

# The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm

2024-2025 Handbook



## THE FARM SCHOOL

At Bell Urban Farm

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# About The Farm School

## Our Mission

At The Farm School, we are committed to inspiring a deep love and respect for the natural world in our students, through immersive, nature-based education and by providing a rigorous academic program.

## Our Vision

We aim to cultivate curious, engaged learners who possess the skills and knowledge to become stewards of the earth. Our aim is to provide a safe, inclusive, nurturing environment in which children are empowered to explore, discover, and connect with the natural world, leading to a lifelong appreciation for its wonders and a commitment to preserving it for future generations. In addition, we are dedicated to providing a well-rounded education that balances access to nature and free play outdoors with the skills necessary to navigate and succeed as a contributing member of society.

## Inclusivity Statement

We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment for all students, staff, and families. The Farm School is secular and we celebrate diversity and aim to provide a welcoming and respectful environment that embraces the unique backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives of every person. We believe that all individuals should have equal access to educational opportunities and resources regardless of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation/identity, or socioeconomic status. We recognize that we have a responsibility to dismantle systemic inequalities and biases, and we are committed to promoting social justice and equity in all aspects of our school community. We believe that a culture of equity and inclusivity is essential for academic and personal growth, and we strive to create a culture where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered.

# Staff and Board Members

## Staff

Lead Teacher: Laura Larson

Nature Play Facilitator: Chelsey Harrington

Administrator: Amber Robbins: [thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com](mailto:thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com)

Executive Director: Kim Doughty-McCannon

## Board Members

Sara Taylor, PhD, President

Sandra Levya, Vice President

Amanda Krell, MS, Secretary

Rose Kaczmarczyk, Treasurer

Larnie Hughes, General Member

Jason Braswell, General Member

Contact: [bellurbanfarmschoolboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:bellurbanfarmschoolboard@googlegroups.com)

# 2024-2025 Farm School Calendar

The 2024 School year begins on Wednesday, Aug 14, 2024, and ends on Wednesday, May 28, 2025. Here are the important dates, holidays, and breaks for the 2024-2025 school year:

- Orientation: TBD
- **First day of school:** **Mon, August 19th, 2024**
- Labor Day: Mon Sept 2, 2024 (no school)
- In-service/Fall break: Fri-Mon, Oct 11-14, 2024 (no school)
- Thanksgiving Break: Mon-Fri, Nov 25- 29, 2024 (no school)
- Winter Break: Dec 23- Jan 3, 2025 (no school)
- MLK day: Mon Jan 20, 2025 (no school)
- Presidents Day: Mon Feb 17, 2025 (no school)
- Spring Break: Mon-Fri, Mar 24-28, 2025 (no school)
- April Break: Fri Apr 18, 2025 (no school)
- Memorial Day: Mon May 26, 2025 (no school)
- **Last day of school:** **Weds May 28, 2025**

**Operating hours:** Drop off will be each morning between 8:00-8:30 AM and pick up Between 3:00-3:30 PM

# Enrollment, Tuition, and Fees

## Enrollment

The Farm School offers an educational program to children in Kindergarten to 3rd Grade.

The age requirement is for kindergarteners to be 5 years old by August 1, 2024.

### **Special Needs Support and Accommodations**

At The Farm School, our mission is to offer a nurturing and engaging educational experience for all children. We embrace the diversity of learners, recognizing that each child brings unique strengths and challenges to our school community. However, it's important to acknowledge the specific accommodations and limitations within our program.

#### **Accommodations Considerations:**

- **Mobility Challenges:** Our campus and learning environments are designed to integrate with the natural surroundings, which may limit our ability to accommodate students with significant mobility challenges.
- **Learning Differences:** We welcome students with minor learning differences, such as dyslexia, and those with ADHD whose needs can be met within our standard program framework. Our goal is to support their learning journey without disrupting the educational experience for all students.
- **Mental, Behavioral, and Physical Health:** While we aim to be as inclusive as possible, our current resources limit our capacity to support students with significant mental, behavioral, or physical health needs that require specialized attention or frequent medical interventions.

#### **Collaborative Approach:**

We are committed to working with families to explore how we might support your child's unique needs within the constraints of our program. We believe in transparent and open dialogue from the outset to ensure our environment is a suitable match for your child. We encourage families to discuss any specific needs or concerns during the enrollment process.

## Tuition & Fees

**Application fee:** A \$50 application fee per child is required at the time of application submission. Applications will not be processed until the fee is received. We accept payments in cash or by check. For those not currently enrolled, payments can be made during normal business hours at the Bell Urban Farm Farmstand located at 2011 Tyler St. in Conway. If you have payment issues, please contact [thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com](mailto:thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com).

**Tuition** for the 2024/25 school year: \$8,400 with two available payment plans:

- 12 month: \$700 per month (due by the 15th of each month)
- 10 month: \$840 (due by the 15th of each month August-May)

**Supply fees:** \$100 per semester (billed in August and January)

**Invoices** will be emailed to parents using Square and can be paid by check or cash and by credit card. *All card payments will have an added 3.5% processing fee.*

Tuition is not prorated and you are responsible for tuition payments whether or not your child attends school, including absences due to illness or vacation

**Late Payment Fees:** Tuition is due on the 15th of each month, regardless of payment plan. Payments received after 3:30 pm on the 15th will incur a \$25 late fee, which will be added to your next month's invoice.

**Late pick-up fees:** Pick-ups after 3:30 pm are considered late. There will be a 5-minute grace period after which the fee is \$1/minute according to the school clock until your child is picked up. The fee will be added to your next invoice.

Upon acceptance and enrollment, parents/guardians will be required to sign a financial agreement and withdrawal notice policy that specifies these financial policies and obligations.

**Scholarships:** The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm is now partnered with [ACE Scholarships](#). These are income-based grants for tuition. All are encouraged to apply. Application will be open February 5th-April 15th, 2024.

Applications can be submitted here:

<https://online.factsmgt.com/grant-aid/inst/4NF04/landing-page>

# Withdrawal

**Notice Requirement:** To withdraw your child, you must give one month's written notice to the Administrator.

**Tuition Responsibility:** You are responsible for paying tuition for the entire notice month, regardless of your child's attendance.

- Tuition fees for part of a month are not reduced (no prorating).
- If on a 12-month payment plan, you must settle the remaining balance in your final payment. Monthly (Aug-May) tuition is \$840.

## **Examples:**

### 10-month Payment Plan Withdrawal:

- Dec 5 Notice: You are liable for December's full tuition.
- Dec 29 Notice: You owe January's full tuition, as it counts as the notice month.

### 12-Month Payment Plan Withdrawal:

- Dec 5 Notice: You pay for December, no matter the attendance.
  - Tuition Details: Up to December, you've contributed \$3,500 towards tuition from August to December.
  - Final Payment: At the time of notice, you owe \$700. This ensures you've covered the total tuition for the months enrolled (\$4200 for August to December), finalizing your payment responsibilities.

\*A financial responsibility agreement is required to be signed for each student enrolled to ensure these policies and obligations have been read and understood.

# Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures

## Drop-off

Students can begin arriving at 8 am. Please note that the day begins at 8:30, so students will benefit from being settled in by this time.

Parents/guardians will park in the field to the left of the school and enter the school area from the side gate nearest the parking area. During rainy seasons, drop-off parking is available at the Farmstand next door.

Students will be greeted by the staff, and attendance taken before entering the school through the back door (in the gated yard area). They will get their belongings settled in, and do an activity until the teacher begins the morning meeting at 8:30 am.

## Pick-Up

Student pick-up begins at 3 pm and ends at 3:30 pm. A staff member will be with students until all have been picked up for the day. Late fees apply to pick-ups after 3:30.

Parents will pick students up at the back door and leave through the side gate nearest parking (field to the left of the school).

The administrator and/or teacher(s) will ensure students leave with only approved people per the parents' permission.

- School administrators must be made aware of and pre-approve any other person(s) picking up students. Those picking up must follow the same parking and pick-up protocols.
- Any person(s) picking up students must be able to share the codeword selected by the parents/guardians, and show identification.

Students will not be allowed to leave with people other than the parent/guardian unless the above requirements have been fulfilled. In this event, a staff WILL stay with the student(s) until other arrangements have been made by the parents/guardians, or the parents arrive.

# Attendance Policy

At The Farm School, we prioritize safety and maintain daily attendance records. If your student will be absent, please notify the administrator promptly using the Band app.

**Please note:**

- While attendance is recorded, The Farm School does not enforce a formal attendance policy so that families can be flexible with travel, vacations, and their child's mental, emotional, and physical needs.
- Absences will not impact the student negatively nor be reported externally.
- No refunds or discounts are provided for absences.

# Communication

At The Farm School, we believe in maintaining open, transparent, and consistent communication with our parents and guardians. To ensure everyone is well-informed and engaged with our school community, we've established the following guidelines:

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences:**

- The Farm School holds parent-teacher conferences twice annually. These conferences are dedicated time for in-depth discussion about your child's progress, achievements, and areas for growth.
- There will be a minimum of one conference in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Specific dates and times will be announced at the beginning of each semester to allow parents and guardians to make necessary arrangements.

## **Weekly Newsletter:**

- Every week, we send out a newsletter via email and post it on the Band app. This newsletter includes updates on weekly themes, cooking activities, nature play activities, and other important information.

## **The Band App:**

- The Band app serves as our primary platform for day-to-day communication, including emergency or weather notifications. Here, teachers share pictures and updates about classroom activities. It's also the main tool for parents to communicate with the administrator regarding attendance, report absences, or address any concerns.
- Upon registration, an invitation to join our Band app space.

## **In-Person Communication:**

- For brief discussions, we encourage parents to talk to teachers directly at pick-up or drop-off times.
- If a more extended conversation is required, parents can arrange meetings with teachers outside the scheduled parent-teacher conferences by coordinating with the administrator through the Band app or via email.

## **Administrator Contact:**

- The administrator is available for any school-related inquiries or concerns. Parents can reach out through the Band app or by sending an email.
  - [thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com](mailto:thefarmschoolatbellurbanfarm@gmail.com)

# Inclement Weather

The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm will follow the Conway Public Schools' direction on inclement weather protocols and closings. If Conway Public Schools are closed, The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm will also be closed. If Conway Public Schools are delayed, we will follow their decision.

Situations such as tornadoes and severe storms will be assessed as early as possible, and the staff will decide if staying in school for the remainder of the day is best, or allowing parents to pick up students.

In the event of a tornado or severe weather (known in advance by weather sources), parents will be contacted through the Band app and/or group messaging, with the choice to pick up their students.

## Make-Up Days

At The Farm School, our academic calendar includes flexible days to accommodate occasional closures without compromising our curriculum or educational goals.

- **No Homework During Closures:** We understand the challenges that inclement weather days can pose for families. No homework or assignments will be sent home during these closures so our students and their families can focus on safety and well-being during such times.
- **Threshold for Makeup Days:** We will consider implementing makeup days only if the school exceeds ten (10) missed instructional days.
- **Implementation of Makeup Days:** Should the need for makeup days arise, our response *may* include utilizing 1-2 additional days in the last week of the school year. We intend to avoid impacting scheduled spring holidays and to minimize inconvenience to our families.
- **Communication:** Any adjustments to the school calendar, including the addition of makeup days, will be communicated to families with ample notice.

# Daily Rhythms

These are the components of a day at Farm School. Activities will occur in both the indoor and outdoor classroom spaces, and incorporate natural materials whenever possible.

**Arrival (8-8:30 am):** Students are greeted and attendance is taken while students engage in maker space activities, reading, drawing, or socializing with peers.

**Morning Meeting (8:30 am):** Students review the day's schedule, discuss the open-ended Question of the Day, and play whole group games intended to bolster community, creativity, and engagement.

**Morning Work Session:** This is where we will focus on our *reading and writing* curriculum. Students learn new skills during small groups and individual instruction and practice previously learned skills through center based activities.

**Morning Snack & Nature Exploration:** Students will spend time outdoors playing freely, exploring nature, and participating in guided nature activities such as: nature walks, exploring loose parts, art invitations, nature journaling, exploring and helping out at the farm, and playing in the mud kitchen.

**Lunch (~11:30 am):** Lunch is a social time and held in the outdoor classroom, weather permitting. Students will bring lunches from home and be encouraged to be responsible for cleaning up after themselves when finished.

## Afternoon Outdoor Free Play

**Quiet Reflection:** Students cool down, rest, and reflect after outdoor play. They have the option to read, color, work puzzles, nap, or just hang out and listen to the teacher read aloud.

**Afternoon Enrichment:** Students participate in activities like music exploration, handwork, cooking, games, STEM, and gross motor activities.

**Afternoon Work Session:** This is where we will focus on our math curriculum. Students learn new skills during small groups and individual instruction and practice previously learned skills through center based activities.

**Tea Time:** Students come back together to discuss and reflect on the day while enjoying a cup of tea and a small snack. Students will take turns serving each other tea.

**Closing the Day:** All students will have daily responsibilities related to the care of the classrooms, plants, and pets.

**Dismissal (3-3:30 pm):** Students will engage with outdoor free play until picked up by their parents or guardian.

## Curriculum

Our teachers will use the following core curriculum:

- Connections OG in 3D [Connections® - The Science of Reading — The APPLE Group - The Science of Reading \(applegroupdyslexia.com\)](#)
- Wild Learning [Wild Learning | Wild Learning \(discoverwildlearning.com\)](#)
- Math Made Fun (supplemental materials)
- Size Matters (Evidence based handwriting program)

# Clothing and Gear

Our daily activities emphasize outdoor exploration and engagement with natural elements like dirt, mud, and water, as well as safe, non-toxic art materials. To support this immersive learning experience, we ask caregivers to ensure students come to school wearing comfortable clothes, suitable for active play and varying weather conditions.

## **General Guidelines:**

- Students require a full change of clothes (shirt, pants/shorts, underwear, socks) for their student every day, packed in a ziplock bag inside their backpack.
- It is recommended that students wear "play clothes" - attire that allows free movement and is acceptable to get dirty. Soiled clothes will be sent home in a separate bag.

## **Footwear:**

- Outdoor Exploration: Students should have a pair of comfortable, waterproof boots.
- Indoor Learning: Students may wear sock feet or choose shoes that promote natural foot movement. It's essential for shoes to be comfortable for indoor activities.

## **Weather-Appropriate Gear:**

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is dressed appropriately for the weather. This includes:
  - Summer/Heat: Light, breathable clothing, and a rain suit for wet days.
  - Winter/Cold: A winter jacket, gloves/mittens, a hat or ear coverings, warm socks, and boots.

## **Recommended Gear:**

- Waterproof boots, slip-on waterproof pants, water-repellent jackets, and waterproof gloves are advised to support all-weather outdoor activities.

## **Sun Protection:**

- For sunny and hot days, applying sunscreen to your child before coming to school is recommended. Consider sending a hat or cap for additional sun protection. Please provide sunscreen that your child can apply themselves if necessary for reapplication during the day (a spray sunscreen works well). Ensure the sunscreen is labeled with your child's name and is stored in their backpack.

# Nature Play

Students will participate in outdoor activities every day, weather permitting. We monitor weather conditions closely to ensure the safety and comfort of all students.

## **Severe Weather Adjustments:**

- Outdoor activities are adjusted or moved indoors during severe weather conditions, such as heat or cold advisories, thunderstorms, or other extreme conditions.
- Even during advisories for heat or cold, we aim to allow outdoor play in a safe manner. This means implementing mandatory water breaks and providing opportunities for indoor rest after no more than 45 minutes of outdoor activity. These measures ensure students can still benefit from and enjoy nature play within a framework that prioritizes their health and safety.

**Risky play.** Risky play refers to activities that allow children to encounter or manage a level of risk and challenge. This can include climbing, running, jumping from heights, playing near natural elements like water and mud, and engaging in play that allows for testing physical limits, problem-solving, and navigating social interactions. Such play is essential for fostering resilience, confidence, self-regulation, and physical skills. Minor bumps and scratches are seen as part of the learning process. Our team ensures that all play is within safe, developmental-appropriate boundaries.

**Stick play.** Playing with sticks is part of childhood. We know that children will collect, carry, swing, dig, throw, and sword fight with sticks. Children are taught how to handle sticks safely. Fantasy play, including sword fighting, is generally acceptable if the play does not involve physical contact and the level of imaginary violence is not distressing to children who are not involved in the game. Teachers will redirect play that crosses physical or emotional safety boundaries.

**Climbing.** Tree climbing is permitted at The Farm School only while under the supervision of a teacher after a risk assessment for each tree has been completed by the trained nature play facilitator. Children are only permitted to climb as high as “me to tree”, meaning a teacher must be able to physically touch the child if the need arises. When children are climbing trees, they are to have three points of contact at all times (Example: Two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand). Teachers are prohibited from lifting students up to a place that they cannot reach by themselves, and students are reminded that they should be able to get down themselves from anywhere that they climb up.

**Throwing.** Children are permitted to throw sticks, acorns, and other natural objects AWAY from the group, and away from trails or other places people might be walking. Teachers will help define throwing zones when needed.

**Stinging/biting insects and toxic plants.** Our first aid procedures will be followed if a child is stung by a stinging insect, or bit by a tick or mosquito. With increased time outdoors, please expect increased contact with insects. We encourage parents/guardians to get in the habit of regular tick checks during the warmer months.

Poison ivy is an abundant native plant in Arkansas and is prolific along the woodline of campus. Teachers are trained in identifying this toxic plant and will have access to soap/wipes specially formulated to wash away the ivy's irritating oil (urushiol).

**Snakes.** Arkansas is home to many types of snakes, most being not poisonous. Children are instructed to wear closed-toe shoes (preferably boots) when walking in the forest. If a student spots a snake while in the woods, they are taught to be still and remain calm, say "Snake" so a facilitator hears, and then take 3 slow controlled steps back.

For more information about snakes in Arkansas visit this website:

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/environment-nature/wildlife/native-snakes.aspx>

In the event of a snake bite, our first aid procedures will be followed.

**Environmental risk assessment.** Our outdoor areas are evaluated often for possible hazards including but not limited to heavy, dead, overhanging branches; damaged trees; trash, etc. Elements of the site that are deemed hazardous will be mitigated through removal and/or avoidance. Our goal is to allow reasonable risk-taking, balanced with watchfulness for true safety hazards.

**Tool usage and safety.** Tool use is integral at The Farm School, allowing children guided access to real tools, enhancing learning, fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination. Our nature play facilitator ensures safety, demonstrating guidelines and assessing each child's readiness for independent use. Appropriate tools are selected based on each child's developmental stage. Misuse or unsafe behavior leads to intervention, adhering to our discipline strategies, and ensuring supervision at all times.

**Fire.** We have a designated fire pit area on campus where students can sit around a small fire with a teacher and/or have a simple campfire snack.

Teachers are responsible for teaching, modeling, and supporting students in following these simple procedures for fire.

- A teacher will always be present when a fire is burning.
- Always walk near the fire.
- When inside the fire circle we are seated or kneeling or have 3 points of contact to move around.
- The benches/stumps surrounding the fire pit must be at least 3 feet from the fire ring.
- Children are to ask before approaching the fire.
- Sticks and logs must be added one at a time, never thrown in.
- The sticks and materials must fit entirely in the pit
- We limit paper or dead leaves to prevent flying embers.
- We always have an emergency bucket of water.
- We always inspect our pit to make sure it's safe and will contain the fire.
- We look at the weather and assess if it's safe to start a fire that day.

\*Please note these are subject to change as our program evolves. For now, children will not be taking part in starting or putting out fires, and fires are exclusively done in our fire pit space.

# Food & Snacks

**Peanut-Free Policy:** Please note that The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm is *not* currently a peanut-free facility.

## **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Parents are responsible for providing snacks and lunches tailored to their child's dietary needs.

## **School-Provided Food:**

The Farm School will provide food under the following circumstances:

- **Cooking Lessons:** As part of their educational experience, students may prepare and taste food.
- **School Parties and Events:** This includes holiday meals and class parties.

Ingredients for cooking lessons and any community snacks (e.g., seasonal local fruits and vegetables) will be provided by The Farm School. We ensure all allergies and food sensitivities are considered for these activities. Details will be communicated through the weekly Parent Newsletter.

**Celebrations:** Parents can celebrate their child's birthday or special holidays during the morning meeting at 8:30 am. However, special food items like cakes or cupcakes are not permitted.

## **Lunch Boxes:**

- It is advised to include 1-2 ice packs in lunch boxes to keep food at a safe temperature.
- For warm food, especially in cooler months, using a thermos pre-warmed with hot water can keep food at a safe temperature until lunch. The school will not provide warming services for student lunches.

This policy ensures the safety and well-being of our students while accommodating their dietary needs and educational experiences.

# Safety & Emergency

**Supervision:** Continuous staff supervision is ensured at all times, with regular headcounts conducted to maintain safety.

**Emergency Drills:** Monthly drills are conducted on the first Friday of each month for fire, tornado, and intruder scenarios, ensuring readiness.

## Emergency Procedures

**Tornado:** In the event of a tornado (known in advance by weather sources), parents will be contacted with the choice to pick up their students. If the situation is that shelter must be taken, students will be directed to sit and cover their heads with their backpacks in the closet space in front of the bathroom (no windows). When the threat has dissipated, students and staff will be assessed quickly for any injuries.

**Fire:** In the event of a fire, staff will verbally direct students to leave the building through the nearest exit (front door or back door). Students and staff will safely make their way to the back gate of the school where emergency services will be contacted. From here, staff and students will identify a location to wait until the school is determined to be safe or children are picked up. Locations include the back field, the Farmstand next door, and the library across the street.

**Earthquake:** Due to the sudden nature of earthquakes, teachers will direct students to cover their heads and curl down into a ball away from windows or large furniture, until the quake has ended. Once the earthquake is over, all students and staff will be assessed for any injuries and treated accordingly.

**Intruders:** An intruder refers to any unauthorized person who enters school property with the intent to cause harm or disrupt the normal operation of our school. It is important to differentiate between an intruder and general visitors or guests, who are welcome and enter the school for legitimate reasons through proper channels.

- **Intruder Safety Procedures:** In line with recommendations from local law enforcement, our school has adopted a safety protocol to respond to intruder scenarios. This protocol is designed to prioritize the safety and well-being of all students and staff:
  - **Flee, Hide, Fight:** Per the suggestion of local law enforcement, and only if in immediate danger, staff will direct children to flee to safety and then hide securely.

- **Emergency Response:** In the event of an intruder threat, school staff will immediately contact emergency services to manage the situation.
- **Lockdown Protocol:** Should there be a threat in the vicinity of the school (e.g., an active shooter, manhunt, or search), the school will initiate a lockdown. During a lockdown, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the premises to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Parents will be informed and will only be able to pick up their children once the lockdown has been officially lifted and it is safe to do so.

**\*Note:** The term "intruder" is used in our protocols to encompass any scenario involving an unauthorized individual posing a threat to our school's safety. This approach is part of our commitment to creating a secure learning environment for our students while minimizing fear or anxiety around emergency drills and procedures.

**Communication During a Lockdown or Emergency Situation:** The school will communicate with parents as quickly and clearly as possible in the event of a lockdown, providing updates and instructions on when and where children can be safely picked up via the school notification system (Band App) by the Administrator and/or teacher(s).

## Zero Tolerance for Abuse Policy

At The Farm School at Bell Urban Farm, we have a zero-tolerance policy for sexual touch and physical or sexual abuse perpetrated by any staff member.

- **Prohibition:** Sexual touch and physical or sexual abuse by staff are unequivocally prohibited.
- **Reporting:** All staff are mandated reporters and must report any known or reasonably suspected abuse within the school community, not limited to incidents involving staff, to both school administration and appropriate authorities.
- **Action:** Reported incidents will be promptly investigated, with cooperation from local authorities as needed. We ensure confidentiality and sensitivity throughout the process.
- **Consequences:** Violations will result in severe disciplinary actions, including dismissal and referral to law enforcement.

# Health & First Aid

## Illness

If your child is unwell, they should remain at home to rest and recover. Use the following rules and symptoms list to make decisions and if in doubt, please contact the administrator via the Band app.

- **Outdoor Activity Requirement:** Students must be healthy enough to participate in outdoor activities. If they're too sick for outside play, they should not attend school.
- **24-Hour Rule:** Children who have been ill must stay home until they are symptom-free and/or without a fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication.

### **Symptoms that indicate children should be kept home:**

- Sudden Changes in Behavior
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Blood or Mucous in Stools
- Vomiting
- Persistent abdominal Pain
- Mouth Sores with Drooling
- Sore Throat
- Severe Coughing
- Strep Throat
- Untreated Scabies
- Ringworm
- Impetigo

# First Aid and Reporting

**Nurse and First Aid:** The school does not have a nurse on-site. The Lead Teacher is certified in First Aid and CPR.

The following procedures are in place for common injuries requiring first aid:

**Minor Injuries** (e.g., scrapes, bruises, minor bumps): Addressed on-site with first aid. Not all minor injuries require an incident report, reflecting our understanding that such injuries are part of risky play and the learning process.

- Minor cuts and scrapes: Staff will promptly clean the injured site, and apply a bandage and/or cold pack as needed.
- Mosquito Bites: If a child complains of bothersome mosquito (or similar) bites, the area will be washed, and a cold pack applied to reduce swelling if needed.

## **Bee Stings & Ticks bites**

- Bee Stings: Staff will remove the stinger immediately, wash the area, apply a cold pack to reduce swelling, and monitor closely for any signs of an allergic reaction.
- Tick Bites: Ticks will be carefully removed with tweezers, the site cleaned, a cold pack applied to reduce swelling if needed, and if possible, the tick will be saved and the incident documented and communicated to parents for further monitoring.

**Snake Bites:** Our teachers and staff are trained in the following response protocol that comes from the University of Arkansas (Division of Agriculture).

- For venomous bites: staff will take the following actions:
  - Remain calm so as not to increase blood circulation and spread venom more quickly throughout the body.
  - Remove rings, watches, bracelets, shoes, and other restrictive clothing near the bite.
  - Seek medical attention immediately! Call ahead, if possible, to alert medics, or call your local emergency medical facility if you need transportation.
  - Keep the bite area immobilized as much as possible.
  - Do NOT apply ice, make cuts, or apply a tourniquet.
  - Wash the bite site with alcohol or soap and water, if available. Be sure to wipe in the direction away from the wound.

- For nonvenomous bites: Staff will treat the wound as you would any minor scrape or cut. Keep it clean and apply topical antibiotics to reduce the risk of infection.

**Serious Injuries:** Immediate action will be taken to provide necessary care, including contacting parents/guardians and, if required, medical professionals. Serious injuries may include but are not limited to deep cuts, head or eye injuries, suspected fractures, allergic reactions, or conditions requiring medical attention beyond first aid.

### **Criteria for Incident Reporting:**

Incident reports are generated for injuries that:

- Injuries to the head or eyes.
- Bee or wasp stings
- Tick or snake bites
- Necessitate medical treatment beyond basic first aid.
- Result in the child being unable to participate in normal activities or require going home.
- Involve a pattern of similar incidents, indicating a need for environmental or behavioral adjustments.
- Are deemed significant by staff, requiring further documentation or follow-up.

### **Communication & Cost:**

- Parents/guardians will be informed of significant injuries and incidents, with reports detailing the occurrence, response, and any recommended follow-up.
- For serious injuries, parents/guardians will be called to the school immediately. If staff perceive the situation to be life-threatening, we will call an ambulance to transport the student to a medical facility and direct you to meet the ambulance.
- All costs for the ambulance and medical fees are the responsibility of the child's family.

### **Allergies and Medication:**

- Inform school administrators of any allergies your child has.
- Our staff does not administer medications to children, except for special circumstances (ex: EpiPen for allergic reaction). Parents are required to provide prescribed emergency medication, such as EpiPens and asthma inhalers, to be kept at the school.

- If a student requires medication during the school day, please contact the admin to make arrangements for the parent to come to the school to administer the medication.

**Sunscreen and Bug Spray:**

- **Morning Application:** Parents should apply sunscreen and bug spray to their children before coming to school each morning to ensure protection begins right away.
- **Reapplication Needs:** For additional sunscreen application during the day, parents are advised to provide spray sunscreen labeled with their child's name. This sunscreen should be kept in the student's bag.
- **Staff Assistance:** Staff can help students reapply spray sunscreen for the student to then rub in, only if a signed consent form is provided by the parents. Please note, our staff are not permitted to apply lotion-based sunscreens.
- **Self-Application:** Students may bring lotion-based sunscreens to school and apply them independently as needed.

**Smoking** is prohibited on the campus of The Farm School.

# Discipline

We believe in fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes positive behavior, personal growth, and social-emotional development. Our commitment to student-centered discipline and social-emotional learning ensures that discipline is not just punitive but serves as a platform for growth, self-reflection, and building stronger connections within our school community.

## **Student-Centered Discipline Approach:**

- Our disciplinary approach focuses on understanding and addressing the underlying causes of student misbehavior, aiming to guide students toward self-reflection, personal responsibility, and positive choices.
- We prioritize teaching appropriate behavior and problem-solving skills rather than relying solely on punitive measures.
- Restorative practices will be utilized, providing opportunities for students to repair the harm caused by their actions, develop empathy, and restore positive relationships within the school community.

## **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration:**

- SEL principles and practices will be embedded throughout the curriculum, promoting the development of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
- Teachers will incorporate SEL strategies into classroom activities, fostering an environment that supports emotional well-being, empathy, and positive social interactions.
- Professional development opportunities will be provided to staff members to enhance their understanding and implementation of SEL practices.

## **Progressive Discipline Approach:**

- Discipline will be approached as a progressive process, taking into consideration the nature and severity of the behavior, the student's age and maturity, and any previous disciplinary incidents.
- The first response to minor behavioral issues will involve dialogue, peer mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative practices, aiming to address the root cause and promote personal growth.
- If the behavior persists or escalates, a series of escalating interventions to be arranged by the parents or guardians at their own expense may be

recommended, such as behavior contracts, counseling, or personalized support plans.

- In cases of serious or repetitive misconduct, disciplinary consequences, including, but not limited to, loss of privileges or out-of-school suspension, may be implemented while still maintaining a focus on restorative practices.

### **Parental Involvement:**

- Parents/guardians will be promptly informed about any significant behavioral concerns regarding their child and invited to participate in problem-solving and intervention processes.
- Documentation and regular communication channels will be established to keep parents/guardians informed about their child's progress and behavior.

### **Significant Behavioral Concerns**

The Farm School defines disruptive behavior, significant behavioral concerns, and repetitive misconduct as the following:

- Repeated Physical Aggression: Consistently hitting, kicking, or pushing peers after interventions and discussions about alternative behaviors.
- Significant Disruption: Continuously interrupting class in ways that significantly hinder the learning process for others, despite guidance and support.
- Safety Concerns: Actions that could seriously compromise the safety of the child or others, like running away from supervision, refusal and/or inability to follow safety protocols, or bringing prohibited items to school.
- Destructive Behavior: Intentionally damaging property or school materials in a way that goes beyond typical exploratory behavior of young children.
- Bullying Behavior: Engaging in repeated unkind actions or words towards another student, especially after interventions aimed at teaching empathy and kindness.

### **Incident Reports**

In the event of significant behavioral concerns, as defined above, an incident report will be filled out, and a parent notified that day at pick up, unless immediate attention is needed, then a parent may receive a call at the time of the incident.

Incident reports will be followed up by a parent meeting if needed (based on context, severity, and frequency) to address the concerns and to find solutions.

## Dismissal Policy

Students with repetitively disruptive behavior will be evaluated for continuation at The Farm School.

After three consecutive parent meetings with little to no positive behavioral change, the student's case will be reviewed for potential dismissal.

- **Evaluation Process:** The review will consider the student's overall behavior, the effectiveness of interventions, and the impact on the school community.
- **Final Decision:** A decision on dismissal will be made with careful consideration of what is best for the student and the school community. Parents will be involved in this process to ensure a transparent and fair approach.

## Grievance Policy

The following grievance procedures are to be used by parents who have a concern about The Farm School.

1. Discuss the concern(s) in detail with the teacher(s) as soon as possible.
2. If the concern has not been addressed or taken care of to the satisfaction of the concerned party within one week, the concerned party should contact the administrator.
3. If the concern has not been addressed or taken care of to the satisfaction of the concerned party within one more week, they may send their written grievance to The Farm School Board of Directors ([bellurbanfarmschoolboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:bellurbanfarmschoolboard@googlegroups.com)) and it will be addressed at the next scheduled meeting. In some instances, a special meeting may be called to address the concern(s).

# Volunteer & Visitors

The Farm School welcomes the participation of our community while prioritizing student safety. This policy guides volunteer and visitor involvement in our school.

Any visitors outside of Parents, Kim Doughty-McCannon (Executive Director), Amber Robbins (Administrator), Laura Larson (Lead Teacher), or Chelsey Harrington (Nature Play Facilitator), must be made known to and approved by the Executive Director or Administrator before their arrival.

**Volunteers:** Background checks are required for volunteers who will directly supervise students or have unsupervised access to them. Examples include but are not limited to volunteering for field trips, leading extracurricular clubs, or assisting in the classroom.

## **Exceptions:**

- Individuals attending one-time or group events where they will not be alone with students, such as classroom parties, assemblies, or grandparent visitation days, may be exempt from background checks.
- Teachers or staff will always be present during these activities to supervise.

We recognize that parents and families are crucial to a child's development and learning and encourage your active participation. Please speak with your child's teacher or the school administrator to explore ways to get involved. Here are a few suggestions:

- Share your trade or skill with the students through a small project.
- Assist in organizing Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Serve as a helper during Afternoon Enrichment.
- Accompany your child(ren) on field trips.

## **Visitors & Guest Speakers:**

- Sign-In: All visitors must be pre-arranged sign in with a teacher or administrator and wear a visitor badge.
- Classroom Visits and Presentations: Pre-arrangement is required with the teacher and school office.
- School Events: Check-in procedures and requirements will be communicated for larger events.

# Social Media

At The Farm School, we embrace the positive aspects of social media while prioritizing the privacy and dignity of our students, staff, and community. Our policy is designed to guide responsible sharing and ensure a respectful online presence.

## **Consent for Sharing Photos:**

- Explicit, written consent must be obtained from the parents or guardians before posting any photos or videos that feature students (with visible faces or otherwise) on the school's official social media channels or the Band app.
- We strive to respect the preferences of our students; therefore, children are given the option to consent to have their photos taken and shared, whenever feasible.

## **Privacy and Respect in Sharing:**

- Community members are encouraged to share their positive experiences related to The Farm School, ensuring they do not post photos or videos of students other than their own without the necessary consent.
- Content shared should always respect the privacy of individuals and uphold the values of The Farm School. Sharing negative or harmful content about the school, its students, or staff is prohibited.

## **Content Guidelines:**

- Teachers and staff may share educational activities or highlights through school-managed social media, with careful consideration to consent and privacy.
- All content shared by the school will aim to celebrate our community and educational journey, adhering to the highest standards of respect and privacy.

# Confidentiality

The Farm School is committed to protecting the privacy and security of our students' and families' information. This includes minor medical information provided during the application/registration process.

## **Collection and Use of Information:**

- Personal and medical information collected is solely to ensure the well-being and safety of our students while under our care.
- Access to this information is restricted to authorized staff who require it to perform their duties.

## **Protection of Information:**

- All personal and medical information is stored securely and treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- Information will not be disclosed to third parties without consent from the parents/guardians, except in cases where it is legally required or necessary for the safety of the student.

## **Parental Access and Updates:**

- Parents/guardians have the right to access their child's personal and medical information held by the school and are encouraged to update it as necessary to ensure accuracy.

# Liability Waiver and Release Policy

We are committed to providing a secure and nurturing environment for all our students to learn and grow. However, we recognize that participation in school activities, particularly those involving outdoor or physical education, carries inherent risks.

## **Policy Overview:**

We require all parents or guardians to acknowledge and agree to a Liability Waiver and Release as a condition of their child's enrollment and participation in school activities. This waiver includes, but is not limited to, the following terms:

- **Waiver of Rights:** Parents or guardians voluntarily waive the right to bring any legal action against The Farm School, its staff, or its Board of Directors for any personal injury, including serious injury or death, that may arise from their child's participation in school activities, except in cases of gross negligence or willful misconduct by the school.
- **Assumption of Risk:** By signing the Liability Waiver and Release, parents or guardians acknowledge the inherent risks involved in school activities and agree that they are assuming those risks on behalf of their child.
- **Release from Liability:** Parents or guardians release The Farm School, its staff, and its Board of Directors from any claims, damages, or liabilities for personal injury, illness, or property damage that may arise from their child's participation in school activities.

## **Procedure:**

With registration, a detailed Liability Waiver and Release form will be provided to all parents or guardians to read, understand, and sign before their child participates in any school activities. This signed document is required for enrollment at The Farm School and must be reviewed and updated annually.

## **Commitment to Safety:**

The Farm School remains steadfast in our commitment to implementing comprehensive safety protocols and measures to protect our students. This policy does not diminish our responsibility or commitment to maintaining a safe learning environment.