

Homeschool Program PARENT HANDBOOK



A bit about us

Our school opened in 2021 to offer an alternative to the screen heavy and sedentary environment found in many education institutions. Our team is passionate about quality, holistic elementary education for children. Born out of the pandemic, the benefits of our nature based, child centered approach have continued to be proven relevant and we are thrilled to continue serving our community today.

Equipping the Next Generation to mindfully shape the future

Our vision is for education to help children become kind, innovative, critical thinkers who are confident in themselves and in their ability to contribute to humanity.

Whole Child Education Rooted in Nature

Our mission is to provide children in NWA a holistic and immersive education grounded in nature that balances core academics with social emotional wellbeing while fostering a respect for self, others and the environment. *Our Homeschool Program supports this mission by prioritizing balance, social emotional health, and a connection to nature in the education setting.

Our School Culture

Village Mindset: We believe that it takes a village to raise Good Humans

This means we

- Respect children in all ways. This includes our words, actions, and intentions.
- Create a supportive network of grace and understanding between all members of our school; students, teachers, families, & support staff. We're all human and we're in this together.
- Commit to time together as a community by attending gatherings and school events.

Be Good Stewards: We believe we all leave a footprint in this world

Because of this, we...

- Respect nature by protecting it; whether it be saving a bug, not picking every flower, or being mindful of bending the little tree too far, we can each make a difference.
- Create and maintain well loved spaces indoor and out. Work together to keep our spaces beautiful!
- Source responsibly & choose sustainable & natural materials for cleaning, for projects and for decor.

Food Standards: We believe nutrition impacts our health

Food served by our school will be:

- Whole food when possible, minimal ingredients, organic when possible
- Free of chemical additives & preservatives, artificial flavors, sweeteners, & dyes

Cultivate Curiosity: We believe curious individuals are happier and healthier in life

- Use the moments children give us to guide learning. Appreciate teachable moments.
- Bring children's interests into the classroom. Encourage a passion for learning.
- We commit to fostering a love of learning

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

Our Homeschool program is on Fridays from 9am-1pm

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due the day of for Drop-in and by the 15th of each month for monthly.

You are welcome to pay by card or bank draft through Brightwheel, or check/cash given to the teachers at drop-off. Payments that are more than 15 days late will be subject to a late fee of 10% of tuition due.

We are an approved EFA/Learns Act provider.

Closings

We are closed for holidays aligning with Fayetteville Public School closings: Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break and a few school break days found on our school calendar at this link

[CALENDAR](#)

Inclement Weather and Closing for Ice/Snow

Thunderstorms, lightning, or extreme temperatures will keep us inside. We will close for dangerous road conditions. Please watch for announcements for closings when there is inclement weather.

If inclement weather conditions prevent the school from opening or require a delayed start, an announcement will be made through a Brightwheel message.

Arrival

Students may arrive beginning at 8:45a.m. Check your child in on Brightwheel. Please either walk your child in the fence or ensure they are met by a teacher.

Departure

Pick up is at 1:00 p.m. Anyone picking up a child must be recognized by a staff member or verified through a message with the parent.

If you expect someone new to pick up your child, please add them as a Brightwheel contact or communicate this through a Brightwheel message

Late Pick-up Policy

In the event that a pick-up is unable to arrive by 1:15 for a child, we will charge a late pick up fee. \$1/min paid to staff.

Attendance Policy

Our program capacity is 12 for the 24/25 school year.

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. If your child is already receiving therapy, we will support any current plan to the best of our ability.

Brightwheel

Each child has their own Brightwheel account. We use it for billing, communication, and attendance.

Meals, Snacks, and our Food Culture

As a school, we believe nutrition impacts our health. 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 lunch, snacks, or treats for the class.

We are a Nut Aware, but not Nut Free facility.

* If food is bought in that does not meet our standards please do not offer it to others.

Technology and Toys

We are a slow-tech school. We have ipads in classrooms for occasional use and research. We do not rely on technology for our lessons. **We ask that devices are NOT brought to school.** This includes any device that can access social media (Phones, Tablets, Smart watches). Watches or phones *strictly for communication* are allowed and can be used when needed. We ask that toys are not brought to school.

Pets & Visiting Animals

We love animals at FNS! We have dogs, cats, chickens, and goats around the campus. If your child has severe allergies to any animals, FNS may not be a good fit for your family. Kindly, request permission from administration before bringing new animals to visit.

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 be outside. In colder months we bundle up, stay active. 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.

Behavior Guidance

Positive Discipline

Our teachers are committed to setting students up for successful behavior through giving consistent expectations, being firm but kind, and encouraging responsibility for actions and problem solving as opposed to punishment. We use redirection, connect before we correct, and are all trained in Positive Discipline.

FNS Student Conduct Expectations

Respect Yourself, Others, our Facility and the Environment

- Cooperate with your teacher and group
- Ask permission before touching others' clothing, and personal belongings.
- Be kind to everyone. You don't have to be friends to be kind, no name calling
- Use equipment gently
- Put things back where they go and clean up at the end of each activity
- 'Leave no trace' on the trails
- Reduce waste wherever possible
- Use positive self talk
- If you have a disagreement with someone, find a way to talk it out peacefully or ask for help
- Do not throw rocks or sticks

Trial/ Probation Periods

All new students are subject to a 3 Friday trial period. We will meet with families at the end of this period to check in. If sometime after the 3 Friday trial period, a child is struggling to meet the conduct expectations, the school may require a 2 day probation period. At the conclusion of a trial or probationary period, the head of school will meet with parents to discuss fit and determine if the child's withdrawal is necessary.

Health Policy

We strive to maintain a clean, healthy environment for our students and teachers. One ill child can infect the whole group and potentially 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.

Saying Goodbye

Withdrawal

When you are certain your child will no longer be attending, we require that you complete and return a withdrawal form and give at least a 2 week notice for withdrawal. Reimbursements will not be given for early monthly 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 email (Fayettevillenatureschool@gmail.com), 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

Supplies List

- Water Bottle
- Lunch
- Backpack w/ extra set of clothes
- 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/>

