

Nature School at Camp Albemarle Lower School

Shape of the Day

Lower School encourages children to learn at their own pace. We value free play and the intersection of academics and social learning that can happen during that time. Some of our most important learning happens in unplanned moments, through the children's discoveries. Our Shape of the Day makes room for this kind of emergent learning, while providing a rhythm to cover academic work that aligns with NC state standards.

We begin each day with choice time where children can explore various activities at their cabin. This will happen mostly outdoors.

Next, students gather for a **Morning Meeting** following the Responsive Classroom model where they:

- Greet each other
- Have a time of sharing
- Do a group activity
- Read our morning message

Language Arts Time

All classes participate in Language Arts time after morning meeting. This includes phonics instruction, vocabulary development and reading and comprehension practice, as well as writing instruction. This coordinated time across our classes gives us the ability to provide for each child's reading level. If a Kindergarten child is advanced, they can join a 1st grade reading group and vice versa.

Morning Snack

Children enjoy a small, healthy snack brought from home with their teachers and peers, building community and enjoying conversation while they snack.

Math

Math instruction follows Math Mammoth, a conceptual based math program that promotes number sense and mastery. Our goal is that children understand a concept thoroughly, while recognizing that each child's brain works differently.

Lunch

Lunch, brought from home, will generally happen outside, picnic style, but indoor space is available on days of inclement weather.

Content-Based Social Studies and Science

Using the Core Knowledge curriculum as a framework, our classes will explore topics in science, social studies and language arts through stories and projects. These topics begin in Kindergarten and build upon each other through the grades as a student progresses, thus growing their knowledge as they grow. Assessment of learning is done through discussion, writing, retelling, performing, art and projects. If a topic truly captivates a class, they may extend the learning and choose to continue exploring the topic beyond the curriculum.

Hike

At the end of the day, children will pursue various projects, traditional wilderness skills and handicrafts, and have time to explore across Nature School. They may pursue interests as a class, across classes, in small groups or individually and these interests may cross content areas. Teachers will act as guides and facilitators during this time, following the children's lead and providing books and materials to grow the learning. This is also a time when a teacher can provide additional help or instruction in a topic or a class can continue to pursue a topic that may have ignited their imagination in the morning.

Closing Circle

Towards the end of each day, children will gather again in their class to share their reflections and questions about the day. This time often gives teachers an inkling of how to prepare for the next day and allows them to ask questions to further curiosity and learning. Following the meeting, children can enjoy free time with their classmates at play until parent pick up or our after-school program begins.

Art and Vespers

In addition to the above, our students have Art and Vespers once a week.