

PARENT HANDBOOK



FAYETTEVILLE
NATURE SCHOOL

About Us

Thank you for choosing Fayetteville Nature School! We were founded in 2021 and are passionate about a quality, holistic elementary education for children.

Our Mission

The mission of Fayetteville Nature School is to nurture the next generation in an environment that balances academics with physical and mental wellbeing while learning in and with our natural world.

We believe a holistic education is one that balances academics with physical and social emotional health while supporting a connection to nature and fostering a respect for each other and for our environment.

Philosophy

At FNS, we value age appropriate academics as well as physical and social emotional health alongside a healthy respect for diversity, nature and environmental stewardship.

We PROVIDE GENTLE, EFFECTIVE ACADEMICS

We value gentle academics that cater to each child's needs.

We continually educate ourselves to provide a relevant and research-backed learning experience.

We CONNECT WITH NATURE

We value undirected time in nature.

We value nature lessons that strengthen children's understanding of how the natural world works, and we teach ways we can help and ways we hurt our environment.

We NURTURE CREATIVITY

We will partner with children to help them reach their potential.

We respect a child's unique perspective on the world and how it works for them.

We PRESERVE CHILDHOOD

We value ample "recess" or free time for children to be children.

We do not test to a standard, but to the child.

Accreditation

Our school is in the process of being accredited through Cognia. Accreditation through Cognia is built on research-based performance standards that give schools data and tools to make continuous and meaningful improvement. For more info check out

Cognia's performance standards here:

<https://www.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Performance-Standards.pdf>



General Policies

Hours of Operation

We are open from 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due by the 15th for our Grades Full Time program. Tuition is due by the Monday following Friday for Homeschool Friday program. You are welcome to pay by card or bank draft through Brightwheel, or check/cash given to a teacher at drop-off. Payments that are more than 15 days late will be subject to a late fee of 10% of tuition due.

Please note that Grades (full week) program tuition is annual, but divided monthly into 10 payments. So tuition will be consistent month to month.

In addition to standard tuition, our Grades program has two semester fees of \$200 each throughout the year. These are billed in September and March.

Closings

We are closed for holidays aligning with Fayetteville Public School closings and for 2 in-service days per year:

Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, Memorial Day
See Calendar for in-service days

Inclement Weather and Closing for Ice/Snow

We will go outside in the sun, rain and cold. Our school philosophy requires that children dress appropriately for the weather. Please reach out or see our [How to Dress Guide](#) if you have questions.

Thunderstorms or lightning will bring us inside. We will close for dangerous road conditions.

If inclement weather conditions prevent the center from opening at the regularly scheduled time, an announcement will be made through a group Brightwheel message. *We will align with the Fayetteville Public School system on inclement weather related decisions.* Please watch for announcements for closings when there is inclement weather.

Individual Educational Plan

As a private school in Fayetteville, Fayetteville Nature School has education referral resources available through the public school system. If you are concerned about your child's hearing, vision, or learning, please let us know. We will share concerns if we have them. FNS will provide space for onsite therapy sessions as needed. If your child is already receiving therapy, we will support any current plan.

Behavior Guidance

We use positive discipline to guide behavior interactions with students.

-Give consistent expectations.

-Connect before you correct.

-Be firm but kind.

-Encourage responsibility for actions and problem solving as opposed to punishment.

We are committed to guiding your child toward positive choices through acknowledging emotions and/or removing them from the situation. The use of physical punishment is never permitted, nor do we use degrading or embarrassing actions or words.

A parent/teacher conference may be requested to find a solution. If the problem continues, alternative solutions will be discussed.

Arrival

Students may arrive beginning at 8:30 a.m. Check your child in on Brightwheel. Please either walk your child in or ensure that they get into the fenced area. IF you need to drop off earlier, please look into before school care through our neighbors at Parkside Playschool.

Departure

Students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. Anyone picking up a child must be an approved pick-up AND one of the following:

- recognized by a staff member

- verified through message with parent

- show their I.D. to a teacher to confirm their identity if not recognized

If you expect someone new to pick up your child, please add them as a Brightwheel contact, communicate this through a Brightwheel message, and have them have their I.D. handy.

Late Pick-up Policy

In the event that a pick-up is unable to arrive by 3:30 for a child, the child will be checked in to our on-site aftercare. If not pre-planned, after care is \$10/day. Please let us know with as much notice as possible if you expect you will be late or need your child to go to aftercare.

Attendance Policy

Our school prioritizes mental health and gentle academics. Although we do not have a minimum attendance requirement, if your child is struggling making progress in their learning due to time out of school, we will initiate finding solutions that may include additional homework or extra work cycles during school. In extreme cases, if absences are detrimental to the child's education, we may suggest changing enrollment to Friday Friends or finding another program.

Brightwheel

Each child has their own Brightwheel account. This is an app we use for communication between FNS and families.

Meals, Snacks, and our Food Culture

As a school, we believe nutrition is paramount in human development. We value wholesome food that is free from preservatives, food dyes, and without flavors from artificial sources. We ask that you support our food culture by respecting these values when sending snacks or treats for the class.

Many families send lunch with their child. We have a fridge available. School lunch can be purchased from our neighbors at Parkside for \$5/day. We partner with our local co-op Ozark Natural Foods- to provide a wholesome organic snack each day. We are a Nut Aware, but not Nut Free facility.

Technology

We are a slow-tech school. We do not regularly use technology for our lessons. Occasionally, we bring out the projector for documentaries, movement videos or movie days. We understand that children may have plenty of exposure to technology outside of school so we choose to prioritize other ways to learn and play.

Pets & Visiting Animals

We love animals at FNS! We have dogs, cats, chickens, ducks and goats around the campus. If your child has severe allergies to any animals, FNS may not be a good fit for your family. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into FNS without first notifying and receiving permission from Administration. Visiting animals must have documentation of current rabies shot, if applicable, from a licensed veterinarian.

Programs

We offer 2 programs at our school:

Grades (K-5 Full Week) Program

A full-time, academic and nature-rich elementary education program

Homeschool Fridays

Fridays only - focused on nature studies, survival skills, and project based learning



Curriculum

The goal of our curriculum is to offer a gentle, holistic and eclectic education that honors each child's educational journey and our place in nature.

We reach our curriculum goals through:

- A thoroughly prepared environment
- Comprehensive concrete subject exposure
- Lessons on nature studies, environmental stewardship, and wilderness survival
- Hands on project based learning
- On site Farm & Garden program
- Community Field Trips
- Ample free play (recess)...we consider these outbreaks and time for big body movement essential to children's development and learning success

*Each child must have a signed liability waiver on file to participate in our Programs and Field Trips

Farm & Garden Program

FNS uses hands-on skills in our farm and garden program to teach science, math, and responsibility. We see life cycles, what plants and animals need to survive, use math to plan the garden and feed the animals...and so much more that requires critical thinking and crosses several subjects.

Outdoor Skills Program

>>> See Field Guide for Outdoor Skills and Life Skills including Fire , Maps, Knots, Knives, First aid, Survival, Local Flora/Fauna—Preserving food, Knitting/crochet

Grades and Testing

We assess children in the Fall and Spring and informally throughout the year. We track children's progress in each learning area, not with letter grades, but with data on where they are at.

We offer children testing when they begin to show mastery of a subject matter. These are individualized for each child and we make these tests gentle and low stress. (ex. A one on one spelling test before moving onto a new spelling/reading level in our Waseca Reading program). We offer standardized tests to Learn's Act participants, but we teach to the child and not to the standard. Light homework is assigned in grades 2-5. ,

Gulley Park

We are lucky to be located just a short walk away from Gulley Park! Our school takes frequent trips over to the park to use the playground, walking trails, Niokaska Creek and the variety of natural areas as part of curriculum and free play.

Outdoor Environment & Dress for School

As a nature school, we believe it is imperative to health and development to spend time outdoors. We have an all weather policy. If it is safe to be outside, we will spend time outside. In colder months we bundle up, stay active, and have weekly library days. In hotter months, we like to take advantage of the creek and take breaks in the shade and indoors.

We encourage you to dress your child in clothing that is comfortable, appropriate for the weather, and that you keep in mind your child may get paint, mud, and other play messes on their clothing. Parents are responsible for sending weather appropriate clothing for their child based on the season. This looks like rain gear in wetter months, layers, and cold weather accessories in colder months. In rainy seasons, we encourage you to leave rain boots at the school for the random unexpected times of rain we may experience.

Field Trips

Our school organizes several field trips throughout the year. We visit all kinds of places in our community. We frequent the library, local farms, and local hiking trails. We typically announce these a month before and ask that parents drop off and pick up at the alternate field trip location. Each child must have a signed field trip waiver on file to participate.

Family Involvement

Parent Volunteer Program

We welcome parent involvement at FNS! Please talk to your child's teacher about classroom needs and scheduling a time to come in for volunteering. This may look like reading to the class, leading art activities, playing a musical instrument, or joining on a field trip.

School Events

We have several events throughout the year that we invite and encourage family attendance. Events include our Lantern Festival , Winter Market, Spring Games and more!

Parent Teacher Organization

FNS believes supporting NWA families is essential to building the village. A PTO is in the works–

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences allow us to communicate with parents one on one. We plan 2 per year: one halfway through the first semester and one halfway through the second semester.



Health Policy

We strive to maintain a clean, healthy environment for our students and teachers. One ill child can infect the whole classroom and ultimately the whole school. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, they must be kept home until they are ***without symptoms for 24 hours***. This will minimize the spread of infection and allow appropriate recuperation time for your child.

Your child should stay home if:

- They have a fever of 100.4 or higher in the last 24 hours. Your child may return after being fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- They are vomiting or having diarrhea (2 or more loose stools in 24 hours). Your child may return 24 hours after they last vomit or have diarrhea.
- They have symptoms of pink eye.

Please let us know if your child is staying home due to illness. If your child shows any of the above symptoms during the school day, we will call you to pick them up as soon as possible. If we cannot reach you we will call other emergency contacts you have listed. This policy is set to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses. Your consideration in observing these policies will help keep our teachers and all of the students in our school healthy and happy!

Allergies/Action Plans

If your child has an allergy, please provide an Allergy Action Plan from your doctor.. If medication for an allergic reaction is provided, please make sure we have the proper medication and that it stays up to date.

Accidents/Injuries/Emergency Treatment

While precautions are taken to avoid injuries, childhood accidents do happen as your child explores new physical skills and muscle control. All of our staff is trained in basic first-aid for minor injuries. Our outdoor skills teacher is wilderness responder certified.

In the event that emergency treatment is needed, here is the protocol our staff will follow:

Minor - If your child suffers a minor injury (i.e. small scrape or cut) that requires first-aid, We will care for the injury and you will be notified through a Brightwheel message or in person by a teacher at pick-up.

Serious – If your child suffers a somewhat more serious injury (i.e. bump on head, or possibility of stitches, sting) we will treat and post a photo of the injury through their account and contact you to



come to the school to further evaluate your child.

Severe - In the event of a severe or critical injury (i.e. uncontrolled bleeding or head injury) you will be notified immediately and we will call 911 for your child to be transported to the nearest medical facility for treatment. *If an ambulance is required, costs incurred are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. A parent/guardian signature on the "Authorization for Treatment" section of your child's enrollment form is required for our records.

Saying Goodbye

Graduation

When your child is ready to move on to 6th grade, we will host a graduation celebration!

Withdrawal

When you are certain your child will no longer be attending, we ask that you give in writing at least a 30-day notice for withdrawal. Tuition reimbursements will not be given for early withdrawals.

We would love to hear about your experience at FNS and would welcome any feedback, good or bad, that you would be willing to provide. You are welcome to contact admin by text or phone call anytime at (479)443-1900.

Thank you for being part of the FNS Family! It is truly a privilege to partner with you in your child's education.

Warmly,

The Fayetteville Nature School Team

Thank you for taking the time to read our handbook. Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree to our policies.

Student Name: _____

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Recommended Supplies List

- Water Bottle
- Backpack
- Weather appropriate accessories(Rainboots, hat, gloves, etc.)

How to dress for Nature School

<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/how-to-dress-your-kids-for-the-outdoors.html>

<https://getthekidsoutside.com/dress-kids-for-weather/>

DRESSING OUR KIDS FOR OUTDOOR PLAY IN ANY WEATHER

(adjust for exposure and activity level)



www.GetTheKidsOutside.com

