



The Farmhouse School

Parent Handbook and School Policies

2022-2023

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 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.

Core Beliefs:

- Children are capable of constructing their own learning
- Children are collaborators
- Children are natural communicators and should be encouraged to express themselves however they feel they can
- The classroom environment acts as a third teacher and is a place of shared relationships that create a feeling of belonging
- Teachers are partners, nurturers and guides who help facilitate exploration into areas of interest as children work on long- and short-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 class

“I have been working in 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 a Associates 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 camping, making art and writing and performing plays with my sisters. As an adult, I enjoy reading, photography and painting.”

- Caitlin Nilsen – Teacher – 3’s Class

“ I have a Bachelors and Master’s 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) were I grew up in Vermont and Massachusetts. Now I spend my free time birding, gardening, nature journaling, camping and hiking with my family.”

- Jenny Ameche- Teacher – 3’s Class

“I received my BA in Psychology and have spent most of my professional life providing early intervention for children on the autism spectrum. I have worked in early intervention centers, inclusive preschools, and in home settings. I love seeing the world through a child’s eyes and facilitating a love of learning and endless curiosity. I feel

passionate about recognizing each child's strengths and following their lead in both learning and play, which often go hand in hand.

As a child I liked to read books, complete puzzles, and play soccer. I also enjoy hiking, traveling, and being silly with my kids."

- 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 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 model 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. Important information should not be shared in passing, in-between or after class. We are focused on the children during times of transition and will likely forget this shared information. Please share all important information via email.

Teacher Emails-

regina@thefarmhouseschool.org

sharon@thefarmhouseschool.org

rebecca@thefarmhouseschool.org

caitlin@thefarmhouseschool.org jenny@thefarmhouseschool.org

- You can come to any of the teachers with questions or concerns
- 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 properly address your concerns 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
- Please be sure to check your email daily for correspondence from the school. This is how we share important information with our families.

Contacting Us:

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 or time sensitive phone calls only. Please save these numbers.

- Our school phone number is **(425) 391-4400**. You may call this number and leave a message for all non-emergencies. We will not answer the phone during class as we are busy with the children.
- If you need to get ahold of us right away, you may call or text us on our school cell phone at **(206) 498-0546**.

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 background check will be paid by the students family. A background check is not necessary for making your child comfortable during drop off and pick up.

There are many ways parents have chosen to participate in the past! You may wish to come in and share a special skill with your child's class, or read stories during playtime. You may wish to act as a chaperone during a fieldtrip or spend time with the children on the playground. We are open to any ideas you may have!

If you would like to volunteer your time or otherwise lend to your child's school experience, you may wish to help in other ways. We could always use help caring for our playground, filing books or prepping special projects around the school. We also humbly welcome donations of new or lightly used books, toys or materials or monetary donations to be used toward enhancing our program. If you would like to volunteer in any way, please reach out!

Room Parent(s):

In the past, we have had parents who have expressed an interest in acting as a room parent for their child's class. Typically, a room parent coordinates special events like Teacher Appreciation Week, or helps to organize field trips or special evening events. If you are interested in becoming a room parent, please reach out!

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 than volunteering in that you will be asked to perform the same duties our teachers perform. If you would like to be added to our substitute list, please fill out and return the Parent Substitute form and return to your child's teacher. You will be required to have a clear Washington State Background Check as well.

School Year Calendar and School Closures:

The Farmhouse School follows the Issaquah School Districts calendar for school closures due to holidays, inclement weather, natural disasters and school breaks with the exception of Teacher Work Days.

- If the school is closed due to an emergency or weather situation and a class misses more than three class sessions, makeup hours will be added to the schedule for that class. These makeup hours may be fulfilled by offering virtual learning opportunities.
- If the Issaquah School District calls for a late start, our morning class will be cancelled. Our afternoon class will run as usual.
- No tuition credits will be allowed for school days your child has missed due to illness, inclement weather, vacation or for any other reason, unless cleared by The Farmhouse School.

School Calendar:

Our school calendar can also be found on our website at www.thefarmhouseschool.org

- **September 6:** First Day of School for 4's and 5's
- **September 8:** First Day of School for 3's
- **November 7:** Teacher Work Day. No school for students
- **November 11:** Veterans Day Observance. No school for students or staff
- **November 23-25:** Thanksgiving Holiday. No school for students or staff
- **December 19-Jan 2:** First Winter Break. No school for students or staff
- **January 16:** Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No school for students or staff
- **February 20:** Presidents Day. No school for students or staff
- **February 21-24:** Second Winter Break. No school for students or staff
- **March 6:** Teacher Work Day. No school for students
- **April 10-14:** Spring Break. No school for students or staff
- **May 12:** Teacher work day. No school for students
- **May 29:** Memorial Day. No school for students or staff
- **June 14:** Last day of school for the 4's Class
- **June 15:** Last day of school for the 3's and 5's class

Tuition Policy:

Tuition is a yearly tuition, payable in 10 installments or all at once. Your first and last month's tuition (September and August) is due on the first day of school.

The Farmhouse School tuition is due and payable on the first school day each month. There is a five-business day grace period. A service charge of \$50 will be billed to your account for tuition payments received after the grace period each month. Dishonored checks will be assessed for

an additional fee or \$50. After two 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.

- Tuition for the 2022-2023 school year is as follows:

3's Class - \$4,500 a year/ \$450 a month (\$900 due in September)

4's Class- \$4,950 a year/ \$495 a month (\$990 due in September)

5's Class- \$6,150 a year/ \$615 a month (\$1,230 due in September)

Class Schedule:

3' Class – Thursday and Friday

9:15 – 11:45

4's Class – Monday, Tuesday

9:15- 11:45

Wednesday

9:15- 12:45

5's Class- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

12:30 – 3:15

Daily Routine:

- Drop-off, sign-in and free play!
- Grouptime
- Free play (all areas of the classroom are open for the children to explore)
- Clean up
- Snack/Lunch
- Outside play
- Goodbye grouptime
- Pick-up

We feel that having a good deal of flexibility in our daily schedule allows us to delve deeper into areas of interest, so we do not adhere to strict 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.

After a couple weeks of observation, the teachers may re-work the order in which certain activities happen during the day. For example, if we have a class that has a great deal of energy in the mornings, we may start our day outdoors or if we have a class that gets hungry early, we

may have snack earlier in the day. We reserve the right to make these changes as we see fit, while adhering to the same start and end times.

Arrival Procedure:

You will drop your child off at the front door of the school, unless otherwise specified by your child's teacher.

- Upon arrival, you will sign your child into school by initialing the sign in sheet located outside the front door
- Your child will be greeted by their teacher
- Your child will enter the school, remove their shoes and coat and hang up their backpack
- Your child will wash their hands
- Your child will find their nametag and sign in by writing their name on a sheet of paper
- Your child will hang up their nametag above the fireplace
- Your child will find a place to play until grouptime begins

Departure Procedure:

You will pick up your child from the playground, unless otherwise specified by your child's teacher.

- At pickup, you will sign your child out by initialing the sign in sheet located on the back porch
- Check your child's file folder and art basket
- Your child will be dismissed to you

If Someone other than a Parent/Guardian is Picking Up your Child:

If someone other than you or your spouse is 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 I.D.

Caretakers, Grandparents or other individuals who pick up your child on a regular basis do not need to show identification each time they pick up your child. Once your child's teacher is familiar with the individual, we will no longer ask for I.D.

If plans change last minute and you need to have someone other than your child's parent/guardian pick up, please text or email your child's teacher with the first and last name of the individual who will be picking up.

Late Pick-up:

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to charge \$5 a minute for families that are chronically late in picking up their child. This fee will be paid directly to the teacher who is responsible for watching your child in-between classes or after school. You will be given 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.

There are occasions when unforeseen circumstances may cause you to be late to pick up your child from school. In such cases, please contact us immediately so that we can anticipate your late arrival. You may email your child's teacher or call or text our emergency cell phone.

Late Drop-Off:

At The Farmhouse School, we understand how tricky it can be to get out of the door each day, especially when you have young children! If you are anticipating a late drop-off, you may let us know via email, but it is not necessary. If you arrive and the door is locked, please knock and a teacher will greet your child at the door.

Separation Anxiety:

Separation anxiety is both normal and developmentally appropriate behavior for preschool aged children. Our teachers are very experienced at handling separation anxiety in a loving and compassionate way. We have found that remaining calm during stressful separation helps your child to adjust. This shows your child that you are confident that you chose a safe place for them to learn and grow 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-

- Come up with simple 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. Be clear and concise
- Be consistent. Follow the same steps in the same order each day and do not waiver
- Have confidence and remain calm
- Arrive on time for school. Your child will be more likely to settle if they have time to get involved in an activity before grouptime

- Share your plan with your child's teacher via email prior to the first day of school. This way, we will know what to anticipate and how we can best support you and your child. Communicate with teachers if you would like us to help and how
- If your child is inconsolable, we will call you
- If your child's separation anxiety continues for a prolonged period of time, we will set up a meeting and come up with a new approach to support you and your child

Absences:

It is important that your child attend school on a regular basis so that they maintain a sense of belonging at The Farmhouse School. Frequent absences can be disruptive for your child, their classmates and the teachers. If your child is going to miss school, please share their projected absences with your child's teacher via email.

What to Bring to School Each Day:

- A warm coat
- **INSULATED** rain boots during the rainy season. In warmer, dryer weather, please help your child choose footwear that is comfortable to walk in and made for playing, running and climbing. No flip-flops.
- You are required to pack rain gear every day, regardless of the forecast. Your child's rain gear may be either a full rain suit or separate pieces. We will assist your child in getting dressed in their raingear before heading outside.
- A **FULL** water bottle
- An insulated lunch box with a nutritious snack/lunch and any utensils needed to eat their meal. **NO NUTS.**
- Two full sets of extra clothes (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) in a gallon zip lock bag labelled with your child's name
- A clean, disposable mask in a bag or prepackaged (no cloth masks, please)
- All of these items are required to fit into your child's backpack. Backpacks must be able to hang on your child's cubby hook.

Cold Weather Gear-

We play outside rain or shine! Our playground can be muddy with lots of puddles for jumping in. It is very important that you dress your child appropriately for the cold, wet weather. Below is a list of REQUIRED cold weather gear:

- A warm hat
- Waterproof gloves or two pairs of mittens with glove covers

- Layers of warm clothing. Fleece or long underwear will help keep your child cozy in the cold.
- Insulated boots
- Warm socks

We will send out an email to all families when we begin to require cold weather gear.

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.

Your child should wear insulated rain boots during the rainy/cold season. 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. We ask that you do not send your child to school in necklaces, scarves or other objects around their neck.

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 special "comfort toy" then they will not be required to share it

Please remember that teachers will not keep track of the item of 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.

Important Forms:

You will receive important paperwork via email over the summer. These forms are due on or before our 'Meet the Teachers' event. Turning your forms in before the start of the school year allows us to have everything in order for your child on the first day of school.

Illness:

To help keep our school community 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 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 or staff 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 to school

Some aspects of our illness policy have changed in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. We are trusting that 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 illness policy as we continue to navigate the pandemic.

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 your child's 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. These medications need to be kept in our emergency backpack, and away from the reach of children. They may not come and go from the school on a daily basis and cannot be kept in your child's backpack.

If your child requires an EpiPen or other emergency medication, you will be asked to fill out a medication form to be kept with your child's medication.

Immunizations:

Parents are to submit a completed Washington State Certificate of Immunization Status or Certificate of Exemption, that demonstrates a compliant immunization status according to state law.

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

COVID-19 Vaccination:

All employees in educational settings are required to be fully vaccinated or have a medical or religious exemption per Governor's proclamation 21-14.3.

While we **strongly encourage** you to vaccinate your child against COVID-19, we are not currently requiring the COVID-19 vaccination to attend school.

Please include a copy of your child's COVID immunization status along with your Washington State Certificate of Immunization Status or Exemption form.

Masks:

Families may make individual choices in regards to masking indoors and out with the utmost respect being given to all members of our community and the choices they feel most comfortable making.

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to make changes to our masking policies throughout the year as we see fit. There may be situations when the use of a well-fitting mask may be temporarily required. We will keep abreast of current recommendations for mask wearing in early education settings and make changes to our policy as needed.

Birthdays:

We celebrate birthdays with a small ceremony during group time. 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 in honor of their birthday, we will present the gifted book during group time. If you chose to donate a book, you may choose to write your child's name and birthday inside the book!

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. We will share this date with you prior to the first day of school.

We ask that treats are not brought in to share and that cubbies are not used to distribute party invitations.

Holidays:

In an effort to make our classroom an inclusive space where each child's identity is respected and represented, we will be learning about a variety of holidays and other special celebrations throughout the year. The ways in which a person celebrates helps to build their identity, values and family culture. We will not be celebrating these holidays as active participants. Instead, we will learn about the history, traditions or meaning behind the celebration.

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.

Discipline:

During the preschool years children are learning appropriate behavior in a school setting. Our job is to help them learn what is and is not acceptable in a supportive, patient and kind manner. Our first responsibility to each child is their safety- both their physical safety and their feelings of security.

When handling common disagreements among children we focus on all the children involved, first making sure each feels safe and then guiding them as they negotiate a settlement and helping them to learn and practice social problem-solving skills and self-regulation. We do not use time-outs at our school but if a child is having a particularly difficult time in an area, we may ask them to find another area to play and support them while they calm down. In the event of teasing, we work with the children involved and the entire class to help children learn appropriate interactions and responses. We work to support and empower children who feel they are being picked on and if necessary, we will shadow a child who needs extra social coaching and support.

Enrollment:

The Farmhouse School does not discriminate against any student 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 that 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.

When we open up enrollment for the following school year, currently enrolled students will be asked to complete a 'Returning Student Enrollment Form' to confirm their re-enrollment. We then open up registration to siblings and alumni students. We will then begin to offer tours to new prospective families.

Wait Pool Policy:

A wait pool will be formed for each class when enrollment reaches maximum capacity. To be added to our wait pool, please contact Regina at regina@thefarmhouseschool.org. If a qualifying spot opens up for your child, we will reach out to offer you an observational tour and an opportunity to submit an enrollment application.

Registration Notification List:

If you are interested in enrolling at The Farmhouse School in the future, you may be added to our registration notification list by emailing Regina at regina@thefarmhouseschool.org. We will then contact you when we open up enrollment for the following year. You may wish to receive registration notifications if you have young children you wish to enroll at The Farmhouse School.

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 and we will retain your last month's tuition payment. Unused tuition paid past the one-month notice will be refunded.

The Farmhouse School reserves the right to terminate 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
- Parent/guardians who do not support the philosophy or approach of The Farmhouse School

- Parent/guardians who interfere negatively with teachers or other families, or their child's experience at our school
- The inability of a parent/guardian or student to follow the policies of The Farmhouse School
- Picking up children late on a regular basis

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 children not be taken. Please do not share images that include other children on social media or on any other public platform.

Instagram:

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

In the first couple weeks of school, you will receive an email with the name of your child's classes private Instagram page. You will simply request to follow us and then share your Instagram account name with your child's teacher via email so that we can accept your request to follow.

Out of respect for the privacy for all children and their families, only a child's primary parents/guardians will have access to the Instagram account.

Playground Use:

Currently enrolled families are permitted to use The Farmhouse School playground after school once they have signed the Playground Release of Liability form. Please respect and adhere to the following rules:

- Only currently enrolled families may use the playground. No guests please
- You **MUST** accompany your child on the playground and be in a position to observe your child in play
- Lock the gate after use
- Clean up toys and materials before leaving
- Sand stays in the sandbox and woodchips stay where they are
- No digging outside of the sandbox
- The tool bench is to remain closed after hours and between classes
- Do not enter the chicken coop

- Do not pick flowers, leaves or plants
- No food on the playground

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

Walking Field Trips:

We are blessed to be surrounded by so many parks and natural spaces to explore here in Issaquah and we explore often! 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 from the school. Some of the places we love to explore are Confluence Park, Issaquah Creek, Bernstein Park and Salmon Run Park.

Emergent Curriculum and Reggio Emilia Influenced Philosophy:

Emergent curriculum means deriving the areas of study in the classroom from careful observation of the children. As teachers, our job is to observe children as they play and to engage in meaningful conversations with them to find out where their interests lie and what their abilities are. Our curriculum is then tailored to help the children explore these play themes in depth, to help them create meaning out of their play, and to offer guidance and support which will enable a child to go beyond his or her current abilities.

The schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, are some of the leading schools in implementing emergent curriculum. Their philosophy of respect, involvement in the community, and careful observation and documentation of learning is one that we believe strongly in. We feel that the Reggio Emilia approach blends perfectly with the developmentally appropriate practices encouraged by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and supports and enhances our guided play philosophy.

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.

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!

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