



Folksy
HOUSE



FOLKSY
in the
FOREST

est.
2022

Parent Handbook

1. *General Information*

Tuition Policy

Bi-annual tuition options are due August 1st and December 1. Monthly tuition is 9-equal payments from September 1st to May 1st. A late fee of \$10 will be added to monthly payments overdue after the 5th of the month. Any semester tuition not paid before the first of the month will be switched to monthly payments. If there is an extenuating circumstance resulting in inability to pay on time, or a dismissal from the program occurs, refunds will be reviewed and decided upon by the Board of Directors.

Community Engagement

We strive to inspire community amongst our Folksy families. In order to do so, we host gatherings and events throughout the year. These celebrations will be included in the yearly school calendar. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held in December so that you can be informed about your child's progress. You will receive newsletters throughout the school year detailing the activities your child is engaged in during the month and what they are learning.

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers have current First Aid and CPR certification. All teachers and substitutes have completed an interview process, background check, and have certifications or qualifications relevant to their role. Our leads are certified teachers and our work cycle instructors have a degree relevant to their topic, or have enough relevant and respected experience in the subject matter being taught. Our Forest School teachers have completed a Forest-School Certification program through Forest Teacher Institute, and Southern Adventist University in Chattanooga, TN. Continuing education is valued and ongoing amongst our core group of teachers.

Punctuality

Because our classes are grounded in rhythm, your on-time arrival is valued to begin our daily activities, and set your children's day off smoothly. For Forest School afternoons this is even more important, as we will be leaving to hike to our base camp sites. If arrival time will be delayed, parents must call the teachers as soon as possible so alternate arrangements for meeting the group may be planned.

No Toys or Food from Home

Nature provides all the materials necessary for playing in the outdoors, so toys from home are not necessary. Art supplies and other learning materials will be provided. Natural, organic and homemade seasonal snacks are provided for students in the morning program so there is no need to send additional foods with your child. Children are required to have a water bottle at the space at all times. Your registration fee includes a custom water bottle for your child that can be clipped to their bag. Please be sure to always have it with your child. *For FOREST SCHOOL, please provide one substantial snack. *For FULL DAYS* please provide your child with a packed lunch and one substantial snack.

Dress and Characters

We ask that characters or logo shirts are not worn at school. Keep dress neutral and comfortable for your child. Slippers are encouraged to be brought in and left so that your child can wear them daily while inside the school space. For Forest School Dress, see section IV.

After School Pick-up Policy and Procedures

No child is ever released to an adult who is not listed on the emergency form without direct communication between the parent and teacher. All classes have sign- in apps for tracking attendance. An adult will accompany each child on their walk to and from their car in the morning and after school. They can hang their backpack and coat, remove shoes, and come up where they will be greeted by a teacher and guided in doors.

Severe Weather Closings

Folksy closings (due to snow, ice or other severe weather situations) will be aligned with Clarence School District closings. In addition, when warnings are issued for Erie County, in the Clarence area, Folksy in the Forest may be canceled pending the timing of these warnings. If heavy downpours and lightning occur, children will be moved indoors to The Folksy House until the threat is over. If it is apparent that the severe weather will continue throughout the class time, parents will be notified by group text to pick up their children early. We will carefully monitor the children's comfort level in cold temperatures and will move them indoors if they become too cold to enjoy their outdoor experience.

11. Child Safety Guidelines

We are committed to keeping our children safe. We adhere to the following guidelines to provide consistent boundaries in the name of safety. We ask that parents uphold these same standards while in our indoor space, or in our shared outdoor spaces. It is also helpful to reinforce many of these practices at home.

Physical Safety

The children are always within eyesight and earshot of an approved adult. Each class stays together in designated areas specific to each portion of the day. The only people that interact with the school children during the day are preapproved by the faculty and are never alone with the children. We have a first aid kit indoors and Forest Teachers carry a first aid kit at all times outdoors. There are always two or more adults in the building or on the site at all times.

For Folksy in the Forest

- Site Assessment: The sites and structures are checked for safety each morning before the children arrive at school.
- Climbing trees: Children may climb trees at school while under adult supervision. They may not climb higher than twice their height and only after they have demonstrated competence.
- Sticks: The children may not play with sticks that are longer than their arm, unless it is clearly and responsibly being used as a walking stick, a tool (digging, for example), or for building, under the supervision of the teachers. Running is not permitted while holding a stick.
- Fire Safety: Children are only in the presence of fire while under supervision of their teacher(s). Although a child may be invited by a teacher to help tend a fire, they are given very specific instructions based on their age and ability to discern a safe distance. They will help to collect and haul firewood, but the teachers are always in charge of adding wood to the fire. There is always direct adult supervision when children are in the vicinity of fire or hot coals.

First Aid at School

In the case of a minor injury, the teachers may administer basic first aid—wash the injury with soap and water and cover with band-aids—as they see fit. The parents will be notified of any significant injuries at pickup (or after school via phone call if the child is picked up by another adult). In the case of a major injury, the teachers will call 911 and the parents/emergency contact and apply basic first aid until medical help arrives. All teachers have easy access to First Aid kits at all times. Children will always be sent to the nearest hospital if such extreme measure is needed.

Bathroom Safety

The indoor bathroom area is set up for independent use by the children. The teachers are located so that they can hear the children and are available to help when needed. If a child needs assistance using the bathroom. The bathroom door is not closed while a teacher is physically assisting a child in that space, but may be closed for privacy when the child is in there alone while the teacher waits outside the door.

Outdoors during Folksy in the Forest, children can use the outdoor toilet area independently as well. Children in this program must be comfortable with using an outdoor, non-flush toilet.

Emergency Evacuation

In the unlikely case that we would need to evacuate the property all parents would be notified via remind app or phone call.

Food Allergies

Teachers are aware of any allergies present in their class from the information provided on the emergency form. Teachers will not offer food to a child if it contains an ingredient that the child is allergic to and will notify the parent(s) ahead of time if a food is being served that a child cannot eat. Parents are responsible for providing alternate food for their child if the food served at school cannot be consumed due to an allergy. Emergency allergy medicine such as an epipen is required to be present in the child's backpack, labeled with instructions at all times.

III. Social & Emotional Safety Rules of Kindness

As teachers, naturalists, and stewards of this earth we are committed to inspiring and teaching respect for the earth and all its creatures and this includes modeling and fostering respect for self and for others at all times. Our school environment provides many opportunities for cooperative play both inside and outside and teachers are there to guide children into co-creative adventures. There is a zero tolerance policy for bullying, hitting, grabbing, pushing, name-calling, aggressiveness or any other demeaning behavior. If these behaviors occur, the teacher will separate the instigating child from the group to a calm place for a one-on-one discussion. Should the behavior in question not shift in a timely manner, the parent will be called to take the child home. Recurring instances of disruptive behavior will result in a parent-teacher conference to implement a behavior plan. We will work as a team to support each child to ensure a successful experience at Folksy. Although we wish to be able to serve all children that come to our school, we will not allow the health and safety of the class to be compromised. We do take any intimidating behavior seriously and recognize that it makes a deep impact upon others. Our teaching philosophy holds the dignity of each child at its very core. Our curriculum inherently supports empowerment, teaches judgment, honors boundaries, values intuition, increases awareness, models clear communication and encourages healthy expression of all feelings. Thank you for contributing to the safety of our children and our community by modeling the types of behavior that we want to encourage in the children.

IV. Folksy in the Forest; Clothing and Gear List

Dressing Appropriately

Making sure your child is dressed appropriately for three hours outdoors is CRITICAL to the success of our program. We adhere to the motto: There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing choices. Layers! Some days are 1-layer clothing days, some 2-layer days, some 3-layers. It is much easier to take layers off as needed than to warm a child that has already gotten chilled. The children's needs throughout the day are often unpredictable and will depend not only on the weather conditions but also the child's body temperature and activity level. Please make sure you dress your children in clothes they can get messy in. All clothing and footwear should be loose fitting and roomy to allow the body's own insulating layer to surround the skin. Pants are more comfortable for children (and easier to pull up and down for going to the bathroom) when they have elastic waists instead of buttons or snaps.

Fall and Spring

We require all children be dressed in the following clothing:

- Base layer of light clothing, quick dry. No denim jeans please.
- Rain boots or mud boots with lightweight socks
- When temperatures are cooler: long-sleeved tops and their Oaki Trail Suit
- On sunny days, please apply sunscreen before bringing your child to school and also send them with a sunhat.

Winter

If there is snow or ice, no water play will be allowed. We require all children be dressed in the following clothing:

- Waterproof boots, we recommend Bogs or Kamik USA
- Oaki Trail Suit
- Wool underlayers (Mama Owl, Smartwool). Polyester is best next to wool
- Silk or wool socks
- Mittens and a hat: wool or fleece is warmest.
- Wearing 2 layers of wool or polyester such as a thick wool sweater, or dungarees/fleece pants is the most effective way to layer children under their Oaki gear in order to keep them warm without feeling too bulky.

**We will hold a clothing swap at the beginning of each school year, so families can exchange sizes in items they have.

- Extra Set of Clothing: We have storage for each of the children at the camp shelter to contain a complete change of clothing in case they need warm, dry layers while outside. The complete change of clothing should include pants, underwear, warm socks, short sleeve shirt, long-sleeve

shirt, sweater or sweatshirt, warm hat and mittens. Since you know your child best, if you think it would be wise to pack an extra pair of footwear, or anything else for that matter, please do!

- **Label Clothing:** Please label everything with your child's name. Please make sure that all items are in good condition and that your child is comfortable wearing them.

Where to Obtain Gear

Children who are properly dressed will be able to enjoy their time outside in all seasons. There are many places to order soft wool products that are not itchy to sensitive skin. Mama Owl, Janus, Engel, Ruskovilla. We recommend Oaki and require everyone in Folksy in the Forest to have the Oaki Trailsuit in Classic Yellow to wear over their warm layers. This is for us to maintain a standard visual on the children.

Any rubber boots will work if warm socks are worn with them. Bogs Boots are the best or Kamik.. You don't have to spend a lot of money on expensive wool sweaters. Any old woolen sweaters of larger sizes found at thrift stores can be 'felted' down to your child's size by putting them in the washing machine and dryer. Also consider used or felted wool to make mitten liners (recommended under the Faire Child or Puddle mittens) and thick wool pants.

Maintaining your gear once it is really wet and muddy

Rain gear can go in the wash by itself when you get home on the rinse cycle (without soap - to preserve the waterproofing a little longer), and then either drip dry or put it in a low-heat dryer cycle. Jackets may be slightly less muddy than pants, so you may get a few days of wear out of them before needing to rinse them. Kookaburra or Eucalan wool wash products protect the lanolin in the wool that maintains the warm- when-wet properties. When aired out at night, wool does not hold odors and when worn under other layers, only needs to be washed every few weeks. If you purchase your pair of Bogs boots from REI, they will take them back if damaged and give you a new pair.

Water Bottle

Each child should always have a water bottle with them. For this reason we make a custom bottle for your child with a clip for their backpack included registration. Please make sure it gets washed out and reclipped.

Back Pack and Trailsuit

All children in Folksy in the Forest are required to have the backpack outlined on the gear sheet (Fjalraven in Acorn) and an Oaki trailsuit in Classic Yellow. This is for visibility and the waterproof property and durability. It also allows us to have a standard for hanging the packs outdoors off the ground, and an easy visual for counting the children outdoors.

