boundaries are communicated and reinforced from the child's first day.
- Inappropriate behavior is addressed promptly, and the child is redirected towards more appropriate actions.
- Problem-solving skills and constructive conversations are encouraged, with an emphasis on suggesting alternative behavior choices.
- Multiple disruptions will prompt the school to contact the parent to discuss the ongoing behavior. If the behavior persists, the school will collaborate with the parents to assess whether our environment is the best fit for their child.
- Barefoot Barn Nature School advocates and implements positive discipline, aiming for all children to feel accomplished, proud, and happy.
- The school reserves the right to decide whether a child can remain in the environment if behavioral issues persist, prioritizing the well-being of other children, teachers, and the school community as a whole.

**Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure:**

Drop-offs and pick-ups should be conducted promptly and quietly to maintain the flow of the environment. Parents are encouraged to respect the school's space and refrain from touching school materials during these times. Engaging in conversations with other parents should be done outside the school doors.

During drop-off, parents are to enter, sign in their child on the iPad, and escort them to their classroom/cubby or allow them to walk independently. For consistency, no child will be admitted after 9:20 am. In case of appointments or emergencies, parents should call the school to inform them of the expected arrival time.

During pick-up, parents are to sign out their child on the iPad, locate them in their classroom or outside, gather their belongings, and exit through the main entrance.

- Half-day pick-up is promptly from 12:25 to 12:35.
- Full-day pick-up is from 3:00 to 3:30.

#### **Water Bottle:**

Parents are required to provide a labeled, reusable water bottle for their child each day, filled with water only. Bottles should be cleaned and refilled at home. Children should be able to drink independently from their water bottles.

#### **Lunch:**

Lunches must be packed in a one-time, easy-open container like a bento box, allowing children to eat independently. Lunch boxes must be reusable and free from wrappers or trash. Lunches will not be heated or refrigerated. Parents may provide a thermos for hot lunches. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child's lunch is well-balanced and includes necessary utensils.

#### **Animals:**

Parents acknowledge and accept that our school environment includes animals accessible to the children, which may pose a risk of bites or scratches. If a child is allergic to a school animal, we will make efforts to keep the child away from the animal while ensuring the animal remains at the school.

#### **Ouchies:**

Parents understand that children may sustain minor injuries while playing at school, such as scraped skin, falls, bumped heads, or splinters. While teachers endeavor to monitor and address all incidents promptly, some may go unnoticed if the child does not cry out or approach a teacher. In cases of head or facial injuries or emergencies, parents will be notified immediately. Parents are encouraged to refrain from overanalyzing situations and instead ask their child about what happened. At Barefoot Barn Nature School, we teach children resilience by encouraging them to get back up after falling, recognizing that falling is a natural part of learning and growth.

#### **Messy & Play Policy:**

Parents agree that play is essential for children's development and acknowledge that children may get dirty or messy while learning and playing. Children will not be changed into new clothes unless necessary, so parents should dress them in attire suitable for free and comfortable exploration. Children may choose to go barefoot outdoors, understanding that this exposes them to various natural elements and potential minor injuries, but offers numerous benefits, including a connection with the earth and a sense of freedom.

#### **Weather:**

We engage in outdoor play regardless of weather conditions, but extreme temperatures may prompt indoor activities. In cold, rainy weather, parents should dress their child in warm clothing underneath rain gear. Children will get wet on rainy days and will only be changed if absolutely necessary.

**Parent/Teacher Communication:**

We encourage open communication between teachers and families, but request that daily interactions during drop-off and pick-up times be brief and respectful of the school environment. For non-urgent concerns or questions, email is the preferred method of communication, allowing the director to liaise with the teacher and respond accordingly. While children enjoy their days of learning and play, parents seeking detailed updates on their child's day are encouraged to ask specific, relatable questions their child can answer.

**Sick/Medicine Policy:**

Parents are responsible for conducting wellness checks on their child each morning. If the school contacts you to pick up your child due to illness, we request that you do so within one hour of receiving the call. If we are unable to reach the parent, we will begin contacting the emergency contacts listed on the registration form. Children will be sent home if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

**Fever:**

Children with a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be sent home and must remain home the next day for observation. They must be fever-free (temperature below 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication before returning to school. The same policy applies if a child develops a fever at home.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):**

Children showing signs of unusual eye discharge or irritation will be sent home and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they require a written evaluation and diagnosis from a doctor, specifying the type of conjunctivitis. If diagnosed with bacterial conjunctivitis, children must have received at least 24 hours of treatment before returning. For viral conjunctivitis, children may return as long as there is no discharge.

**Thick White, Green, or Yellow Discharge:**

Children with thick white, green, or yellow discharge will be sent home as it may indicate an infection. They must stay home the next day for observation and need a written evaluation and diagnosis from a doctor before returning. If antibiotics are prescribed, children may return after 24 hours of treatment. If the discharge is not contagious, a doctor's note specifying the diagnosis and clearance is required.

**Diarrhea:**

Children with two or more loose bowel movements in one day will be sent home and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they must be free from diarrhea for 24 hours with at least one regular bowel movement.

**Vomiting:**

Children who vomit will be sent home and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they must be symptom-free with no vomiting for at least 24 hours.

**Persistent Hacking Cough:**

Children with a persistent hacking cough will be sent home and must stay home the next day for observation. Before returning to school, they require a written evaluation and diagnosis from a doctor. If treatment is not required, a doctor's note with a diagnosis and clearance that it is not contagious is necessary.

**Lice:**

Children will not be readmitted until 24 hours after treatment and must be nit-free. The Director or a Teacher will evaluate and determine if the child can be readmitted.

**Common Cold Policy:**

Children with a common cold will be assessed individually, considering factors such as the child's developmental level and our ability to limit the spread of germs. We prioritize the health and well-being of all children and teachers. Parents are urged to consider the impact of their child's illness on others and refrain from sending their child to school if they are unwell. If a teacher deems a child unfit for school due to illness, parents will be contacted to pick them up.

**Vaccines:**

Appointments for vaccines should be scheduled after school or on non-school days. If a morning appointment is unavoidable, the child must stay home for the day. Vaccines may have side effects ranging from mild to extreme, including fever and discomfort.

**Medications:**

Medications will not be administered at school.

By signing this document, you acknowledge the entire Parent Handbook and agree to uphold Barefoot Barn Nature School's values, philosophy, and policies.

I, [Parent/Guardian Name] \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian of [Child's Name]  
\_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the school policies noted in the Parent Handbook.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read and keep this Handbook while your child attends Barefoot Barn Nature School.