



The Farmhouse School
Parent Handbook and School Policies
2021-2022

Please also refer to our [Pandemic Policy and Procedures document](#) as some of the information listed above may not be applicable in light of an ongoing Pandemic. As of September 2020, the policies and procedures laid out in the aforementioned document will override the information here. A pandemic is often a constantly evolving situation, so our Pandemic policies and procedures may change or become more relaxed as Governing officials release new directives. We will communicate often with our families as changes are made.

Our Mission:

Our Mission is to create a community where children have the freedom and support to discover the wonders of their world.

Anti-Bias Mission Statement:

At The Farmhouse School we aim to create a community that supports all dimensions of human difference. We take a proactive approach to helping young children become advocates for a more equitable, just world.

Together, we celebrate diversity, challenge our biases and practice thinking critically about how we treat one another. We engage in dialogue and learning opportunities that support children as they develop whole and meaningful self-identities, practice empathetic interactions and learn to think deeply.

Our goal is to inspire within each child a desire to speak for peace, tolerance and justice.

Core Beliefs:

- Children are capable to construct their own learning
- Children are collaborators
- Children are natural communicators and should be encouraged to express themselves in however they feel they can
- The classroom environment acts as the third teacher and is a place of shared relationships that create a feeling of belonging
- Teachers are partners, nurturers and guides who help facilitate the children's interest as they work on short and long-term projects.
- Parents are partners in education

We believe children have the right to:

- Have time to play
- Feel their voice is heard and understood
- Be a part of and make connections with their natural environment

- Feel safe and supported in their community
- Feel valued by others
- Feel proud of themselves, their family and their heritage
- Explore and make art
- Have time, space and materials to pursue their interests
- Be joyful

Our Teachers:

- **Regina Bannick** -Teacher and Owner- 3's, 4's and 5's Classes

"I have been working in the field of Early Education for twenty-two years. I have taught preschool and art in both the greater Seattle area and on the West Coast. I currently have an Associate's Degree and am working toward a Bachelor's degree in Art Therapy. I am also a member of The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance.

My true passion lies in teaching and I am constantly inspired by the curiosity, authenticity and creativity of children. I believe that teachers are collaborators who partner with children to help guide and facilitate their learning.

As a child, I enjoyed hiking and camping, making art and writing and performing plays with my sisters and cousins. As an adult, I enjoy reading, photography and painting. "

- **Caitlin Nilsen** – Teacher – 3's Class

"I have a Bachelor's and Masters degree in Environmental Studies. I worked for several years as a paraprofessional in an inclusive preschool, and taught environmental education in Australia and New York to preschool through college age students. For 11 years I worked as an ornithologist, mostly in the San Francisco Bay, and enjoyed sharing that knowledge with children. I love helping children discover the natural world through science, art, literature and play.

As a child, I loved exploring the forest (preferably by horseback) where I grew up in Vermont and Massachusetts. Now I spend my free time birding, gardening, nature journaling, camping and hiking with my family."

- **Sharon Solie** – Teacher- 4's Class

"My background in education includes a Master's in Education and seven years teaching experience as an Elementary School Teacher and Reading Specialist. Most recently I have enjoyed volunteering with Issaquah School District as an Art Docent and taking Early Education courses at Bellevue College. I enjoy getting to know each child as an individual and have a firm belief in the power of building a positive relationship with children. I believe that once a positive bond is formed, effective teaching can happen.

As a child, I enjoyed playing soccer, going to the beach and making up silly songs. Now in my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, playing soccer and exploring the Pacific Northwest."

- **Rebecca Nguyen** – Teacher – 5's Class

"My background includes a BA in Psychology and a Masters in Teaching in Elementary Education. I taught in the Highline School District in the primary grades for four years before becoming a parent. I'm thrilled to be working at The Farmhouse School. The philosophy of the school is the most authentic learning I can imagine for preschool. I love observing preschool age children explore the world curiously and creatively, form friendships and grow socially and emotionally.

As a child, I loved riding bikes with neighbors and playing imaginatively. I now enjoy reading, hiking, playing with my kids and enjoying the beauty of the Northwest."

Parent-Teacher Communication:

Contacting us via email is the most effective and time-efficient way of communicating with your child's teachers. Please make sure you have your child's teachers emails on hand.

Teacher Emails:

regina@thefarmhouseschool.org

sharon@thefarmhouseschool.org

caitlin@thefarmhouseschool.org

rebecca@thefarmhouseschool.org

- You can come to any of the teachers with questions or concerns. Often times, we will discuss our concerns as a team and reach out to you once we have had a chance to discuss.
- If you have a question or concern, we ask that you email us to set up a time to talk. Aside from a quick conversation in passing, we will not have time to address your concerns properly during times of transition (i.e., drop-off/pick-up or as we are cleaning up between classes.)
- Questions about tuition should be directed to Regina

Contacting Us in Case of an Emergency:

While email is the best way to communicate with your child's teachers, we also have a school landline number and a cell phone for emergency use only. Please save the following phone numbers.

- Our school phone number is **(425) 391-4400**. You may call this number and leave a message for all non-emergencies. Often times we will not answer the phone during class as we are busy with the children.
- If you are running late or there is an emergency, you may contact us on **our school cell phone at (425) 954-6382. Please use this number for emergency or time-sensitive phone calls only.** We will also use this number to contact you and are on the playground or away from the school, even in non-emergency situations.

School Mailing Address:

If you need to send anything to the school, please use our P.O. Box

The Farmhouse School
P.O. Box 2711
Issaquah, WA 98027

Family Participation

At the Farmhouse School we welcome parents to take part in their child's education by volunteering in the classroom. Volunteer time can be coordinated with your child's teacher. Before any adult family member volunteers or attends a field trip they will need to pass the Washington State Patrol Background Check. The fee for each Washington State Background Check will be paid by the student's family. A background check is not necessary for making your child comfortable during dropping off and pickup.

Parent Substitute positions

We will occasionally reach out to parents to offer opportunities to act as a substitute teacher if one of our educators is sick or cannot make it into school. The Farmhouse School offers tuition credits to parents who wish to substitute teach in the classroom. This is different from volunteering in that you will be asked to perform the same duties our teachers perform. We offer an opportunity to be added to our substitute list at the beginning of each year and will require a Washington State Background Check.

School Year Calendar and School Closures

The Farmhouse School follows the Issaquah School District calendar for school closures due to holidays and school breaks with the exception of Teacher Work Days.

additional days during the school year for staff professional development in addition to teacher work days. There is no tuition credit during the school year for these days.

The Farmhouse School has allotted the following days for teacher work days and the school will be closed: October 29th, February 28th and May 24th.

If the school is closed due to an emergency or weather situation and a class misses more than three class sessions make up hours will be added to the schedule for that class. We will make up additional closures by providing virtual learning opportunities.

If the Issaquah School District calls for a late start our morning class will be canceled. Our Afternoon class will run as usual.

If your child misses school due to illness or vacation there will be no tuition credit allowed for these days.

The 2021-2022 school calendar can be found on our website at www.thefarmhouseschool.org

School Calendar:

- **Sept 7:** First day of school for the 4's and 5's class
- **Sept 9:** First day of school for the 's class
- **Oct 29:** Teacher Work Day No school for students
- **Nov 11:** Veterans Day Observance No school for students or staff
- **Nov 25-26:** Thanksgiving holiday No school for students or staff
- **Dec 20 -31:** First Winter Break No school for students or staff
- **Jan 17:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day No school for students or staff
- **Feb 21:** Presidents Day
- **Feb 22 - 25:** Second Winter Break No school for students or staff
- **Feb 28:** Teacher Work Day No school for students
- **Apr 11 - 15:** Spring Break No school for students or staff
- **May 24:** Teacher Work Day No school for students
- **May 30:** Memorial Day No school for students or staff
- **June 8:** Last day of school for the 4's class
- **June 10:** Last day of school for the 3's and 5's class

Tuition Policy

Tuition for regular classes is payable in 10 installments, September through June.

Tuition for the 2021-2022 school year is as follows:

3's Class: \$3,500 a year or \$350 a month

4's Class: \$4,800 a year or \$480 a month

5's Class: \$5,700 a year or \$570 a month

The Farmhouse School tuition is due and payable on the first of each month. There is a \$135 nonrefundable registration fee. There is a seven (7) business day grace period. A service charge of \$50 will be billed to your account for tuition payments received after the grace period of each month. Dishonored checks will

be assessed for an additional fee of \$50. After two (2) dishonored checks, tuition will be accepted on a cash only basis. At its own discretion, The Farmhouse School will reserve the right to terminate enrollment for nonpayment of tuition.

Class Schedule:

3's Class – Thursday and Friday 9:15 to 11:45

4's Class – Monday and Tuesday 9:15 to 11:45

Wednesday 9:15 to 12:45

5's Class- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 12:30 to 3:15

Daily Routine:

- Drop-off, Sign-in and free play!
- Group-time
- Play!
- Clean-up
- Outside/snack or lunch
- Goodbye group-time
- Pick-up

We feel that having a good deal of flexibility in our daily schedule allows us to delve deeper into the children's interest, so we not adhere to any set time constraints. That being said, research shows that routines are important to children (and teachers, too!) We follow our daily routines as often as possible to provide the children with that structure.

What to Bring to School Each Day:

- Rain gear every day, regardless of the forecast. Even if the forecast does not call for rain, we will be eating outdoors for the foreseeable future, and rain gear will ensure your child stays dry while eating. Raingear may be a full rainsuit or separate pieces and should be packed in your child's backpack each day. We will help them to get dressed in their raingear before we head outdoors.
- We often take walking field trips and your child will be asked to carry their own backpack. For this reason, we require specific measurements for your child's backpack so that they can comfortably carry it on short walks around Issaquah.

water bottle, lunch box and rainsuit must fit in their backpack. Backpacks must be **NO LARGER THAN 16 IN. IN HEIGHT AND NO SMALLER THAN 14 INCHES IN HEIGH.** Your child's

- A snack (or lunch for 4's on Wednesdays) that is easy to eat outdoors of on the go, packed in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. Your child's lunch box must fit inside their backpack. **NO NUTS.**
- A FULL water bottle that can fit inside your child's backpack or lunch box and has a secure, leak-proof lid
- We require insulated rain boots in the rainy season. In warmer, dryer months please help your child to choose footwear that is comfortable to walk in and made for playing, running and climbing. No flip-flops.
- A clean mask
- ***What to Bring on your Child's First Day, to be Left at School:***

- A full set of extra clothing packed in a gallon Ziplock bag, clearly labelled with your child's first and last name. Please be sure that the clothing is appropriate for the season. When your child gets wet or dirty and needs to change, we will send the dirty clothing home in a plastic bag. This is an indication to you that you will need to replace that item. Simply bring a replacement to school on the following day and we will add it to your child's extra clothing. Please include a top, bottoms, underwear and socks.
- Your child's emergency kit

What Your Child May Bring from Home

Children are welcome to bring toys from home as long as both parent and child understand the following:

- If an item or toy is brought to school it might get ruined, lost, or broken
- The item or toy may not interfere with the play or harmony of the classroom
- The item or toy can be shared with the students in class
- If the item is your child's security blanket or a special 'comfort toy' then they will not be required to share it.

Please remember that teachers will not keep track of the item or toy and The Farmhouse School is not responsible for any items or toys from home that get lost, broken, or taken. The Farmhouse School reserves the right to remove an item or toy brought from home from the classroom.

Illness

To help keep our classmates healthy, we ask that you keep your child home from school if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Productive cough
- Severe sore throat
- Eyes that are pink, itchy or burning, or producing a discharge
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Rash with a fever
- Lice or nits
- Open or oozing sores

If any of these symptoms are exhibited in your child at school, they have a sick appearance, or are generally lethargic and unable to participate in the classroom activities you will be called and asked to pick them up immediately.

If your child has a chronic condition such as continual nasal discharge you will be required to submit a doctor's note stating that your child is not contagious before they may return to school.

The Farmhouse Schools policy is that no student shall return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours. This will help to limit the spread of colds, flu and other contagious diseases. Open sores need to be covered and treated by antibiotics for 24 hours before the child returns school.

Some aspects of our illness policy have changed in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. We are trusting that our parents will do their due diligence to keep children home when they are ill. Please see the 'Pandemic Policies and Procedures Handbook' for detailed information regarding our sick policy.

If your child is ill, we will call you. If you do not answer in a timely manner, we will reach out to the emergency contacts you have listed on your registration paperwork.

Masks:

The Farmhouse School will follow the recommendations set out by the Center for Disease Control and the Washington State Department of Health in regards to face coverings.

The Washington State Department of Health states that people in childcare settings where children are present and in outdoor settings where there is a decreased ability to maintain physical distance should continue to wear masks. ([Secretary of Health Order 20-03 Statewide Face Coverings.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#))

- All staff will be required to wear masks as recommended by the from the CDC.
- All students at the Farmhouse School will be required to make their best attempt at wearing a mask successfully while at school. Your child **MUST** come to school in a mask each day.
- Masks must be washed daily, and an extra mask should be packed in your child's backpack.
- Your child's mask must fit properly and cover their nose and mouth. If your child's mask does not fit properly, we will ask that they wear a school mask.
- Vaccinated parent/guardians may enter the school but must be masked.
- We will not require parent/guardians to wear masks outdoors during pick-up or drop-off but will ask that parent/guardians wear a mask on the playground to help us normalize mask wearing at school for our students.
- We will keep abreast of current recommendations for mask wearing in school settings and make changes to our policy if we feel comfortable.

Allergies:

You have informed us of your child's existing allergies in your registration paperwork. If new allergies are identified throughout your time at the Farmhouse School, please share them with a teacher. If your child's allergies are severe enough to require an EpiPen or other emergency medication, you will need to provide those medications to be kept at school at all times. Please ask for a medication form to be filled out and kept along with your child's medications.

Arrival and Departure Procedures:

You will drop your child off indoors each day, at the front of the school. One vaccinated adult per child may accompany their child into the classroom and help them go through the morning routine, if you would like. All people who come into the school will need to wear a mask. You are not required to accompany your child and may choose to drop your child off at the front door where they will be greeted by a teacher. If you are unvaccinated, we ask that you do not enter the school. A teacher will be at the front door to greet your child and help them through their morning routine.

Your child will be picked up outdoors, rain or shine.

At Drop-off:

- You will sanitize your hands
- You will sign your child into school on our sign-in sheet
- A teacher will check you and your child's temperature
- If you are vaccinated, you may accompany your child into school. Your child will wash remove their coat and shoes, hang up their backpack and wash their hands. We ask that you allow your child to move through their morning routine as independently as possible so that they can build important self-help skills.

At Pick-up

- You will sanitize your hands
- You will sign your child out on our sign-out sheet
- You will wait for your child to be dismissed to you

If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child:

If someone other than you or your spouse will be picking up your child, please note the full name of that individual in the comments section of our sign-in sheet. We will check that individual's identification against the name given. We will not release your child to anyone without an I.D.

If someone other than you or your spouse will be picking up your child on a regular basis (at least once a week,) you do not need to note it each time. Simply email your child's teacher with the full name of the person authorized to pick up your child on a regular basis. You will still note their name on the sign-in sheet on their first pick-up.

Separation Anxiety:

Separation anxiety is both normal and developmentally appropriate behavior for preschool aged children. Our teachers are very experienced in handling separation anxiety in a loving and compassionate way. In our experience, we have found that remaining calm through stressful separation helps your child to adjust. This shows you child that you have confidence in that you have chosen a safe place for them to be and that you have confidence in them. We have found that it is helpful to have a plan in place for a child who suffers from separation anxiety.

What we find works:

- Coming up with a simple set of steps that you and your child will go through before you leave. For example: "When we get to school, mom/dad will watch you sign in and hang up your nametag. Then you can show me where you will start your day. Then I will give you a hug and say goodbye." Try not to overcomplicate or overprocess your plan. Clear and concise is the key.
- Be consistent. Follow the same steps in the same order each day and do not waiver.
- Have confidence and remain calm
- Show up on time for school. Your child will be more likely to settle if they have a little bit of time to get involved in an activity before group time
- Share your plan with teacher Regina via email prior to the first day of school so that we know what to anticipate and how we can help facilitate. Communicate with teachers if you would like us to help and what you would like that to

look like

- If your child is inconsolable, we will give you a call
- If your child's separation anxiety continues, we will meet with you to come up with a plan

Walking Field Trips:

We are blessed to be surrounded by so many parks and natural spaces to explore here in Issaquah and we explore these spaces often by talking walking field trips. We do our best to inform you and your child that we will be walking by hanging a note on the door and by verbally sharing with you as you enter the school, but sometimes our need to explore is impromptu!

We begin practicing walking safely and responsibly around Gilman Village. Once the children are capable and confident, we venture further out. Some of the places we love to explore are Confluence Park, Issaquah Creek, Bernstein Park and Salmon Run Park.

Documentation:

At The Farmhouse School we use documentation to make the children's learning visible. Documentation typically includes samples of the child's work; photographs of the children engaging in their work and the comments and transcripts of conversations and observations we make on the work we are doing in the classroom. Often times this documentation evolves alongside the children's learning as they make new connections and their interests move in new directions. Documentation highlights how the children planned, carried out and completed their work. Documentation shows the children that we value the work that they do and it helps us as educators to prolong and extend specific areas of interest as we draw new connections.

Each child is also given a journal that they use to document their own learning. They may use their journal to draw something interesting they noticed at the creek, to document an observation they made at the science table, to draw a picture of a creation made out of Legos, to make a plan for a creation in the Art Studio or to answer a prompt posed by a teacher. Journals are a powerful tool that gives your child ownership over their own learning and allows us deep insight into what your child values, how they share their learning and what learning styles work best for them.

Teachers also use learning stories as a way to document moments of growth. Learning stories are a form of documentation presented as a narrative story with the teacher as the author and the child as the subject of the story. Because the story is written *to* the children, it's both easy for teachers to write and easy for families to understand. Teachers become observers and story writers while reflecting on children's actions and words. The story is always a positive one about children's strengths, good ideas, and dispositions for learning. Learning stories are written in your child's journal.

Parents are given opportunities throughout the year to view their child's journal and leave notes about their child's work.

Instagram:

We create a closed, private Instagram for each class and post to it often. We encourage you to peruse the photos we share with your child. Doing so will open up conversations about what your child is doing at school and helps them to make connections between home and school.

Our Philosophy on Art

We believe that art and expression is an important part of the development of the whole child. All children are artists who create and express themselves artistically, even if that is not in the traditional sense. We believe that the process

is more important than the product and that there is no “right way” to make art.

We value all forms of artistic expression, including painting, drawing, constructing, storytelling, dancing, making music and acting and dramatic play.

Studio Creations:

Inspired by a child's natural inclination to construct and invent, we have created a loose and flexible formula for guiding our students through the process of designing and creating projects in the studio.

- We wonder with the child- When a child shows interest in creating a project in the studio, we start by wondering together. What materials might you need? What inspired you to want to create this?
- Research- We invite the child to do research. Children may use books, photographs, the computer or their own imagination to get ideas and information to help guide their work.
- Create a plan- The child will make a plan. Often times this is an illustration
- Collect materials – The child will collect the materials they need for their project.
- Create a prototype- Sometimes a child will create a prototype that can be adjusted as they figure out what works and explore or implement new ideas.
- Share- The child will share their work with their class through the creation process. They may take questions or comments from their peers or ask for advice to help them solve problems as they arise.
- Test- The child will test their project and continue to make adjustments and tinker until they are satisfied with the finished project.

Our teachers carefully document this process and that close observation gives us great insight into what the child knows and where their strengths lie. Through this process, children learn to innovate, be persistent, think critically, ask for help, manage their time and expectations, implement their ideas and the ideas of others, communicate their frustrations, feel proud of their work, self-regulation and creative thinking and problem solving!

Potty Training

The Farmhouse School understands that potty training is a process and does not require students to be fully potty trained. The staff will work with families and children as they complete this process. If a child does have an accident, they will be encouraged to change themselves with adult encouragement and support. If students are unable to care for themselves the parent may be called to assist their child.

Enrollment

The Farmhouse School does not discriminate against any students on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, ability, or family makeup. We enroll students based on age, gender, and other factors so each class will be balanced. The Farmhouse School reserves the right to change our enrollment policy at any time. Please see our current registration form for details.

Wait Pool Policy

A wait pool for each class will be formed when enrollment reaches the maximum of 14 students for all three classes. The wait pool will be formed when each completed enrollment application is received. When a spot opens in a class, the child's family will be contacted and given five business days to deliver their registration fee and completed registration form to The Farmhouse School to secure their spot. If payment is not received within five business days the child will be removed from the wait pool.

Termination of Enrollment

Due to unforeseen circumstances a family may withdraw enrollment during the school year by giving one month written notice to The Farmhouse School. In addition, you will be liable for an early termination fee equal to one month's tuition. Unused tuition will be refunded for days paid past the one-month notice.

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a student under the following conditions:

- Child or adult behavior problems that cause immediate harm to students or staff.
- Child or adult behavior problems that cannot be resolved.
- Parents/guardians who do not support the philosophy or approach of The Farmhouse School.
- Parents/guardians who interfere negatively with other families or your child's experience at our school.

- The inability of parents/guardians or students to respect staff, children, and other adults.
- The inability of and parent/guardian or student to follow the policies of The Farmhouse School.
- Picking up children late on a regular basis.

We will discuss our concerns with you and put them into writing. We will give you the opportunity to change the behaviors in question or remedy the situation. However, The Farmhouse School reserves the right to terminate your enrollment without notice. Unused tuition will be refunded.

Dress Code

We ask that you bring your child to school in comfortable fitting clothing which can get dirty and stained. The Farmhouse School is not responsible for clothing that gets stained during class time or outdoor play. We require you to provide waterproof boots that will be left at school for the year. Please check throughout the school year to make sure they fit properly. Other footwear should be closed toed, have an enclosed heel or heel strap, and suited for active outside play. No flip flops please.

In addition, we require all children to come each day with a rain suit in their backpack.

Immunization

Parents are to submit a Washington State Certificate of Immunization Status for the enrolled child. At The Farmhouse School, we believe students have the right to attend school without the threat of exposure to certain vaccine-preventable diseases. To attend school, students are required to submit a completed Certificate of Immunization Status, or Certificate of Exemption, that demonstrates a compliant immunization status according to state law. [Refer to WAC 246-105-030 by clicking here.](#)

Students not fully immunized, or students attending school under conditional status who fail to make satisfactory progress, must be excluded from school.

Birthdays

We ask that treats are not brought in to share. We will celebrate birthdays with a small ceremony during group-time and your child will be given a collaborative gift in honor of their birthday. If your child would like to bring a gift of a book to donate to the school, we will read their gifted book during group-time.

If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate their half birthday at school. This way, all children will feel their special day is valued.

Invitations

Cubbies are to be used for schoolwork and school information only. Please do not distribute party invitations at school.

Afternoon class will be responsible for sending a healthy snack for their child every day. Candy is not allowed at The Farmhouse School.

Late Pickup

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to charge \$2 a minute for families that are chronically late in picking up their child. We will give a family written notice before we implement our late fee charge. If a family continues to pick up their child late it is The Farmhouse Schools right to terminate enrollment.

Photo Policy

We ask that parents take photos and videos of only their child at school, unless there is a special event. Please be aware that some parents have requested that photos and videos of their child not be taken.

Playground Use

Currently enrolled families are permitted to use the Farmhouse School Playground after school hours if they have signed a release of liability form and adhere to the following rules:

- Only currently enrolled families may use the playground. No guests please.
- Lock gate after use
- Cleanup after use including putting away toys and packing out your trash
- Sand stays in the sandbox and woodchips stay where they are
- No digging outside of sandbox
- Do not enter the tool bench area or garden
- Do not pick flowers, leaves, or plants
- NO FOOD ON THE PLAYGROUND. WE HAVE STUDENTS WITH SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES.

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to revoke access to the playground at any time.

The policies in the Parent Handbook are subject to change by The Farmhouse School at any time.