



EverWild Forest School  
Family Guidebook  
2023-2024 School Year

# Welcome to the Forest Family!

We're thrilled to have your child join us for our fourth school year in the Treasure Valley! We know this will be EverWild's best year yet!!

Here at EverWild, we believe getting our hands dirty and learning through the lens of nature is the best form of education. If you're new to this model and are interested in learning more, including the research behind it, we recommend starting with the books and resources listed in the section below.

The content of this guidebook is meant to help lead you through this beautiful journey with EverWild Forest School. It includes policies, holiday/break information, programming, and more!

We're always here to help and are excited to connect with you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at the phone number or email address below.



## See you in the Wild!



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# Resources

## Books

[Last Child in the Woods](#)

By Richard Louv

[There's No Such Thing as Bad Weather](#)

By Linda Åkeson McGurk

[Balanced and Barefoot](#)

Angela J. Hanscom

## Sampling of Research Articles

[Nature-based education and kindergarten readiness: Nature-based and traditional preschoolers are equally prepared for kindergarten.](#)

**Children in nature-based and traditional preschools are equally prepared for kindergarten.**

Cordiano, T.S., Lee, A., Wilt, J., Elszasz, A., Damour, L.K., Russ, S.W., (2019). Nature-based education and kindergarten readiness: Nature-based and traditional preschoolers are equally prepared for kindergarten. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, 6(3), 18-36.

[The benefits of children's engagement with nature: a systemic literature review.](#)

**Playful styles of nature engagement yield multiple benefits for children**

Gill, T., (2014). The benefits of children's engagement with nature: A systematic literature review. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 24(2), 10-34.

[What is different about Forest School?](#)

[Creating a space for an alternative pedagogy.](#)

**The divergence and freedoms inherent in Forest School may contribute to the well-being of participants**

Waite, S., Goodenough, A., (2018). What is different about

Forest School? Creating a space for an alternative pedagogy. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 21(1), 25-44.

[A forest-based environment as a site of literacy and meaning making for kindergarten children.](#)

**A forest environment provides kindergarten children with rich opportunities for literacy and meaning making**

Streelasky, J., (2018). A forest-based environment as a site of literacy and meaning making for kindergarten children. *Literacy*

[Reloading pupils' batteries: Impact of green spaces on cognition and wellbeing.](#)

**Study breaks in green spaces improved well-being and cognitive performance of adolescents**

Wallner, P., Kundi, M., Arnberger, A., Eder, R., Allex, B., Weitensfelder, L., Hutter, H., (2018). Reloading pupils' batteries: Impact of green spaces on cognition and wellbeing. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(6)

[The impacts of unstructured nature play on health in early childhood development: A systematic review.](#)

**Nature play may positively impact children's health and development, particularly in the areas of physical activity and cognitive development**

Dankiw, K.A., Tsiros, M.D., Baldock, K.L., Kumar, S., (2020). The impacts of unstructured nature play on health in early childhood development: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE*, 15(2)

## Online Resources

[Idaho Environmental Education Association](#)

[IdahoSTARS](#)

[Idaho STEM Action Center](#)

[Children & Nature Network](#)

[Natural Start Alliance](#)

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# Introduction

## What is Forest School?

In summary, Forest Schools are all-weather outdoor education programs that utilize nature immersion and place-based curriculum to develop cognitive, physical, and social- emotional skills in children. The Forest School pedagogy typically incorporates philosophies commonly used in [Waldorf](#), [Montessori](#), and [Reggio-Emilia](#) methods.

The traditional forest school model was popularized in Europe in the early 1830s, and included the following primary principles:

- » Outdoors in all weather
- » Child-led flow learning
- » Guided risk taking
- » Place-based curriculum
- » Environmental stewardship
- » Small class sizes



## Forest School Origins

Germany's original Kindergarten is today's modern-day Forest School, which has evolved to serve the needs of preschoolers through upper elementary.

Founded in 1837 by educational pioneer Friedrich Fröbel, Kindergarten (translated: the garden of children) implemented a holistic academic model that nourished children like "plants in a garden," focusing on student's individual learning needs and emotional development. Nature served as the primary foundation from which inquiry-based teaching styles were based.

Educators around the world adapted the kindergarten model and recognized that the unique risks, challenges, physical benefits, social skills, and emotional growth opportunities presented by nature served as the perfect teaching tool.

The first English-language Kindergarten in the US opened in 1860 by German immigrants. Considering the growing popularity and observable benefits of Kindergarten, Elementary schools in the US began implementing a more nature-focused and inquiry-based approach to learning.

As World War I approached, children were taken indoors and provided a more rigorous curriculum focused on language and math with greater undertones for overall structure



and obedience in the face of great uncertainty. This trend deepened through the great war times and has remained relatively unchanged in the public school sector.

Educators began pushing back on the standardization and “academification” of early childhood education. The first Forest School was founded in Sweden in the 1950s, offering programs to children in an entirely outdoor classroom. To this day, Denmark does not offer formalized academic programs until age seven, yet the country maintains some of the highest scholastic achievement records of all developed nations.

Back in the US, the No Child Left Behind legislation implemented high stakes standardized testing across the country to increase the country’s academic performance scores. When scores failed to rise, Common Core programs introduced one-size-fits all lesson plans and a new level of academic expectations that forced out non-test centered activities such as music, art, P.E, and recess.

*“The great sadness of early childhood education in 21<sup>st</sup> century America is the collapsing of the curriculum from wholeness to narrowness, from hands, heart, and head to just the head. From Saint Francis of Assisi to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi to Friedrich Fröbel to Rudolph Steiner to Maria Montessori to John Dewey to Claire Warden, there’s been a constant reaffirmation of the need for early childhood education (well, all education really) to address the whole child, not just the right hand or the neocortex. But currently, narrow-minded ideologues have somehow seized the podium and have declared, “Though shalt learn your letters and numbers, above all else! Play and wonder be banished.” And many kindergarten teachers, and yes, even preschooler are knuckling under and paying homage to the worksheet gods. Songs and stories, recess and recreation are jettisoned in favor of phonemic awareness and test preparation. Woe is us!”*

*– David Sobel (2016) Nature Preschools and Forest Kindergartens: The Handbook for Outdoor Learning.*

In response to the increased ‘academification’ of childhood, a small number of US educators began importing the European-based forest school model. There are now over 500 Forest Schools across the country, and the number continues to climb as demand increases for developmentally appropriate, evidenced-based education.

## The Benefits of Forest School

There are countless reasons to incorporate a forest school education with conventional methods of learning. For one, forest school programs naturally focus on hands-on (experiential) learning techniques in the subjects of science, mathematics, engineering, literacy, writing, and art. Forest schools allow children to seamlessly apply the scientific method of developing questions, testing hypotheses, and creating conclusions that inform their theories and worldview. In addition, the forest school pedagogy nurtures children’s independence, emotional intelligence, and sense of community. The forest

school teaching philosophy is based on the education of the whole child and does not focus on arbitrary academic milestones.

Studies have found the following outcomes for children attending Forest Schools:

#### Academic Outcomes



- » Increased retention of subject matter
- » Higher standardized scores
- » Improved grades overall
- » Elevated math, reading and writing skills
- » Higher graduation rates

#### Personal Development Outcomes



- » Increased empathy, leadership, and communication skills
- » Enhanced resilience
- » Heightened critical thinking and problem solving
- » Better spatial skills

#### Mental Health and Well-Being Outcomes



- » Increased psychological well-being
- » Reduction in depression, anxiety, & stress
- » Lessened Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) symptoms
- » Decreased occurrences of obesity & asthma

#### Positive Stewardship Outcomes



- » Stronger connection to nature
- » Increased environmental values
- » Pro-environmental behaviors into adulthood

# About EverWild Forest School

## About

The crucial nature-child connection is a living, breathing relationship; one that has innate value and meaning in and of itself. Children enrolled in EverWild Forest School are permitted a play-and-place-bonded experience where they can observe the dynamics of the seasons through time. In addition, our community-focused pedagogy elevates peer to peer relationships through stories, cooperative learning, and shared experiences. EverWild Forest School's approach to life and education aspires to help raise children who are flexible, creative, resilient, confident, and empathetic.

EverWild Forest School is a proud and active member of the following organizations: Idaho Environmental Education Association, the American Forest Kindergarten Association, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Natural Start Alliance, the Children and Nature Network, and the Idaho Conservation League. In addition, EverWild Forest School participates in partnership with Idaho STARS, the Idaho STEM Action Center, Boise State University, and Antioch University New England. Our curriculum, policies, and standards of excellence are derived from those established by these distinguished organizations.

## Mission

Our mission is to connect children to themselves, their communities, and to the natural world through free play, place-based curriculum, and nature immersion.

## Vision

We envision a world of confident, creative, and engaged citizens who live in relationship with nature and in awareness of the global community.

## Objectives

We seek to fulfill our mission and vision through the following objectives:

- » Provide a safe environment for students to freely explore the outdoors and participate in risky play.
- » Support each student's developmental and emotional needs through trust-based mentorship, growth-mindset language, and positive discipline.
- » Help students build knowledge of various concepts across the curriculum including science, math, history, and language arts.
- » Facilitate deep connections with the local natural and human communities through immersive play and place-based learning.
- » Build resiliency, independence, and confidence in students by enabling experiences outdoors in all weather.

- » Create positive associations with the natural world by allowing students time to slow down, observe, and directly engage with the environment.

## Core Values

- » **Youth Are Powerful:** We believe that youth are intelligent, capable, and curious. We create programs that honor their intellect and autonomy, and allow them to be the experts of their own learning journey.
- » **Belonging Builds The Foundation:** We believe that a strong sense of place sets a solid foundation from which children can grow into independent and secure individuals. Our programs connect children to the local human and natural communities to develop deep roots from which to bloom.
- » **We Are A Global Community:** We focus on the commonalities that bring us together in this human experience, especially our shared responsibility as stewards of the Earth. Our programs prioritize empathy, respect, and understanding, regardless of differences in schools of thought, orientations, cultures, or creeds.

## Programs

We offer three divisions of programming: Forest School, Family & Community Programs, and Enrichment Camps.

### Forest School: September through May

- » Early Learning (partial day; ages 4-6)
  - *Definition of Enrollment Age: All children wishing to enroll in Early Learning programs must be four years old on or before October 1 of the school year in which the child enrolls.*
- » Forest Kindergarten (full day; ages 5 & 6)
  - *Definition of Enrollment Age: All children wishing to enroll in Forest Kindergarten must be five years old on or before October 1 of the school year in which the child enrolls.*
- » Homeschool Enrichment (partial day; ages 7-12)

### Family & Community programs: year-round

- » Tots & Trees (walking toddlers + adult)
- » Family Nature Classes
- » Specialty Classes
- » Community Events

### Enrichment Camps: year-round

- » Holiday Camps
- » Summer Camp

## What about the Weather?

EverWild Forest School's classes are completely nature-based and take place outside in all weather conditions, except severe weather (see our Health & Safety Protocols in the Family Guidebook). If intolerable conditions occur during class, classes will erect a shelter with our tarps or gather under covered areas if available at the location. Part of a full outdoor education experience is learning how to adapt to uncomfortable situations. This teaches resiliency and shows our children that we can find joy even in stormy circumstances. Preparing for inclement weather helps children to learn the importance of planning ahead, identifying appropriate gear, and developing a back-up plan (change of clothes).

We believe that "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear!" In other words, with the appropriate clothing and accessories, students will have little issue with the weather. Children should be able to tolerate a variety of clothing densities and materials to be outside in every season. They should be capable of practicing resilience to all types of weather.

# Locations

## Veterans Memorial Park (Boise)

930 N Veterans Memorial Pkwy, Boise, ID 83703. Classes meet in the south parking lot off Stilson Rd behind Parkway Dental.

## Garden City Greenbelt

6000 N Glenwood St, Garden City, ID 83714. Our Forest Kindergarten Basecamp is located behind the University of Idaho Extension Office.

## Eagle Greenbelt

145 E Riverside Drive, Eagle, ID 83616. Classes meet at the Greenbelt entrance between Bardenay restaurant and the Hilton Garden Inn.

## Wilson Springs Pond (Nampa)

3506 S Powerline Rd Nampa, ID 83686. Classes meet at the south trailhead entrance.

## Marianne Williams Park

3451 E Barber Valley Dr, Boise, ID 83706

# Curriculum

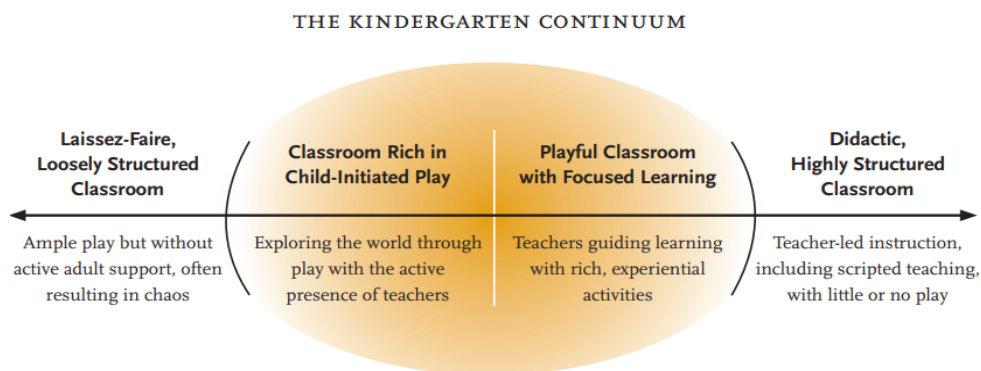
## Place-Based Curriculum

EverWild Forest School leverages the evidence-based approach of a place-based curriculum, which is described as:

Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other concepts across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to their community, enhances students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school. (Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities by David Sobel, 2004).

During each class, our teachers will guide students through phenology-based themes that explore concepts in science, math, engineering, literacy, writing, history, art, and music. With nature as the ultimate teaching tool, our intentional weekly themes are place-based and driven by the seasons, local natural and cultural history, and the wider community (international celebrations, etc.). EverWild Forest School students benefit from the harmony of an emergent curriculum model with intentional curriculum that allows the interests of students to inform topics of exploration on the backdrop of place-based themes.

EverWild Forest School harmonizes the benefits of child-led learning and place-based curriculum. Each class is loosely structured to offer opportunities for both evidence-based approaches to education. As mentioned previously, our goal is to achieve the perfect balance of a playful yet guided classroom flowing within the center of the Kindergarten Continuum.



# Early Learning & Homeschool Enrichment Curriculum

## MARCH Week 3 Forests

	1	2	3	4
<i>Topics</i>	Day of the Forest	Forest Stewardship	Roots	Sap
<i>Books</i>	<i>The Grandpa Tree</i> by Mike Donahue <i>The Nut that Fell from the Tree</i> by Sangeeta Bhadra <i>Seeds and Trees</i> by Brandon Walden	<i>The Giving Tree</i> by Shel Silverstein <i>Who Will Plant a Tree</i> by Jerry Pallotta, Tom Leonard	<i>What Do Roots Do</i> by Kathleen Kudlinski <i>We Walk Through the Forest</i> by Lisa Ferland	<i>The Sweetest Season</i> by Elissa Kerr <i>What On Earth?: Trees</i> by Kevin Warwick
<i>Activities</i>	Meet a Tree Bark Rubbings	Bug Hotel Nature Art Counting Nature	Root Observation Nature Bingo Root Drawings	Sap Hunt Pretend Breakfast Simon Says- Tree Sap
<i>Discussion Questions</i>	What makes a healthy forest? How are plants and animals connected?	How can we be forest stewards? Why is it important to protect the forest?	How would the growth of a plant be affected if its roots were cut off? What do roots do for a plant?	Where does sap come from?

### SPRING | Forest Stewardship

**OBJECTIVE:**  
Students will understand how the public can practice forest stewardship in a variety of ways.

**VOCABULARY:**  
Stewardship- taking care of something  
Decomposers- eat plants and animals that are dead

### ENGAGE

- Ask: "What do you think when you hear the word forest?"
- Show them an image of a forest and explain that forests have many trees, but forests have many interesting parts.
- Explain how you are going to find out about these parts as well as what we can do to help keep the forest beautiful
- Brainstorm a list of things in the forest. Show them the [forest bubble map](#) or create one together.
- Explain each part of the forest in basic terms. Give special attention to the decomposers and explain how they eat plants and animals that are dead.
- Discuss how all the parts work together so that the forest is healthy.

#### Intro game:

- Create a forest memory game using images or drawings of vital parts of a forest (refer to the forest bubble map).
- You will need two cut out images of each thing to play the memory game.
- Place all the cards face down and have each child choose two cards at a time.
- If they find a match, they get to keep the cards. If they aren't a match they must place them face down again.

Developmental Continuum: practices empathy, recognizes the needs of others, pattern recognition, recall, writing, literacy

**MATERIALS:**  
Be creative! Choose supplies that are available to you.

- DIY Forest Memory Game
- Journals
- Pencils

### EXPLORE

- If possible, take the children on a short nature walk to a forested area nearby so they may observe the parts of the forest noted on the bubble map.
- Children can carry their journal to record what they see.
- Discuss their observations.

Read story on topic.

Literature options:

- The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Who Will Plant a Tree* by Jerry Pallotta, Tom Leonard

### SPRING | Forest Stewardship

### EXPLAIN

- Explain that stewardship means being responsible for something and taking good care of it such as protecting your belongings and using them carefully without harming or wasting them. So whether we use a forest for hiking, hunting, or getting wood, we need to be good forest "stewards" so that the other people can use the forest today, tomorrow, and for many years to come.
- Even though you may not own a forest, you can still be a forest steward. You are a forest steward when you choose to use products from renewable resources (e.g., trees). You are a forest steward when you recycle wood and paper products. You are a forest steward when you keep the forest beautiful by not littering. You are a forest steward when you don't hunt plants and trees (without good reason).
- Someday, you might have a forest of your own. You will be a forest steward when you plan for and choose to do the things in your forest that keep it healthy and useful for plants, wildlife, and people.
- Talk about the many benefits of the forest habitat. Elicit student dialogue to answer the question: "What can you do to keep the forest healthy and useful?"
- Give each child a piece of paper/cardboard/paper bag and write "I'm a forest friend because..." After the above discussion on forest stewardship help them think about how they can be a forest friend and write their answers on their paper.

### EXTEND

Activities to extend understanding of the topic:

- Bug Hotel
  - Have children work together and use their imagination to build a bug hotel.
- Nature Art
  - Use only natural materials to create art.
  - Show children an example by creating a butterfly using sticks for the body and leaves for the wings.
- Counting Nature
  - Place leaves, rocks, pine cones, and moss on a piece of paper or cardboard.
  - Practice counting how many of each item and write the total.



Discussion Questions:

- How can we be forest stewards?
- Why is it important to protect the forest?



Weekly themes are implemented for consistency across classes and to allow families to scaffold learning at home by complementing forest school lessons with supplemental activities. While the themes are homogeneous across programs, the level of cognitive challenge increases with the age group.

For example, the Early Learning class may spend time collecting and sorting leaves by species, color, and/or shape, while the Homeschool Enrichment class may conduct an experiment to analyze which chemical compounds are associated with different leaf color (e.g., carotenoids, anthocyanins, etc.). With the benefit of four to five full days per week, the Forest Kindergarten class can dive more deeply into each concept.

## Forest Kindergarten Curriculum

### Wild Math

Forest Kindergarten utilizes Wild Math® to cover the typical math skills and incorporate activities, lessons, and games that take place outdoors where it is naturally hands-on, engages all of the senses, and includes plenty of movement.

### Wild Reading

Forest Kindergarten utilizes Wild Reading to integrate elements from Waldorf, Montessori, and nature-based learning methods and combines them with [science-backed research](#) on how children learn to read.

Each week, there is a featured letter sound, followed by engaging lessons and activities in phonological awareness skills, word families/phonics, sight words, and other key literacy skills.

### Forest Fridays

Full-day Forest Fridays offer nature immersion and exploration, as well as community-based projects, speakers, and field trips that connect your child to their community and lights up their interest in civic engagement.

\*Children do not have to be enrolled in Forest Kindergarten to attend Forest Fridays. Any 4-6 year old can enroll in Forest Fridays.\*

## Documentation of Learning

Along with our weekly themes and guided activities, teachers utilize our parent communication tool, Brightwheel, to provide a record of student learning through each season.

## Teaching Philosophy: Educaring & Mentorship

Our teaching philosophy is based on positive reinforcement, respectful communication, and positive discipline. Coined, as “educaring,” our teachers are attuned to each

student's emotional, cognitive, and physical needs. We focus on the whole child when considering both encouragement and discipline. We prioritize autonomy and consent. We ensure that play and risk taking is "as safe as necessary" rather than "as safe as possible," which is aligned with the forest school philosophy. In the sections below, we will explore the intricacies of our philosophies with examples and discussion.

## Class Expectations

As with any program, EverWild Forest School implements rules of respect and safety. In terms of behavior, we do not tolerate bullying, shaming, name-calling, or any unwelcome physical touch.

### Class Rules

- » Keep myself safe
  - Follow teacher's directions
  - Stay with the group
  - Tell your teacher if you don't feel safe or respected
- » Respect the safety and feelings of others
  - Use kind words
  - Respect body boundaries
  - Use kind actions



Rules related to safety are described in more detail in our Risk Management section.

We also set strict expectations for our teachers and hold ourselves accountable to the same respect and safety rules. Teachers are expected to use growth mindset language (e.g., say "you worked really hard on that!" instead of, "good job!") and to prioritize consent (e.g., may I help you over the log by lifting you up?). In addition, teachers are expected to model the same respectful behavior as they require from their students. Our teachers do not force children to share, instead, they facilitate the taking of turns; and they do not force apologies.

### Positive Discipline and Natural Consequences

Even in the best of circumstances, sometimes behavior will require intervention. If the child is exhibiting behaviors that are dangerous or hurtful to others, the child is pulled aside to a safe place to work through their behavior with a teacher. Our experienced teachers start by validating any emotions the child may be experiencing. This "name it to tame it" action helps the child better understand their own emotions, while simultaneously showing that the adult understands as well. For example, "you're angry that Jane took the stick from you." By stopping here (even if the subsequent behavior – hitting Jane because she took the stick – was wrong), the child is able to calm their

emotions down and be more open to working toward a solution. Once the child is ready, the teacher will address the unsafe behavior by brainstorming with the child as to why it violated our rules of respect. Together, the teacher and child develop a solution to “fix it.” The child may want to apologize with sincerity, talk it through, or offer a gentle hug. We do not force our students to say sorry, as we want to ensure all apologies or repair attempts are sincere.

If behavior is not associated with another person (e.g., running away), natural consequences of this unsafe action include being required to stay by the teacher for the remainder of class. Hitting other children with sticks or rocks may result in the natural consequence of losing the privilege to pick up sticks or rocks for a limited time. If unsafe or hurtful behavior, like bullying, persists despite multiple attempts to resolve the issue, teachers will notify caregivers via Brightwheel and work with them to develop solutions. Continued behavior that violates our safety or bullying rules may result in a phone conversation or in person meeting between parents and the Director to discuss options. If the child’s behavior continues, it may be decided that forest school may not be the best fit for the child at this time.

## Class Structure

### Class Size

Maximum typical class sizes listed below. Each class includes two teachers.

- » Early Learning: 10 students (1:5 ratio)
- » Forest Kindergarten: 12 students (1:6 ratio)
- » Homeschool Enrichment: 12 students (1:6 ratio)
- » Tots & Trees: 14 students with caregivers and one teacher

### Class Schedules

- » Early Learning: 1-5 days per week, 9:00am - 12:00pm or 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- » Forest Kindergarten: Monday - Thursday
  - o Full-day option from 9:30am-3:30pm
  - o Half-day option from 9:30am-12:30pm
  - o Forest School Fridays are an optional add-on from 9:30am-3:30pm
- » Homeschool Enrichment: 1-2 days per week, 9:00am - 12:00pm or 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- » Tots & Tees: Every Friday from 10:00am-11:15am

### Daily Schedule

Welcome Circle

After welcoming our Forest Friends at the drop off area, we hike into the woods and for a Welcome Circle. Welcome Circles are the foundation from which we build upon our

day. In our circle we will reaffirm our connections through story and song and discuss the themes for the day.

### Exploration and Discovery

For the first part of class, the group will spend time exploring the habitat at their own pace, manipulating their environment, and making discoveries. This time for unstructured free play is critical for development while also building relationships within the group. Teachers are engaged with students during open-ended exploration, applying an emergent curriculum model to support inquiries as they present themselves.

### Tea & Story Time

Halfway through the class, the group will gather for a seated moment of reflection and discussion over snacks and herbal tea. Teachers will read a book, poem, or sing a song relevant to the topic of the day.

### Daily Lesson with Guided Activities

The latter half of class will be focused on a specific topic as it relates to the season and place. Students will participate in hands-on learning experiences in concepts based in science, art, math, literacy, and more.

### Farewell

At the end of class, the class will reflect on what was enjoyed about the time together and discuss what did not work. A farewell song will close out the day and send our Forest Friends off with excitement for the next class.

## Arrival and Departure Procedures

Upon drop-off and pick-up, teachers will sign in/out students on the Brightwheel application.

Only primary parents/caregivers and those listed as Approved Adults listed in the child's profile within the application or via verbal approval by the primary caregiver are permitted to pick up a child. We require a photo ID of the Approved Adult upon initial pick up.

## Late to Class / Late Pick Up and Absences

If you anticipate arriving 5 or more minutes past the start of class, please send a message to your teachers through the Brightwheel app. To provide a rich and educational day in the forest for the attending students, we will be unable to delay in the drop off area longer than 20 minutes past the start of class. We will try to be as accommodating as possible for parents/caregivers who arrive later than 20 minutes after class (e.g., one teacher can meet the parent and student near the group's location if it doesn't impede class flow).

If your child will be absent for a scheduled class, please send a message to your teachers within the Brightwheel app.

## Substitutes

Occasionally, teachers may call out sick or have pre-approved time off. In these instances, we call upon our other team members, our designated substitute teachers, or qualified volunteers to step in. When this happens, parents will be notified via our parent communication tool, Brightwheel, of the change in class leadership for the day. In the case that a substitute teacher or volunteer cannot be identified to step in, the class will be conducted as usual; however, the group may combine with another class for the day or will maintain a close distance to other classes in case a second set of hands are needed. Our student to teacher ratio is low enough to allow for occasional solo teaching.

In the rare instance where both teachers are absent and no substitute is available, class may be canceled and a refund for the day will be applied to the next month's tuition.

## Volunteers

EverWild is lucky to have a robust volunteer program and our volunteers are important in helping our school operate efficiently. Classes may have volunteers who volunteer on a regular basis, or volunteers who enjoy helping when staff needs a substitute teacher. All volunteers undergo a background check.

# Enrollment

## Schedules

To keep classes consistent and develop strong class communities, families must register for the entirety of the class chosen. If you register for a 2 day a week class, you are committing to 2 days each week. We will not be able to invoice you for only 1 day a week.

Families are allowed to register for classes at different locations but must register for the entirety of each class (ex: M/W at Eagle, T/Th at VMP to make a 4 day week)

## Forest School Enrollment Process

Priority enrollment opens for current families mid-January. All remaining spots will be open to the public on February 1st. Choose your desired class on our website and check out to pay the nonrefundable \$75 materials fee and September's tuition. Once your application is received, you will be emailed next steps to complete registration on Brightwheel and invoiced for last month's tuition. Last month's tuition is due by August 1, 2023. Administration will also give you a call to answer any questions and go over the enrollment process.

Your child's space in the class will be reserved as soon as the required paperwork is submitted and the fees are paid in Brightwheel.

There will be a check in meeting scheduled 4-6 classes into your child's experience with their new class. The check in is a time for teachers and administrators to continue to develop their relationship with parents and develop a culture of communication.

### Tots & Trees Enrollment

Tots & Trees enrollment is initiated by applying for the desired class through our website and submitting the \$70 Nonrefundable Materials Fee. Once the Materials Fee is submitted, your child will be added to the roster and you will be contacted for next steps. The enrollment deposit is separate from monthly tuition.

The cost of the first month's tuition will be prorated if starting mid-month. Tuition is nonrefundable.

### Mid-Year Enrollment

To enroll mid-year, choose your desired class on our website and check out to pay the nonrefundable \$50 application fee. Once your application is received, you will be emailed next steps to complete registration forms on Brightwheel. The mid-year enrollment process includes a trial class for children to attend in order to determine if EverWild Forest School is a good fit with the teachers and class dynamics, and if our program is a good fit for your child before final enrollment is complete. This is a drop-off class and should be treated like the first day of program participation.

After the initial trial class, the parents, child, and teachers need to feel confident EverWild Forest School is a good fit. An administrator will contact you after the trial class to answer additional questions and chat about how the trial class went. If it is determined that EverWild Forest School is a good fit for your child, you will be invoiced a \$75 materials fee and tuition for the first and last month.

Your child's space in the class will be reserved as soon as the required paperwork is submitted and the fees are paid.

There will be a check in meeting scheduled 4-6 classes into your child's experience with their new class. The check in is a time for teachers and administrators to continue to develop their relationship with parents and develop a culture of communication.

### Completion of Enrollment

Enrollment is not finalized until the following are completed:

- Creation of family account on Brightwheel
- One-time payment of \$75 Materials Fee (\$70 for Tots & Trees)
- Media Consent Form

- Release of Liability Form
- Family Guidebook/Parent Contract
- Behavior Intervention Policy
- Tuition for first and last month

The cost of the first month's tuition will be prorated if starting mid-month. Tuition is nonrefundable.

Failure to submit all the required paperwork and tuition fees will result in termination of your child's enrollment.

## Waitlist

Once a class is filled, prospective families can sign up for our waitlist [here](#) to be considered at a specific date and/or when there is an opening. We will contact families in the order their wait list submission is received.

## Communication- Brightwheel

EverWild Forest School utilizes Brightwheel for all communication. The software offers a mobile application for easy sign-in/out and communication with teachers. Your child's teacher will share photos and class updates on the Brightwheel mobile application so you can see all the adventures the kids go on during the day!

Invoices, weekly newsletters, private messages, and incident reports are sent via Brightwheel.

By registering with EverWild Forest School, you are agreeing to partner with your child's teachers and EverWild administrators in case challenges arise. Caregivers are important partners in working with us to build their child's social-emotional skills.

## Business Hours

Business hours for parent teacher communication are Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Messages in Brightwheel will be responded to during these hours. Please send non-class related messages before or after class during these business hours.

If you have an emergency outside of these hours, please contact Ilyse at 208-996-3539.

## Accommodations

EverWild Forest School aims to offer programs that meet the emotional, developmental, and physical needs of students. Forest school is a good fit for many children but it is not right for all children and is not the answer to every child's needs. While our team is committed to providing high-quality educational experiences to children of all abilities, we may not have the specialties to offer the support at the level

required for all students. Please let us know during the enrollment process if your child may need emotional, cognitive, and/or physical accommodations that may require specific support.

We work with families on a case-by-case basis to determine if we have the resources to provide the level of care that ensures a high-quality experience for each child.

We believe that nature is critical for the developmental needs of all children, but forest school is not a one-size-fits-all program. As we continue to grow as a program, we are prioritizing training and developmental opportunities specific to addressing the needs of differently abled children in a forest school setting.



# Tuition

School Year runs from September - May. First month's tuition and \$75 materials fee (\$70 for Tots & Trees) is due upon enrollment. Last month's tuition is due by August 31, 2023 or before your child's first day if registering mid-year. Tuition is invoiced on a month-to-month basis thereafter via Brightwheel.

## Forest Kindergarten

Forest kindergarten takes place Monday through Thursday from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Families may choose half-day or full-day with an option to add Fridays.

Schedule	Monthly Tuition
Monday - Thursday Half-Day	\$530
Monday - Thursday Full-Day	\$865
Monday - Friday Full-Day	\$1,080
Only Fridays	\$215

## Early Learning & Homeschool Enrichment

Families may mix and match classes to achieve their desired schedule but must enroll for the entirety of each class (e.g., enrolling in Mon/Wed mornings and Tues/Thurs afternoons for a 4-day weekly schedule).

Days per Week	Monthly Tuition
4-days	\$530
3-days	\$434
2-days	\$315
1-day	\$175

## Tots & Trees

Tots & Trees classes meet every Friday from 10:00am to 11:15am.

Days per Week	Monthly Tuition
1-day	\$70

## Payment

All tuition invoices are sent through Brightwheel. All parent contacts and additional payers added (Family or Approved Pickups) can set up their payment methods directly in their Brightwheel account on the web or on the app. You will receive an invoice each month from Brightwheel at least five days prior to the payment due date. You can pay

via credit card or ACH Bank Transfer. If paying via personal check, please make payable to EverWild Forest School and send to the mailing address listed on the invoice.

## Transaction Fees

As with most online payment providers, there is a small fee involved to ensure the high level of security needed to process funds. ACH (bank account payments) has a small flat rate fee per transaction of \$0.40 and credit and debit cards have a small 2.4% fee per transaction. Processing fees will be listed as a line item on your bill. You can see your processing fees in your app when selecting a payment method.

## Autopay

We require Mandatory Autopay, and your total balance will automatically be deducted from your default payment method on your statement's due date. You can always go into your account and manually submit a payment before the due date.

Any payers will be required to accept and enable autopay the next time they add a payment method. If a payment method had already been saved to the account when we enabled Mandatory Autopay, brightwheel will display a prompt advising that autopay is enabled whenever the student's billing account page is visited.

## Late Charges

Tuition payment is due in full by the first day of each month for that month. If payment is not received by the due date, a \$2 fee will be assessed for each day thereafter. If seven days lapses without payment, your child may be at risk of expulsion.

## Sibling Discount

The eldest sibling receives a 5% discount on tuition for Forest School after the first month.

## Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance can be requested on your application form. Tuition assistance consideration closes July 1st for the upcoming school year.

# Cancellations & Withdrawals

## Class Cancellations

Due to the outdoor nature of our program, we may be required to cancel classes due to hazardous weather conditions. We have worked hard to create reasonable and steadfast weather safety policies to keep our students and teachers safe.

Weather-related cancellations are out of our control, and we are not able to provide refunds, or credits due to cancellations. Makeup classes may be planned at the end of the year depending on teacher availability.

## Credits or Refunds

We cannot give refunds or credits for sick days or those that are voluntarily missed (e.g., vacation, missed class). If you feel you have a unique situation, please email Ilyse at [Ilyse@Everwildforestschool.org](mailto:Ilyse@Everwildforestschool.org)

## Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawal from EverWild Forest School requires 30 days advance written notice. Last month's tuition will be applied no less than thirty days after submitting a written notice of withdrawal. If you need to withdraw your child from our program, please give written notice to Ilyse at [Ilyse@Everwildforestschool.org](mailto:Ilyse@Everwildforestschool.org). This gives us time to fill your child's space for the following month.

# Holidays

## School Year Breaks

To provide families with a consistent program, we do not observe holidays or other service days outside of our Fall, Winter, and Spring breaks, listed below:

- » Fall Break: November 20-24, 2023
- » Winter Break: December 25, 2023-January 5, 2024
- » Spring Break: March 18-22, 2024

## Enrichment Camps

We offer full day enrichment camps open to the public and EverWild families. EverWild families will receive notice to enroll for camps at least two weeks prior to public registration.

*Please note: fall/winter/spring break camps are dependent on enrollment and may be canceled due to low participation.*

# Community Engagement

## Volunteers

EverWild Forest School values the time and talents of our community members. We occasionally utilize passionate and experienced volunteers to add value to our programming. All volunteers go through the same interview, evaluation, and background check as our educators. Our volunteers receive specific training on our approach, pedagogy, policies, and expectations prior to supporting a class. Classes may have volunteers who volunteer on a regular basis, or volunteers who enjoy helping when staff needs a substitute teacher.

Although our volunteers are thoroughly vetted, they are not permitted to teach from our curriculum (knowledge sharing is acceptable) or be the only adult with students.

## Interns

EverWild Forest School partners with local colleges and universities to provide field-based internships for qualified students. Just like our educators and volunteers, interns go through a comprehensive evaluation and training process, including a background check, prior to their class assignment. Interns are paired with a strong lead educator and serve as co-teacher for the entirety of the class.

## Community Partners

As a place-based school, EverWild has partnerships with dozens of individuals, businesses, and organizations across the Treasure Valley. We live in an incredible community, and we aim to showcase this through guest speakers and workshops within our classes throughout the year.

Due to the varying locations and schedules of our Early Learning and Homeschool Enrichment classes, community visits occur more sporadically based on what different experts/businesses/organizations can accommodate. Please note that unlike the Forest Kindergarten program, costs for community visits are not included in tuition for the Early Learning and Homeschool Enrichment programs. As such, some locations/schedules may receive visits from community partners more often than others (e.g. Peregrine Fund can only do visits on Tuesday afternoons), but we do our best to organize a variety of presentations for all classes to enjoy!

## Forest Family Events

We lovingly refer to our enrolled families as Forest Families. As a 'thank you' for choosing us to be part of your child's intentional community, we offer quarterly nature-based celebrations and events just for you – free of charge. These events are meant to continue to foster our beautiful EverWild community and are so much fun!!

Registration is required to help us plan for supplies and staff and can be done so online when registration is open (families will be notified when that happens):

- » Back-to-School Picnic and Gear Swap
- » Martinmas
- » Forest Tea Party
- » EverWild Games

## Gear

### Teacher Packs

Each class will have a teacher prepared with a pack equipped with a first aid kit and all necessary supplies for each day. In addition, the teachers will have a privacy pop-up tent and portable camp toilet for changing clothes and going to the bathroom.

### Gear Guide

EverWild Forest School has partnered with Outdoor School Shop to provide a one-stop online location to shop a curated list of gear we recommend having for a successful school year in the forest. Follow the link below to navigate to our exclusive partnership page and enjoy 15% off at checkout with EVERWILD.

### [Shop our custom gear list!](#)

In a small backpack, please pack:

#### Everyday requirements:

- » Full reusable water bottle
- » Snack in reusable containers or cloth napkins  
*Snack ideas: dried fruit & cashews, sliced veggies & cheese, apples & crackers, berries & cheese slices, plain yogurt & berries, whole wheat pasta & cherry tomatoes, sandwiches*
- » Wet bag for wet/dirty clothes
- » Change of clothes including socks, underwear, and extra gloves
- » Lightweight hoodie or jacket



#### Warm Weather Suggestions

- » Sunscreen
- » Sun hat
- » Sunglasses
- » SPF 50 clothing
- » Water shoes (no flip flops)
- » Waders



## Cold Weather Suggestions

- » Merino wool base layers
- » Waterproof gloves
- » Wool socks
- » Balaclava or ski mask
- » Insulated waterproof boots for snow/rain
- » Rain pants and raincoat or rain suit
- » Snow pants and coat or snow suit
- » Warm hat



## How to Layer

- » **Base Layer:** worn next to the skin, keeping the body warm and dry, wicking away any moisture. Wool is the recommended fabric. Cotton is never recommended as a base layer as this fabric actually traps the moisture next to the child's skin making them cold. Don't forget the feet when thinking about base layers! All outdoor school children should have at least several pairs of wool socks. The same applies to the head; a thin Merino wool beanie is perfect as the first layer on the head and can easily be layered over with a jacket hood.
- » **Mid Layer:** the mid layer acts as extra insulation between the base and the outer layer. Think fleece zip up jacket or sweater or lightweight puffer jacket here. In terms of the mid layer bottoms, choices include loose knit Merino wool leggings or mid weight fleece pull-ons.
- » **Outer Layer:** this is the layer that keeps the weather out and the warmth in! Think insulated, waterproof snowsuits or snow coats and snow pants. In rainy weather, rain gear will be considered an outer layer.



If shopping at Oaki.com, use code EVERWILDFOREST at checkout for 25% off!

Even with the great discounts, nothing can beat the deal you could get with secondhand items! Secondhand items reduce textile waste and are significantly more environmentally friendly than new materials.

## Gear Library

We are working to reduce one of the biggest barriers to getting outside—access to gear—by providing access to our outdoor gear library to all EverWild families. The gear library is stocked with high quality outdoor gear including [BOGS](#) boots, rain and snow jackets, snow pants and suits, hats, gloves, base layers, and more. EverWild families

can request gear by emailing [llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org](mailto:llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org). Please return items washed and ready for storage at the end of the season.

If you would like to donate used and outgrown items to our gear library, please contact [llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org](mailto:llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org) to arrange a time to pick up items. We are always in need of socks, gloves, base layers, and snow gear.

## Outside Food & Celebrations

### Food

Students in half-day programs need hearty snacks in reusable containers/bags. Students in our full day Forest Kindergarten need two snacks and a packed lunch. We are unable to reheat items. We kindly request sending items with zero packaging to limit trash in the forest. Snack wrappers can accidentally be left behind so please unwrap items before placing them in lunch boxes.

Students are not allowed to share food items with others.

*Snack ideas: dried fruit, sliced veggies, apples & crackers, berries & cheese slices, plain yogurt & berries, veggie and cheese roll-ups, whole wheat pasta & cherry tomatoes, sandwiches*

### Allergies

If your child has a severe food allergy, please contact llyse at [llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org](mailto:llyse@EverWildForestSchool.org) and your child's teachers so we can instruct your child's class to avoid bringing specific items.

### Celebrations

#### Birthdays

We love celebrating birthdays and a variety of cultural holidays throughout the year! Each month, the class will do a birthday celebration with songs and something special to honor the child(ren) with birthdays that fall within the month (e.g. birthday crown, birthday bracelet). Outside of this tradition, we ask that caregivers keep family celebrations separate from EverWild Forest School class times. We are happy to accommodate the recognition of a child's specific birthday, but we will not accept requests to engage in additional commemorative activities aside from our usual monthly birthday celebration.

No food is to be distributed for birthday celebrations.

## Rationale

- » Limit potential dangers of exposure to life threatening food allergies for students and staff.
- » Limit exposure to students of restricted foods which parents do not want their children eating (ie. Sugar restrictions, Gluten free).
- » Reduce the amount of unhealthy (high sugar, high fat) foods students are given at school.
- » Reduce the problems of sharing food with only 'certain' students and not others.
- » Eliminate the increased trash and clean up caused by messy treats eaten while being outside.

## Holidays/Traditions

EverWild Forest School programs are secular; however, we do acknowledge the presence of cultural celebrations and holidays (some of which may be related to a religious holiday). Discussions around a variety of different holidays, traditions, and themes are part of our mission to educate students on a diverse range of topics and worldviews to connect them with the wider community.

Some of the holidays and celebrations we acknowledge are:

- » **Halloween**  
Students are encouraged to come dressed up in a Halloween costume or as a fairy/animal/gnome for an after-class parade! *Note: costumes may get dirty*
- » **Christmas/Hanukkah/Yule**  
Students may bring small natural gifts to share with their classmates.
- » **Valentine's Day**  
Students may bring small natural gifts to share with their classmates. Please refrain from bringing food/treats and small disposable items.

In addition to the common holiday/celebrations above, you will also hear us talk about select ancestral celebrations or traditions that are tied to the seasons such as [Martinmas](#), Yule, moon phases, the solstices, and equinoxes.

We respect the religious or spiritual beliefs of each family and will honor conversations around these in the class should the children be compelled to discuss amongst themselves. Our teachers are trained to keep conversations around these 'big' topics focused on curiosity and mutual respect among the group and will gently redirect the conversation should it be required.

Although we welcome curiosity and discussion around all types of beliefs, we do not proselytize or promote any specific religion, culture, or creed.



## Sustainability Policy

As such, we permit students to bring small gifts\* to share with their classmates in celebration of specific holidays or traditions. We believe that this only enriches the discussion, even if other students do not celebrate the specific holiday/tradition at home.

*\*\*EverWild Forest School strives to be a zero-waste program. If you wish to provide gifts for teachers or students in your child's class, we appreciate your consideration of the environmental impact of your offering. We welcome handmade items, seeds, gift certificates to local businesses, and items made of natural and/or recyclable materials (wood, glass, steel, wool). Thank you!*

# Health and Safety

## Mask Policy

As per the current evidence, risk of coronavirus transmission in an outdoor setting is extremely low. Despite this, we support families who choose to wear masks during our programs if a mask mandate is not in effect. If a mask mandate is in effect, students are required to wear face coverings unless a medical/mental issue prevents them from doing so.

## Illness

To reduce incidents of illness, please keep your child at home if a fever is present (100.4°F or higher), has a persistent cough, has vomited, or had diarrhea within the last 24-hours or if the child has open sores associated with Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease. Children must be fever free for 24-hours before returning to school. We trust your judgment on keeping your child home should they be exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, including headache, lethargy, and body aches.

If your child is sick and will be absent, please notify your teachers through Brightwheel prior to the start of the missed class.

## Water

Please have your child bring a filled reusable water bottle in their backpack each day.

## Sunscreen

We recommend applying sunscreen to your child at least 15 minutes prior to drop off, even in the colder months. Please include sunscreen in your child's backpack if you would like your child's teacher to reapply during class.

## Handwashing

We will assist each child in sanitizing their hands with an alcohol-based gel after using the toilet and before eating. Classes also have the option to use biodegradable soap and water. If you wish for your child not to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, please inform your child's teachers.

## Toilets

EverWild Forest School is not set up for changing diapers in the woods, and therefore, all participants must be able to independently use the potty during drop-off program hours. If approved by Parents/Caregivers, staff will assist younger children if needed. We also offer children the chance to urinate outside near a designated tree/bush at least 100ft from water and in an adequately private area.

We do not have plumbed toilets or sinks while in the forest. Our restroom is a portable camp bucket toilet lined with a plastic trash bag containing sawdust. The potty is housed in a portable privacy pop-tent. Once a child is done using the potty, a teacher will remove the bag, tie it off, and place it in a trash can. The child will be assisted by a teacher to ensure thorough hand washing/sanitizing. Most of our locations have plumbed public restrooms and we will utilize these as often as feasible.

You can see our toilet set up [here](#).

During Tots & Trees programs, children in diapers may be changed anywhere and at any time by the caregiver.

## Comfort

We will be outside in all weather, so please ensure your child is prepared. Please see the [Gear](#) section for appropriate gear and layering.

Teachers will be mindful of temperature, precipitation, and wind chill, as well as of the physical and emotional state of the children. A nylon pop-up tent and/or tarpaulin will be used in the event of hail or heavy downpours. On extra cold days, we will provide warm tea for the children to drink, and hand/feet warm packs.

Children will be required to change into dry clothes within 10 minutes if ambient temperature or windchill is 60 degrees or less. If a child refuses, teachers will encourage them but will not force them. If a child will not change clothes, parents will be contacted for early pick up.

Occasionally, students will be sent home who are not prepared for the weather, too cold, or very uncomfortable and not improving with heat packs. If your child is not dressed properly and teachers detect the possibility of hypothermia or frostbite,

parents will be contacted for early pick up. In extreme weather cases, class will be canceled.

## Risk Management

Our outdoor sites are evaluated often for possible hazards including but not limited to heavy, dead, overhanging branches; damaged trees; high or dangerous water; and, evidence of human disturbance (trash, vandalism, etc.). Elements of the site that are deemed hazardous will be mitigated through removal, avoidance, or cancellation of class if needed.

One of the many benefits of allowing children plenty of time to play freely outdoors is the increase in self-confidence and independence. This occurs, in part, by taking reasonable risks and testing limits. Our goal is to allow reasonable risk taking, balanced with watchfulness for true safety hazards.

### Climbing

Children are permitted to climb as high as they are tall and must be able to reach that height by themselves (teachers will not lift them up to a place that they cannot reach themselves).

### 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.

### Exploring

Site boundaries are clearly communicated to the students before and during each class. This means that children are always directly in sight of a teacher. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that children do not accidentally stray from the group. Students who deliberately run from or leave the group after a maximum of two "warnings" will be asked to withdraw for safety reasons (a "warning" consists of sitting down with the student and working to understand the root of the flight behavior). Teachers will work with the student to develop ways to mitigate the flight behavior, including incorporating caregivers into the discussion.

### Stinging Insects & Toxic Plants

If a child is stung by an insect, an injury report will be filed, and Children's Benadryl or other approved antihistamine will be administered should a reaction occur.

Poison ivy is an abundant native plant in Idaho and is prolific along all stretches of the Greenbelt. Teachers are trained in identifying this toxic plant and carry soap specially-formulated to wash away the ivy's irritating oil (urushiol).

## Wild Edibles

Teachers will explore some basic, easily identifiable wild edibles with children (huckleberries, blackberries, and western salsify, for example). As part of this exploration, children are taught to never eat anything from nature without permission from an adult.

## Sticks

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.

## Water

Many of our explorations take us to the banks of the Boise River. Teachers are responsible for identifying areas of water play that are safe for wading. Children are only allowed to wade in shallow streams and pools and may not enter water higher than the middle of their shins. Children are always closely supervised, especially when playing in and around the water.

## Ice Play

Prior to allowing students to walk on ice, teachers must evaluate the area to determine the approximate depth of the water underneath. Students may walk on ice with no more than approximately 6 inches of water underneath. If the depth of water cannot be determined, students shall not be allowed to walk on the ice.

# Incident Weather

EverWild Forest School uses the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather tracking software, [Clime](#), to track all weather.

The forecasted weather conditions are monitored at least two hours prior to the start of class. Class will be canceled should the weather prove hazardous. Cancellation announcements will be made in the Brightwheel app as well as via email.

## Heat

If the temperature reaches 99 degrees Fahrenheit, pickup will be required after 90-minutes. For example, if the temperature reaches 99 degrees at 12pm, caregivers will be notified in Brightwheel that pickup will be at 1:30pm.

Tots & Trees programs will be canceled if the temperatures are predicted to be 99°F degrees or hotter.

## Cold

Late Start - 1-2 hours later than normal start time

Canceled - NO SCHOOL, all classes are canceled

## Forest Kindergarten

If the temperature is predicted to be 15 degrees Fahrenheit or less at the start of class and predicted to stay 15 degrees Fahrenheit or less for more than 90-minutes of class time, class will be postponed until temperatures are predicted to be above 15 degrees Fahrenheit. If the temperature is predicted to be 15 degrees Fahrenheit or less all day, class will be canceled.

## Early Learning & Homeschool Enrichment

Half-day classes will be canceled if the predicted ambient temperature is 15°F or colder for more than 90-minutes of class time. Hypothermia can set in quickly for children once the air temperature drops this low. Due to being an outdoor program, we are not able to quickly bring our Early Learning or Homeschool Enrichment students inside for warm up breaks.

In cases of low temperatures and precipitation, one hour late starts may be considered to ensure student safety. Wet clothing in cold temperatures can lead to hypothermia in mere minutes.

### Tots & Trees

Tots & Trees programs will be canceled if the predicted ambient temperature is 15°F or colder.

### Snow

Snow levels in the Treasure Valley are typically light or moderate. However, there is always the potential for a heavy snowfall to make traveling by vehicle or on foot dangerous. Normal snowfall would not result in classes being canceled.

We will *typically* be adhering to the Boise School District Snow Days. When Boise School District schools are closed, our morning classes (9:00am-12:00pm) will be canceled, and Forest Kindergarten will have a Late Start OR Canceled day.

Weather will be reassessed for the afternoon and the final call for Late Start or a Canceled day at least 2 hours before the start of class.

You will be notified of Snow Days via email Brightwheel message.

### Air Quality

Exposure to PM2.5 and ozone are hazardous to children's health. Due to our extended time outdoors, we've created the following Air Quality policy to keep our students and teachers safe in the wake of increasing smoke pollution during the latter parts of the summer season.

Although an AQI of 130 is considered relatively safe for adults, the length of exposure must be considered. Most of our teachers work outside all day, all week long, and we do our best to balance our policies with their exposure and the needs of our students.

Class will be canceled if the Air Quality Index (AQI) is 130 or higher using the following parameters:

Class will be canceled if...

- » the AQI is 130 at least 45-minutes before the start of class and is predicted to remain at 130 or higher for 90-minutes or more from the start of class.
- » the AQI is predicted to reach 130 within 90-minutes from the start of class.

Early pick up will be required if...

- » the AQI is predicted to reach 130 within 90-minutes from the end of class.

To reduce the risk associated with an accumulation of PM2.5/ozone exposure, classes that meet for two or more consecutive days have additional safety protocols:

Class will be canceled if...

- » the AQI is predicted to be 115+ for 90-minutes during the scheduled class time for the following day after a 115+ AQI

*E.g., If the AQI on Monday is 115+ and class went on as scheduled, and Tuesday was predicted to be 115+, we would cancel Tuesday. If the AQI on Wednesday is predicted to be at 115 but we canceled Tuesday, we would continue with classes on Wednesday, provided the AQI remains under 130.*

## Lightning

### Forest Kindergarten

When thunder is heard or cloud-to-ground lightning is seen, play will be suspended and the class will take shelter inside Basecamp EverWild or Garden City Library immediately.

Once play has been suspended, the class will wait at least 30 minutes inside shelter from the last sound of thunder or view of lightning strike before resuming outdoor activity.

Any subsequent thunder or lightning strike during the 30 minute waiting period resets the clock, and a new 30 minute waiting period begins.

### Early Learning & Homeschool Enrichment

If lightning is detected within 10 miles of the forest school site, or when thunder is heard or cloud-to-ground lightning is seen, play will be suspended and pickup will be required immediately.

Caregivers will be notified via Brightwheel and phone call. Students will be moved to the nearest temporary indoor building for pickup: Hilton Garden Inn or Bardenay in Eagle, and the restroom facilities at both Veterans Memorial Park and Wilson Springs Ponds. Partially enclosed shelters, like park pavilions, are not safe during lightning events.

### Tots & Trees

Tots & Trees programs will be canceled in the event of a forecasted lightning storm or gale-force winds.

## Rain, Hail, Snow

In the event of severe rain, hail, or snow, students will be moved to shelter to wait out the storm. If students are extremely uncomfortable or overly scared, early pickup may be required.

## Wind

### Forest Kindergarten

Classes will be held inside Basecamp EverWild when wind speeds at 22mph or higher are sustained for an hour or more during class time. If we are under a wind advisory with gusts predicted to be at 40mph or faster, classes will be held inside Garden City Library. At any point during a wind advisory, classes shall be conducted in open spaces, setting up tarps under trees during a wind advisory is strictly prohibited.

### Early Learning & Homeschool Enrichment

Classes will be canceled when wind speeds at 22mph or higher are sustained for an hour or more during class time. If we are under a wind advisory with gusts predicted to be at 40mph or faster, classes will be canceled. At any point during a wind advisory, classes shall be conducted in open spaces, setting up tarps under trees during a wind advisory is strictly prohibited.

### Tots & Trees

Tots & Trees programs will be canceled in the event of gale-force winds.

## Cancelled at EverWild's Discretion

Early pickups or cancellations may be required should students show signs of acute or chronic discomfort, even if the temperature/weather metrics do not reach the thresholds listed above. While we want to provide an opportunity for children to learn how to be resilient in all weather, we do not want to cause undue duress.

In addition, should weather conditions prove hazardous to commuters (e.g., extremely icy roads), or hazardous to classes (e.g., heavy branches due to wet snow) class may be canceled to keep everyone safe.

EverWild Forest School does not issue refunds for weather or climate related cancellations.



# Emergency Action Plan

Our staff are trained in risk analysis and contingency planning; however, as in any school setting, injuries and emergencies may occur. EverWild Forest School has developed the following Emergency Action Plan to prepare for and mitigate unexpected events.

## Injuries

Minor injuries may be treated with a first aid kit. An Incident Report and private message will be completed in Brightwheel for all injuries that break the skin or involve the head or genitalia.

In the event of a more severe injury such as possible concussion, fracture, burn, laceration (1/4" deep or more), etc. one teacher will attend to the student and apply first aid while the other will contact the caregiver or the emergency contact. In the event of an emergency, ambulatory services may be contacted first prior to alerting the caregiver to initiate emergency medical care that is outside of our educators' realm of experience.

## Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, such as severe head trauma, anaphylaxis, major fractures, excessive bleeding, or external threat, the following procedures will be followed.

- » All activities will halt and group safety will be prioritized.
- » The lead teacher will contact emergency services.
- » Patients will be triaged and emergency first aid will be initiated as instructed by emergency dispatch instructions.
- » One teacher will meet emergency services at the entrance of the property, if possible.
- » One teacher will contact Parents/Caregivers and Emergency Contacts as soon as practicable via phone call.