



Information for Families

Welcome and thank you for choosing the Farm School! We are honored and excited to teach your children and to help mold them into kind, creative and positive individuals. At the Farm School, we believe that children learn best by playing, experiencing, and learning from the world around them and that the first years of life create a strong foundation for success in school and beyond. We work hard to create an environment, experiences and activities that foster wonder, joy, excitement and nurture children's hearts, minds, and bodies. We aspire to provide a place and nature based curriculum where children interact daily with the farm and the world around them.

Our goal is to provide an environment where children are loved and respected for who they are. We provide activities and experiences that support the formation and maintenance of caring respectful relationships and that prepare children for elementary school and beyond.

Farm School Enrollment

To enroll in the Farm School, parents should submit the registration form and the \$30 registration fee. Registration forms are available on our website or at the Farm School. Registration forms will not be considered complete without the \$30 registration fee. Once the registration form and registration fee have both been received, children will be enrolled or placed on our waitlist based on availability of space in our program. All applications will be considered in the order in which they are received. The Farm School does not discriminate in its admission policies or in the administration of its program. The enrollment paperwork must be completed yearly and turned in before your child begins attending the Farm School each school year. Enrollment paperwork includes the following:

Registration form and \$30 registration fee

Enrollment Forms

- Enrollment Agreement (must be initialed and signed)
- Waiver and Liability Release (signed and dated)
- Emergency Contact and Parent Consent (signed and dated)
- Certificate of Immunization or Waiver

If a family chooses to withdraw from the Farm School, please let us know as soon as the decision has been made. We appreciate your consideration and respect.

Farm School Fees & Tuition

Registration Fee

Each school year there is a one time, non-refundable registration fee of \$30 per child.

Tuition

Monthly Tuition is \$200 for the toddler class and \$300 for the preschool class. Tuition is due the first day of every month (September-May). Payments received after the 10th will incur a \$35 late fee. Tuition can be paid online (including a \$5 online processing fee) or by cash/check. Checks should be made out to "The Farm School" and can be handed to Brittany at pickup or drop off.

If a check is returned due to insufficient funds, parents must pay any bank charges.

There will be no reduction in tuition for individual days missed due to illness, holidays, weather, vacation, etc.

Sick Child Policy

As a general rule, if your child is too sick to enjoy participating in all parts of the day, they should stay home. Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if (s)he has:

1. Undiagnosed rash
2. Cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
3. Runny nose, including large quantities of green or yellow snot
4. Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
5. A temperature of 100°F or above or chills
6. Throat/ear infection, or difficulty swallowing
7. Bacterial infection; streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep Throat) or impetigo
8. Contagious conjunctivitis (pink eye) or pus draining from the eye
9. Evidence of lice, scabies, ringworm, or other parasitic infestation

If your child gets sick during school, we will call you to come and pick her/him up. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person(s) you designated on the emergency contact sheet. Your child will be separated from the other children and made comfortable. Someone will stay with your child until you arrive.

Please notify us if your child has been exposed to or has a contagious disease. If children have been exposed to a communicable disease while at school, families will be notified.

Safety Practices

- We **wash hands** at arrival, before snack, after using the bathroom or blowing a nose, and after touching animals.
- **Toys will be sanitized** as needed with an anti-bacterial solution. Toys that have been in a child's mouth will be sanitized before being played with by other children.

- **Frequently touched surfaces** will be sanitized regularly.
- **Safety Drills** will be conducted throughout the school year. Evacuation plans will be posted on the wall next to exits.
- Because of the short school day, The **Farm School does not dispense or apply medications.**
- **First Aid** will be administered to a child needing care. Farm School staff are required to maintain current adult and pediatric CPR, First Aid and AED training certificates.
- In a life-threatening emergency, **911** will be called and the child will be transported to Bitterroot Health Hospital. Parents will be notified immediately, and in most cases will make the decision regarding the need for medical intervention.
- Farm School teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Before the first day of school, please make sure:

- You have filled out and returned all the enrollment paperwork
- You have sent an email to farmschoolpreschool@gmail.com telling us about your child
- If you use social media, follow our Instagram accounts and "like" our Facebook page

On the first day of school, please send the following:

- A Ziploc bag (with your child's name written on it) filled with a change of clothes, including pants, shirt, socks, and underwear
- Extra diapers/pullups and wipes (if your child wears them) to keep at the school and use as needed. We'll let you know when we need more. Cloth diapers are fabulous and we are happy to do a daily exchange of dirty for clean :)

For each school day, please send the following:

- A healthy snack and a water bottle. Please send your child's snack in a reusable container/lunch box and write your child's name on both the snack container and water bottle.
- Clothes for outdoor time. Please dress your child appropriately for the season given that we walk to/from our classroom plus spend time outdoors daily. This may include comfortable shoes, a sun hat, a coat, boots, snow pants, mittens, or a winter hat. Please label your child's gear with his/her name and thoughtfully choose clothes that will keep your child warm and dry!
- Optional, but very helpful: a backpack to carry all of the above, plus anything your child creates during the day.

Day to day operations...

Arrival and departure

Please arrive at the Homestead Organics main parking lot during the 5-minute period preceding the start of class. Help your child get his/her outdoor clothes on and have your child's snack ready, preferably in a backpack. Please have your child put his/her backpack (containing snack and water bottle) in the wagon, join the group and sign your child in on the sign in sheet. Families are welcome to accompany us on our walk to the school but are not required to do so. **Please note that we will leave the parking area shortly after the class start time so that we can spend our day at the school and on the farm.** If you arrive late, please be prepared to escort your child to the school building, which is a short walk from the parking lot.

At the end of the school day, we will pack up our things and walk back to the parking area. Please plan to wait for us outside of the gated area and look for the sign out book to sign your child out as we complete our goodbye circle. After we sing our goodbye song, children will grab their backpacks from the wagon and will only be released to adults whose names have been listed on the Emergency Contact form. Please do your best to pick your child up on time as staff have after school obligations and cannot stay late with your child.

Please remember that Homestead Organics is a working farm. While both farmers and Farm School staff have worked hard to ensure that our route to school and our school grounds are safe for small children, the farm has many items that are not considered child appropriate nor child safe. If you choose to spend time on the farm outside of school hours, please know that you are responsible for your children's safety and their supervision (this includes the Homestead Parking lot, which is utilized by MANY people and vehicles). We are extremely fortunate and benefit immensely from our location on the farm; please help us maintain our positive relationship by being thoughtful and respectful of the farm and all its property.

Snacks

We recognize that different families have different food preferences for their children. To be respectful of this, families are asked to provide a healthy snack and a water bottle (each labelled with the child's name) for each day their child attends the Farm School. Please try to use reusable containers whenever possible. We will allow nuts in our school as long as all enrolled children do not have any known nut allergies. In the event that an enrolled child has a nut allergy, all parents will be informed and foods containing nuts will be prohibited for that school year. Please do not send your child with anything that could be considered a choking hazard (popcorn, hot dogs, grapes, hard candies, etc.) and be mindful that children are talking excitedly during snack time...cut foods into smaller pieces than you might at home.

We incorporate tasting farm produce and cooking/baking things we have harvested into our day; at times snack will be supplemented with things we have created.

Weather and outside play

Outside time is part of our daily routine at the Farm School and we go outside daily, rain or shine. The only exceptions are when the temperature is below 10 degrees at outside play time or if the air quality is in the orange/red/purple. On these days, we will only be outside during our stroll to and from the school building.

The Farm school does not follow the Hamilton School District in terms of weather delays. Assume that class will happen unless you receive a text or a phone call from Farm School staff stating that school is cancelled. In the event that Hamilton School District cancels school, the Farm School reserves the right to also cancel school.

Clothing

With school taking place on a farm, we may get dirty. We'll also paint, bake, play outside, and do activities that celebrate the joys of childhood, but aren't necessarily the best for your child's fabulous dress clothes. Please send your child to school in **comfortable, washable clothing** that is appropriate for the weather.

We work hard to foster independence in terms of toileting and getting dressed/undressed for outside time. Please help your child be successful by thoughtfully choosing clothing and footwear that your child can put on and take off with minimal or no adult help. Please do NOT send your child in overalls, shoes with laces/zippers, or coats with buttons as a means of closure unless your child can independently put them on and take them off.

Behavioral guidance

We want all children to be successful at the Farm School and proactively do many things to support this. We work hard to create an environment where our routine helps children know what to expect, where children are engaged, where there are enough toys, and where children are given ongoing practice and reminders of what is expected. We provide a lot of positive reinforcement and model what we expect. However, we know that sometimes, kids need even more.

We use research based and time-tested strategies to guide children's behavior. We believe in natural and logical consequences, taking a short break from an activity or situation when needed, and teaching kids to empathize and fix a problem rather than just saying sorry.

When challenging behavior occurs, we use a variety of strategies to help children learn what they should do differently next time. When needed, we support children and help them learn what to do to "fix" the problem and what they can do and say differently the next time.

What about the Farm?

We believe that the experiences children have impact and shape their lives. At the Farm School, we want children to see, experience, and be part of the farm and all it has to offer. We will go on frequent walking "field trips" to all reaches of Homestead Organics Farm. During our field trips, we will plant seeds, collect eggs, and feed chickens, goats and pigs. We will harvest vegetables, taste them, and bring them back to our school to use in baking and cooking projects.