

# Little River Outdoor School

## Parent Handbook

We believe in providing an environment where children get the structure they need to thrive, the play they need to learn and the nurturing support they need to blossom.

### Welcome to Little River Outdoor School!

Here, at Little River Outdoor School, we believe that the early years of a person's life dramatically impacts who that person will become and, thus, take our jobs of providing education for these emerging individuals very seriously. We believe in providing the structure and

environment in which each child can explore, discover and blossom. We also know that the most important people in these children's lives are their parents and family. We consider family involvement and support an essential part of our mission. We want you to feel free to be as involved as you can be, and we welcome you to join us for class anytime.

### Curriculum

Little River Outdoor School is an outdoor education program that promotes learning through interest-led, hands-on experiences in nature. Children learn best when they are able to freely explore the natural environment and learn through real life experiences. A nature based program can improve the health and focus of a child, while also providing them with an appropriate environment to relieve stress, think critically and persist through challenges. We will utilize our time in nature to teach planned lessons in math, reading, writing and science. We use the curriculums 'Exploring Nature with Children', by Lynn Seddon and 'Wild Math', by Rachel Tidd. Each child will go at their own pace. There is no 'ahead' or 'behind', it is simply your child doing their academic work that they are capable of doing when they are capable off doing it. We believe by

allowing each child to go at their own pace and follow their interests, we will remove the pressure and stress that children often feel from a traditional school environment where every child has to be on the same academic level. By allowing them to go at their own pace, they can truly learn each and every concept fully.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for filing 'Notice of Intent to Provide Home Instruction' form to the Superintendent of Public Schools in the locality in which you live. A description of curriculum is to be provided. If you need assistance locating the correct forms, address forms should be mailed, description of curriculum, please ask Isabelle or Amanda.

### Animals

Children will have opportunities to learn and care for animals throughout the day. Animals located on the property:

Dog - Border Collie

Cats - breed unknown

Mouse - breed unknown

Rabbits - New Zealand

Horses - Quarter Horses

Cattle - Angus

Chickens - ISO Browns, Guineas

Ducks - breed unknown and Mallards

Goats - breed unknown

Pigs - Tamworth and breeds unknown

### Ages Served

Little River Outdoor School provides care for children ages 5 through 12 years old. Younger students may be accepted on a case-by-case basis.

### Enrollment Procedures

In order to enroll a child, parents must submit completed enrollment forms including: Child's Record Form, Immunization and Physical Examination Record Form/School Entrance Health Form, Parent Handbook Sign-off Sheet, Child Introduction Sheet, Parental Consent for Photos, Liability Insurance Declaration, Administration of Medications Policy, Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, General Permission for Regularly Scheduled Trips, Permission to Participate in Swimming or Wading Activities, Lyme Disease Information and Waiver. A transition plan will be arranged prior to enrollment between school staff and the child's family.

## Termination

Notice of 30 days must be given to Little River Outdoor School before withdrawal or schedule change.

We will make every effort to work with children who are having a difficult time adjusting. We commit to communicating fully with parents about challenges staff and children are having. If Little River Outdoor School and the child's family working together cannot assist the child to integrate into the school environment, Little River Outdoor School reserves the right to ask the parents to withdraw their child. Parents displaying inappropriate behavior towards other children in care and/or staff will be asked to withdraw immediately without notice, and without tuition refund. Adults should not correct or discipline other students. If an adult sees something of concern, the teacher should be notified immediately, never address the child.

## Weekly Schedule

Little River Outdoor School's classes are from 9:30AM to 3:00PM Monday through Thursday.

### Arrivals Departures and Absences

Arrival is from 9:00AM-9:30AM. Please do not arrive before 9:00AM, and never leave your child without making contact with a teacher. If you arrive before 9:00AM, we ask that you wait in your vehicle. Please have students arrive no later than 9:30AM. If you will be arriving after 9:30AM, please let us know.

Departure is at 3:00PM. We understand the unexpected can happen. If you will be unable to pick up your child by 3:00PM, please notify us as soon as you become aware of the situation so we will have time to make staffing adjustments. If arriving later than 3:00PM, parents will be expected to pay a \$25 fee. After 3:15 PM the fee is an additional \$1 per minute.

If your child will be absent, for illness or vacation, please notify us as soon as possible.

### Speed Limit

The speed limit once you turn off Bethlehem Church road onto the private road is 13MPH. Many neighbors walk this private road with children and pets, and our students frequent the driveway on a regular basis. If

speeding is reported, your family may be asked to withdrawal immediately without notice.

### Holidays and Breaks

Little River Outdoor School will be closed for holidays and breaks during the following times:

**Winter Break** - Starting Monday the week of Thanksgiving through January. Classes begin the first Monday of February.

**Summer Break 1** - Starting the last Monday of May for two weeks.

### July 4<sup>th</sup>

**Summer Break 2** - Starting Labor Day (first Monday in September) For two weeks.

### Meals

Little River Outdoor School does not provide food. Families are required to provide food for their child. We will eat two hearty snacks and one lunch per day. Each child will need a filled water bottle, which can be refilled throughout the day. Every child will pack out what they pack in. Meaning, all food garbage will be

packed back into their lunch boxes and brought home to be thrown away. There is no refrigeration offered. Ice packs in a well insulated lunch bag work great! Failure to provide food will result in a call to parent/guardian and an expectation that you will immediately bring food for your child. Please pack healthy foods high in proteins and grains, fruits and vegetables. We are very busy throughout the day and good, healthy food makes all the difference!

### Supplies

- Pencil box
- Colored pencils
- Regular pencils
- Crayons
- Markers
- Pencil sharpener
- Watercolor palette and brush
- Watercolor paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Glue Sticks
- Ruler
- Spiral notebook
- Refillable water bottle
- Life jacket



- Plastic tub and lid large enough to fit your child's backpack
- Waterproof backpack
- Sunscreen
- Hand and feet warmers (winter)
- Deet (optional)
- Clipboard
- Mask

### Clothing

Our days are spent outdoors busy in the garden, hiking, working with animals, learning in the creek and more. Your child needs to have the appropriate clothing required to do this freely. **They must have a minimum of two changes of clothes per day.**

For our colder, wetter months we recommend:

- 2 pairs of waterproof insulated boots
- Waterproof rain pants
- Waterproof coat
- Gloves
- Hat
- Snowsuit
- Extra socks

- Warm pants for layering
- Warm shirts/sweatshirts to layer

For our warmer months we recommend:

- Lightweight shoes
- Lightweight clothing
- Sun hat
- Swimsuit

Please apply sunscreen before arriving. We can re-apply later if needed. Due to the type of learning that we do, all shoes must be closed toed and fully secured to your child's feet. Do not wear ballet flats, flip flops, shoes with heels, or other similar shoes. Children are welcome to go barefoot whenever it is safe to do so. Failure to provide adequate clothing will result in a call to parent/guardian and an expectation that you will immediately bring appropriate clothing. Please note, clothing will get messy and wet with dirt, mud, paint, grass stains and more. Please only bring 'school clothes' for your child.

## Emergencies

Little River Outdoor School is committed to being fully prepared for emergencies. A copy of the School's Emergency Preparedness Plan is located in our first aid kit. Please, note if we evacuate the property we will gather at the public library in Floyd if the weather is bad, or we will take the students to Warren G.

Lineberry Park located behind the Mexican food Restaurant in Floyd. If there is an emergency during class that does not require evacuating the property, we will take shelter in the barn or house. The Emergency Plan is always with us with every student's records. We conduct fire and emergency drills monthly. We practice evacuation drills quarterly.

All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. We will not hesitate to call 911 in emergency situations. We will follow First Responder's recommendations for transportation to a hospital.

Parents will be notified as soon as possible. If parents cannot be notified, we will notify emergency contacts indicated on entry paperwork and continue to try to contact parents.

Teacher contact:

Amanda Lawson (253) 792-1710

Isabelle Porter (253) 392-9171

School Landline (540) 745-2034

### Mandated Reporting

Every person who works for Little River Outdoor School is a mandated child abuse reporter. We are required to be trained in child abuse reporting and to renew our training annually. We do not investigate or follow up on suspected abuse, but we will report any signs of abuse we observe. If Child Protective Services are called, we may or may not be able to inform you based on CPS recommendations and requirements.

### Cultural Identities

We are committed to promoting a diverse and welcoming school that supports the development of acceptance. Children who experience an attitude of tolerance from the adults around them, learn to adopt it as well. We will acknowledge and respond to children's observations of differences and encourage discussion and understanding. We do not intend to

promote a "tourist attitude" to multiculturalism, but rather foster an attitude of acceptance, understanding and tolerance. We invite you to share your family's background and culture with the Little River Outdoor School. Introducing and celebrating holidays, sharing food from your culture, and sharing music and dances from your culture are great ways to start the exploration. We look forward to hearing your ideas about sharing culture.

### Religious Practices

Little River Outdoor School celebrates holidays, some of which are religious. We want to be sensitive to your family's practices and values. If you have a holiday or celebration that your family celebrates that you would like to share with us, we would be happy to talk with you about how to do that.

### Field Trips

Our field trips will take us to the forest daily. We are licensed as a Family Day Home through Virginia Department of Social Services. Compliance history and a copy of regulations and additional information can be obtained by contacting:

Virginia Department of Social Services  
Division of Licensing Programs  
801 E. Main St. Richmond, Virginia 23219  
[www.dss.virginia.gov](http://www.dss.virginia.gov)

### Non-Discrimination

Little River Outdoor School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, political beliefs, marital status, or sexual orientation.

### Behavior Management

Little River Outdoor School will not use corporal punishment or emotional manipulation to manage children's behavior. Behavior is one way that children communicate their wants and needs. We believe in communicating with children at their developmental level to resolve problems and conflicts. If children need to take time away from the group, they will be in control of when they return to the group.

### Illness

Children should be kept home if they exhibit any of these symptoms:

- Diarrhea (three or more watery stools or one bloody stool within 24 hours)

- Vomiting (two or more times within twenty-four hours)
- Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered with cloths or with bandages
- For suspected communicable skin infection such as impetigo, pinkeye, and scabies. (The child may return twenty-four hours after starting antibiotic treatment)
- Lice or nits
- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and who also have one or more of the following:
  - o Earache
  - o Headache
  - o Sore throat
  - o Rash, or
  - o Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.

If a child develops one of these symptoms during care, the staff will call the parents and expect that the child will be picked up. The child will be cared for separately from the other children - until parents can arrive and take the child home.

Illnesses are recorded on an illness log and Virginia Department of Public Health, and our Virginia

Department of Social Services licensor will be notified if there are any instances of notifiable communicable diseases.

**It is required by law that Little River Outdoor School be notified within 24 hours or the next business day after a student or any member of the immediate household has developed ANY reportable communicable diseases.**

**Life-threatening diseases MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY!**

**Any symptoms of COVID-19 must be reported immediately. This includes students and any member of the immediate household.**

**You must report if any member of your family has come in to contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19.**

### **COVID-19 Considerations**

We believe that by being completely outdoors the risk of infection is minimized, but we also recognize that



the risk is still very real. We will take as many precautions as possible to minimize cross contamination between members of our school. We ask that each family take as many precautions available in your daily life to lessen your chances of contracting and spreading Covid-19. We reserve the right to ask a family to leave the school if we feel the family is taking unnecessary risks with their health. We also reserve the right to ask any family not to return to school for at least 14 days if: traveling outside the state of Virginia, any exposure to a positive case, any member of the family is ill.

### Medications

Little River Outdoor School will not administer medications.

Topical skin products and general first aid will be administered if necessary. Written parent authorization is required annually for topical skin products and general first aid. The products shall be in the original container and labeled with the child's name.

## Immunizations and Physical Examinations

Little River Outdoor School must have the current form approved by the Virginia Department of Health or a physician's form shall be used to record immunizations received and the results of the required physical examination. The form/report shall include the date of the physical examination and dates of immunizations received and shall be signed by a licensed physician, the physician's designee, or an official of a local health department.

## Approximate Daily Schedule:

*Our Schedule may change depending on students' need*

9:00-9:30 Arrival and Morning Chores

9:30 Opening Ceremony

10:00-10:30 Snack/Free Choice

10:30-11:00 Math

11:00-11:30 Free Choice

11:30-12:00 Read/Write/Draw/Art

12:00-12:30 Lunch

12:30-2:00 Adventure Time

2:00-2:30 Free Choice

2:30-3:00 Closing Ceremony

## Full Time Teachers

Isabelle Porter

Amanda Lawson

## Tuition

Tuition is \$6,000 yearly. Ten monthly payments of \$600 per month can be made. No payments are due for December or January, during winter break. Payment is due on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month

February-November. Cash, Checks or mobile payment such as Venmo or Zelle are accepted. Failure to pay on time will result in an additional charge of \$15 per day per child for a grace period of five days before you will be asked not to return with your child. Your child's spot can be filled after 10 days of nonpayment, and there is no guarantee a spot will be available later. If you wish to return, your child's name may be placed on the waiting list. Payment is due whether your child attends class or not. If class is canceled for reasons other than weather or covid-19, you will be credited those days. You will not be credited cancellations due to weather or covid-19. If a monthly payment plan is in place, payment is expected monthly for twelve months.

Any returned checks will incur a \$35 fee and \$15 per day per child fee until payment is received in full.

A \$75 registration fee will be charged per child.

If your child does not attend for 30 days, your enrollment can be terminated if we are not notified of your absence.

A \$600 non-refundable deposit will be required to be placed on our waiting list.

## Child Introduction Sheet

You know your child best. Please tell us as much as you can about your child, so we can provide the best possible education and care.

Eating:

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Allergies:

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Daily Activities:

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Fears:

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Likes:

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Dislikes:

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Habits:

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Development:

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Temperament:

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Projected Schedule:

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## Sign Off Sheet

I have read Little River Outdoor School Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures contained in this Handbook. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can always ask for information and clarification about the policies of Little River Outdoor School.

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Student Name

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Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

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Parent or Guardian Signature

Date