



Nature School at Camp Albemarle K-8th

Our Story and Future Vision:

Lower School began in the fall of 2020 with a combined classroom of homeschooled 1st-3rd graders, we affectionately called our One Room Schoolhouse. In the summer of 2021, we received our official paperwork to operate as a private school and offered grades K-4th. Each year we have added an additional grade, and, in the fall of 2023, the decision was made to grow through middle school, one grade at a time. In the fall of 2025, we will serve students in grades K-8th.

Our Lower School builds upon our successful preschool model that relies on outdoor education and free play, while adding in high quality academics. While our Lower School students climb trees, explore the sound, and play in the mud kitchen, and have free play outside, this is not at the expense of academics. Instead, the two are intertwined and work in a complimentary fashion, allowing for unique, hands-on learning opportunities that cannot be matched in a traditional school setting. Our Middle School model will continue to build upon our Lower School with more time dedicated to academics while still preserving the time to play and explore.

Mission and Philosophy

Our mission is to educate and inspire the whole child, and to prepare each student to be an engaged explorer of their world, learning about nature and learning through nature. We believe that the natural world is an exceptional classroom for inspiring wonder, sharing God's love through His creation, cultivating a strong sense of self, and developing empathy towards others.

We're reimagining what school looks like.

We believe that school should be a joyful, engaging, and active experience. We strive to develop inquisitive, creative, kind children who will become lifelong learners with a deep connection to nature, through an educational experience that transcends the classroom. Students who attend Nature School will spend well over 500 hours outside in a school year. This closeness to the natural world inspires awe and wonder for our Creator. We see God's character revealed in wild places. As it says in Romans 1:20,

“From the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made.”

We’re reimagining what being a teacher looks like.

Instead of teaching to a test, our teachers develop relationships with their students, creating rich, faith-based learning environments and experiences tailored to the unique learning needs of each student, inspiring and nurturing them to be independent, creative, and compassionate. Our small student to teacher ratio enables our teachers to truly focus on each student as a whole person. We trust our teachers’ ability and passion to educate and hold space for them to develop all their gifts and talents to benefit their students. Additionally, our teachers are provided with a curriculum for each subject area. While they have the freedom to go outside the bounds of the curriculum, the curriculum provides a framework that frees the teachers from having to create and gather their own materials.

The Nature School at Camp Albemarle Approach

- Reputable and research-based, sequential curriculum that covers all academic subjects and aligns with standards while nurturing the unique skills and abilities of each student and providing time for them to learn at their own pace
- Close-knit classrooms offering opportunities for individual and group learning
- Close-knit school atmosphere where students interact and develop deep friendships and mentorships across grade levels
- Educating the whole child: academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually
- Time for free play and exploration woven into each day as integral for students’ success

Daily Rhythm and Overview

- The Nature School at Camp Albemarle day will run from 8:30am – 2:30pm
- Drop-off is no earlier than 8:30am unless student is signed up for morning care which runs 8-8:30am
- Lunch is a half hour
- Daily snack and lunch must be provided by each family for their student(s)
- All our Nature School students are expected to be prepared to be outside no matter the weather. Students need to have a full set of rain gear (rain pants make a world of difference in a child’s ability to enjoy rainy days) and appropriate clothing for colder weather. We are happy to provide gear recommendations, if needed. We will be outside as much as possible.
- We have no mandatory homework, though our middle school model will incorporate growing individual responsibility and feature work that can be improved upon or continued at home. We maintain clear and consistent communication with our students’ families at all times so that their education can be supported at home, as well.