



# Nature School

AT CAMP ALBEMARLE

Student Handbook Updated 6/24



156 Albemarle Drive, Newport, NC 28570

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## About Camp Albemarle and Nature School at Camp Albemarle

### Camp Albemarle History and Mission

God has had his hand firmly on Camp Albemarle since its beginning in 1953. On their way to visit a potential site for a camp near Wilmington, a group from the Albemarle Presbytery experienced car trouble while traveling on State Road 24 near Newport. While the men repaired the car, the women decided to take a walk to see Bogue Sound. While near the water, they encountered the property owner, who, on discovering their mission, suggested that they purchase her property for their camp! After some negotiation – the property owner wanted the property was purchased for \$66,000 and Camp Albemarle came into being. It is the mission

of Camp Albemarle to nurture spiritual growth in children, youth, and adults through interaction with the wonders of God's creation and to foster deep relationships with Christ in our churches, communities, and the world. Today, Camp Albemarle serves children through summer camps, Nature School and Alby After School.

### Nature School at Camp Albemarle History and Mission

In 2012, Tom Hussmann, Camp Albemarle's executive director talked to organizations in the area to see what kind of need there was in the community that camp could serve and began pursuing starting an outdoor preschool. Heather Estep Lavinder, Nature School founder, learned about outdoor preschools at an environmental education conference in 2014 and wanted to start one in Carteret County. Tom and Heather's paths crossed in February 2015 and in January 2016 Heather was hired as Nature School Director. Nature School at Camp Albemarle opened for its first preschool class in September 2016. In April 2018, the school changed its name to Nature School at Camp Albemarle to reflect the addition of homeschool programs.

In the spring of 2020, Nature School teacher Katie Andrews proposed a plan to the directors and the board to open a private school based upon our preschool and homeschool model. In the fall of 2021, we received our official paperwork to operate as a private school and began offering grades K-4<sup>th</sup>. Each year we have added an additional grade. In the fall of 2023, Heather moved into a new position at Camp Albemarle as Director of Development and Katie stepped into the Nature School Director role. The decision was also made to pursue growing through middle school. In the fall of 2025, we will serve students in grades K-8<sup>th</sup>.

### Nature School Programs

Nature School has two programs: Preschool and Lower School. Lower School is certified as a full day K-7<sup>th</sup> grade private school through the North Carolina Department of Administration, Division of Non-Public Education and plans to pursue accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

### Mission Statement:

Nature School at Camp Albemarle is a Christian school with an approach rooted in daily nature immersion to bring students close to God and nature, inspiring wonder in learning and creating life-long learners.

### Program Philosophy

- Sharing God's love through His creation
- Connecting students to nature to inspire appreciation for the natural world
- Providing a safe environment to encourage exploration and learning
- Assisting students in their interactions with each other to promote cooperative learning and encourage problem solving
- Developing activities that are focused on the individuality, abilities, and interests of each student
- Promoting wellness and physical strength through active outdoor play

### Facility

Camp Albemarle is located on 29 acres of open grass and wooded areas and is bordered by Bogue Sound. Classes utilize all areas of camp and there is an indoor space for inclement weather. The Lower School utilizes cabins as classrooms, though they spend much of their time learning outside.

### *No Pets Allowed on Camp Property*

Except for resident dogs, no pets are allowed on property. Please refrain from bringing your pet with you while on Camp Albemarle property. Camp Albemarle's Director of Summer Camp Ministries lives on property and has a dog. We also have a school dog, Shoal.

## Camp Albemarle Staff

Visit our website to read the bios of Camp Albemarle and Nature School staff.

## Non-Discrimination and Grievance Policy

Nature School at Camp Albemarle believes that God has called us to reach out to families and children of all backgrounds and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, political beliefs, or cultural heritages.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Katie Andrews, Nature School Director, at 252-726-4848 or [katie@campalbemarle.org](mailto:katie@campalbemarle.org).

## Enrollment Information

### Session Offerings

Visit our website at [www.campalbemarle.org/nature-school](http://www.campalbemarle.org/nature-school) and click on the Session Offerings tab to see a complete listing of our session offerings.

### Tuition and Fees

Visit our website to view the current tuition rates and fees.

Tuition will be due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. If payment is by cash or check it can be turned into the camp office. Teachers are unable to accept tuition payments. Debit/credit card payments can be made online by visiting: [natureschoolatcampalbemarle.campbrainregistration.com](http://natureschoolatcampalbemarle.campbrainregistration.com). If the 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend, payment will be due on the Monday or Tuesday immediately following the 1<sup>st</sup>. A late fee of \$25 will be applied to the account if there is a balance due on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. If payment is not made by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month and arrangements have not been made with the Nature School Director, service will be suspended. Tuition will not be refunded due to missing school or inclement weather days. A \$30 fee will be charged on all returned checks.

### Scholarships

There are a limited number of scholarships available for those enrolled in Nature School at Camp Albemarle. Please contact the Nature School Director for more information on financial assistance. Lower School families may be eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship provided by the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority and must apply here first.

### Withdrawal Policy

In the event that you need to withdraw your child from Nature School at Camp Albemarle, a two-week notice is required. Your child's spot will be offered to the next available student on the waiting list and if there is no one on the waiting list, you will be responsible for tuition payments until the spot is filled. The Nature School Director will waive these fees in extreme circumstances.

## Waiting List

If there is a withdrawal from the program, we will contact the first person on the waiting list. The family will have 5 business days to contact the school, confirm their child's placement in the program, and submit their child's registration form and fee. Failure to do so within 5 business days will forfeit their child's spot and the next family on the waiting list will be contacted.

## Children with Special Needs

Please contact the Nature School Director with any requests for accommodating children with special needs. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Program Specific Information

### School Calendar and Open Houses

Visit our website for the most up-to-date calendar.

Open Houses will be announced by e-mail and on our social media and website.

## Preschool Approach

Our preschool program follows an emergent curriculum which allows for flexibility in learning activities. Teachers utilize children's natural interests, curiosities, and seasonal nature changes to guide their curriculum development. Free play is built in as a crucial part of our program and provides endless opportunities for cognitive, physical, social, and emotional learning. During free play, the teachers' guide students through problem solving moments that naturally arise through students' social interaction. We utilize a positive discipline approach rooted in Conscious Discipline and Responsive Classroom. Our program also emphasizes faith development through the sharing of daily devotions, blessings at snack time, opportunities for student-led prayer, and singing songs about the Bible and Jesus. Our goal is for our preschool students to know that God loves us and is always with us, that God created the world around us, and that we can talk to God and bring him our worries and our thanks.

### **Rhythm and Routine**

Our preschool classes follow a daily rhythm that includes:

- Morning meeting, welcome song, and devotions
- Unstructured free play
- Snack and stories
- Hikes to various areas of Camp Albemarle
- Guided discoveries
- Goodbye song

### *Preschool Drop Off:*

Please say goodbye to your child outside the entrance of their outdoor classroom. To facilitate a smooth transition, we ask that you do not enter the classroom or try to engage in morning activities with your child.

Practice a drop off routine before the first day and talk with your child about saying goodbye. The teachers are skilled with engaging a reluctant child or comforting children as they work through separation anxiety. Prolonging the departure often makes it harder for children to settle into class. We will work 1:1 as needed with concerned families and work out specific plans, as needed, if a child continues to struggle with the transition to preschool.

### Lower School Approach

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, and 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.

- Progressive and integrated curriculum that covers all academic subjects and aligns with NC state standards while nurturing the unique skills and abilities of each student and providing time for them to learn at their own pace.
- Educating the whole child: academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually
- 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
- Time for free play and exploration woven into each day as integral for students' success

### School-Wide Policies

#### Attendance

In order for students to truly benefit from our program, they need to be in regular attendance. We value the strong and cohesive class dynamic that is created when all the students in a class are together regularly. It allows friendships to blossom and each child to truly feel like a part of the Nature School community. It also provides our teachers with the chance to consistently guide each child through their personalized learning experience, which is especially important if your child is in Lower School.

We define regular attendance as being present from the beginning of class until the end of class 95% of the time (5% missed equals 9 days for 5 day, 6 for 3 day, 4 for 2 day). We are an outdoor school and we do expect attendance on cold, rainy, and/or windy days. We are happy to provide gear and clothing recommendations to ensure that each child is comfortable being out in all kinds of weather. We also have gear we can loan out for the day or year if a student needs it. In the case of truly inclement weather, class will be canceled, and this does not count towards attendance.

Excusable absences from school include:

- Illness or injury to the student
- Quarantine
- Death in the immediate family
- Medical and dental visits for the student
- Judicial or administrative proceedings
- Religious observances

- Alternative educational opportunities (i.e. travel with an academic component or educational opportunity elsewhere)
- Military deployment circumstances

If your family is planning an extended trip that will coincide with regular class time, please communicate your plans with the director well in advance. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

We ask that if a child is to be absent for any reason, your child's teacher is contacted as soon as possible using their preferred method which will be communicated at the start of the school year. If you know well in advance, you can also e-mail [katie@campalbemarle.org](mailto:katie@campalbemarle.org). This is a respectful courtesy to our teachers, so they aren't left waiting on a child who does not show up. If your child is dropped off or picked up late, this also needs to be communicated to the school. There is a \$1/every minute late after 10 minutes charge for consistently late pick-ups. If your child is late being dropped off, the child will need to report to the office with the adult dropping them off, so any disruption to their class is minimized. Please see Check-in and Check-out Procedures below for more information.

If a child has missed half of the unexcused absence days, we will have a meeting with the family to discuss the circumstances and to determine how we can support more regular attendance. If absences continue after that meeting, we will have another meeting with the family to consider continuation of the program for your child. Attendance may be a factor considered in the interview process for Lower School enrollment.

## Check-in and Out Procedures

### *Check In:*

All students must be walked to the designated class start area by an adult. This location will be communicated by the Nature School Director or your child's teachers at Open House. Check in is no earlier than 8:20am (Lower School) and 8:50am (Preschool).

Class promptly starts at 8:30 (Lower School) and 9am (Preschool). You must go to the office to check-in your child if you arrive after 8:40am (Lower School) and 9:10am (Preschool).

Please be respectful of your child's time at school, the work of the teachers, and the learning of the other students in the class. Late arrivals impact all three of these, especially for your child. We will not wait for your child to start class, meaning they will miss out on the beginning of class activities and learning. A meeting will be held with the Nature School Director when a student has five unexcused tardies.

### *Preschool Waiting Location:*

We understand some preschool students have siblings getting dropped off at 8:30 for Lower School. We ask that you wait with your child by the Dining Hall until 8:50. This gives our preschool teachers the necessary time to prep and removes some of the pressure of families waiting right outside the preschool spaces or the children engaging with class-time activities before class.



### Check Out:

Students must be checked out by an adult on the authorized pick-up list. Check-out is at 2:30pm (Lower School) and 12pm (Preschool). Teachers will check out the students using our online attendance system. Please make sure you go to the teacher first to sign-out instead of calling your child to you to leave.

### Late Pick-Up Fee

It is important that you pick up your child by 2:30pm (Lower School), 12pm (Preschool), and 4pm (Homeschool). **There will be a fee of \$1 per minute for pick up after 2:40pm (Lower School) and 12:10pm (Preschool).** This fee will be added to the upcoming month's tuition. Please communicate late pick-ups to your child's teacher as soon as possible and follow their instructions for pick-up.

### Authorized Pick-Up List

**We will not allow a student to leave unless it is with someone on the authorized pick-up list.** A photo ID will be required if the teachers are not familiar with the adult picking up the child. If you choose to carpool these families must also be included on the authorized pick-up list. Inform the Nature School Director immediately if there needs to be an addition or removal of names to the list.

### Before and After School Care for Lower School

Before school care is available at 8am for Lower School students only. Contact the Nature School Director for more information. After School Care is available for Lower School students through Alby Afterschool. Please see <https://campalbemarle.org/alby-after-school/> for more information and to register your child.

### Parking

Parking is available behind the dining hall for all classes. Please do not drive up to the classroom or to the pavilion parking lot. For the safety of our students, no traffic can come by the preschool classroom. Exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis – please contact the Director with any concerns. Parents must display the parking pass on the dash of the car every time while on Camp Albemarle Property. Parking passes will be issued at Open House.

### Supplies

Most of our daily supplies are included in the registration and supply fee paid at the time of enrollment. We do have class-specific Amazon wish-lists. These will be e-mailed out at various times but a link to these lists may be requested from the Nature School Director or your child's teacher. Every student needs appropriate all-weather clothing, closed-toe shoes, a backpack with extra clothes and a water bottle every day. Lower School students need a healthy, nut-free snack and lunch every day. Lower School students will receive a basic supply list in August.

## Toys and Items from Home

Toys and other non-school items from home are not allowed at school unless the child's class has a special show and tell day or at the discretion of the teacher. Personal belongings tend to get lost, broken or dirty during our outdoor adventures. If the class is discussing a certain topic and there are items at home that would be good learning tools, communicate this information with the teachers ahead of time. Permission may be granted for these items to come to school and all items must be labeled with the child's name.

## Field Trips

There may be several occasions that the class will take a field trip. The teachers will inform parents if they are required to stay or just need to drop off and pick up their child at the field trip location. An adult must always participate in field trips for preschool students, providing transportation and staying for the duration of the field trip. Usually Lower School K & 1<sup>st</sup> require adults to stay and participate. Depending on the availability of the Camp Albemarle vans, we may transport Lower School (2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>) students for the field trip. A month's notice will usually be provided to allow time to make necessary arrangements when parents are asked to transport. Less notice may be provided when Nature School provides transportation.

## Dress Code

Students should wear clothing that they can play and get dirty in and have weather appropriate gear for rainy, cold and hot weather. We can provide suggestions, if needed.

- Students should be able to put on and remove clothing with minimal assistance. This not only reduces the transition time between activities but helps foster independence and encourages self-help skills.
- All students must wear closed-toe shoes every day.
- Undergarments should not be visible due to lack of coverage from the outer garment or clothes that are too tight-fitting.
- Sleeveless shirts need to have straps wide enough to cover an undergarment and shirts must cover the midriff and be high enough to cover the chest.
- Clothing should not have obscene, provocative, or vulgar slogans or pictures.
- Shorts need to fully cover a child's bottom and upper thighs and should be worn by under dresses or skirts so children are able to fully engage in active, outdoor play.
- Girls must wear a modest, one-piece swimsuit or tankini. Boys must wear swim trunks or board shorts. Rash guards are recommended for sun protection, especially on sound days. All students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> must wear a t-shirt and shorts or cover up when outside the pool or waterfront area or if no longer engaging in water play.
- All students should have an extra change of seasonally appropriate clothes stored in their backpacks, cabins, or provided to the preschool teachers to store.

## Snack and Lunch Policy

### Preschool Snack

Students will be provided with a small, healthy, nut-free snack each morning that they will eat with their class. On special occasions, like holidays, Nature School will provide any treats or teachers will communicate needs with the parents. Students should come with only water in a water bottle. If it's an especially cold day, Nature School will provide a warm drink for the students.

### Lower School Snack and Lunch

Students will pack a small, healthy, nut-free morning snack and a nut-free lunch, each day. Lunch will take place under the pavilion, in the dining hall, in a designated picnic area, or in your child's class cabin. Kindergarten-3rd grade lunch is from 11:30am-12pm. 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> grade lunch is from 12:30-1:00 pm. Parents are welcome to join their child for lunch on a designated day, once a month. These dates will be scheduled on the school calendar.

### Birthday or Holiday Treats

Parents may provide a special treat to share with their child's class on their Birthday. It is up to the teachers to decide when they enjoy this snack, but it will usually be at the end of class. Classes may request special treats for holidays and ask parents to contribute.

## Behavior Management Policies

Here are some general rules of behavior to discuss with your child before coming to school. The children will be involved in the rule making process during the first couple weeks of school using Conscious Discipline® and Responsive Classroom® techniques.

- Take care of yourself.
- Take care of others.
- Take care of our school and materials.

The Conscious Discipline® approach is used for behavior management. This is a self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. Positive discipline allows children to solve their own problems with the guidance and modeling provided by teachers - transforming conflict into a learning opportunity. Moments of "behavior issues" are our opportunity to teach children the social-emotional and communication skills necessary to manage themselves, resolve conflict and develop pro-social behaviors. In a typical day you will hear teachers acknowledging a problem exists, labeling the feelings being experienced, and guiding the children to find a solution (*Excerpt from the Chippewa Nature Center Nature Preschool Handbook*).

Responsive Classroom is a student-centered social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research-and-evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classrooms and school communities for both students and teachers. The Responsive Classroom approach to

discipline is proactive and non-punitive. Responsive Classroom creates the conditions for social, emotional, and academic success by using practical strategies across the following four domains:

- Positive community
- Effective management
- Engaging academics
- Developmentally responsive teaching

### Risky Play and Weapon Play

Risky play is important for a child's development, providing the opportunity for the child to explore, imagine and self-regulate in a way that adult-directed, structured play does not allow. This type of play creates rich learning opportunities that allows the child to challenge themselves and gain confidence as they overcome everyday obstacles. Children intuitively begin to develop risk management skills as they get a sense of their own comfort zone and what it feels like to stretch it. Our teachers are trained in risk benefit assessment - the assessment of the opportunity for learning and play balanced with the safety of each child.

There are six elements of risky play:

1. Great Heights – Climbing and learning to balance.
2. High Speed – Riding a bike, running, sliding down a slide, rope swinging.
3. Dangerous Elements – Playing near a body of water, stick play, fire building.
4. Rough and Tumble – Wrestling or play fighting (this is our most closely monitored and restricted type of risky play allowed at Nature School).
5. Lost/Disappear – Hide-and-go-seek.

Students participate in risky play including but not limited to climbing trees, fire building or gathering around a fire, sound exploration, hide-and-go-seek, and balancing on stumps and logs. However, please note that we generally gently discourage wrestling or hands-on rough and tumble play, especially for the younger students.

Weapon play is also a type of risky play that allows children to process and understand what they have heard and what is going on in their world. Teachers will facilitate a discussion when they see weapon play occurring and will ask open ended questions to better understand the creativity of the play. Redirection will most likely occur but if a teacher feels that the play is not harmful to the children and all children agree to play, pretend weapon play may continue under the supervision of the teacher. Examples of this play may be children pretending to shoot at a target, being a police officer, or a guard defending a fort. Play will stop immediately if there is talk of harming or killing another person, if it makes another child feel uncomfortable, if it occurs on a regular basis, or if a child cannot handle this play in a safe and appropriate way.

### Electronic Devices & Technology

Nature School provides students with limited access to electronic devices (Chromebooks and Kindles) and the internet. We believe that learning to use technology is an important part of learning how to function in our

world, however we believe that usage should be delayed as long as possible and minimized during the school day. We believe in using technology when it can have a transformative effect on learning and allow our students to experience something they would otherwise be unable to (virtual field trips, songs for learning, educational games or resources to enrich lessons). On rare occasions, students will be allowed to watch a movie with their class. Teachers will get parental permission prior to any movie shown.

### Acceptable Use of the Internet

Students' use of computers and the internet is restricted to educational pursuits during the school day and is only granted with the permission of teachers or staff. Students are monitored while on devices which also employ safety filters through Google's Family Link. While in school, student visitation of websites which include vulgarity, nudity, profanity, violence, and pornography is strictly forbidden and may result in immediate out of school suspension. All students will be required to go over the guidelines of safe technology use with the school director prior to usage and will be required to sign a document stating they understand and agree to safe and educational usage.

### Personal Electronic Devices

Nature School is a phone-free school for students. Personal cell phones, smartphones, and smartwatches are not to be accessed from arrival on campus until the school day is over, including lunch and hike. These electronics must be powered off and dropped off in the designated class spot and may only be picked up when the child is fully signed out and leaving for the day. Any devices being used by students will be confiscated immediately and may be picked up by a parent from the office. For further information on why we are implementing this policy and the importance of protecting our students please visit Phone Free Schools Movement: <https://phonefreeschoolsmovement.org> and The Anxious Generation: <https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

### Bullying

Nature School at Camp Albemarle is committed to providing a safe school environment. Bullying is a serious offense, prohibited by federal and state law as well as by our policies. Verbal, physical, or electronic conduct that has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for any member of the school community will not be tolerated.

We define bullying as a deliberate act with the goal of hurting, insulting, threatening, or humiliating another student. There is usually an imbalance of power present and bullying is often repeated and purposeful, with no remorse shown by the bully. We do make a clear distinction between developmentally appropriate and normal conflict and bullying.

Peer Conflict	Bullying	Instances of bullying may:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal power in relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imbalance of power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically harm another student</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both children upset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim upset, bully is not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage school property</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel remorse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bully has no remorse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause emotional distress to a student</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to solve problem and restore relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bully does not see need for resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interfere with a student’s educational opportunities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happens occasionally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is ongoing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a hostile educational environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually not emotionally damaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be serious emotional or physical threat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantially disrupt the orderly operation of the school</li> </ul>

Staff will use education and intervention to address instances of bullying as soon as possible, by trying to get to the root of the issue while ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved. If a student reports harassment or staff observes it, the Conscious Discipline Time Machine® will be used to help the victim assertively advocate for their needs and to help the student doing the bullying find an effective, meaningful, and logical way to make things right and end the bullying. In-order to teach true accountability and restoration, our students will not offer blanket apologies like, “I’m sorry,” but will instead be guided through recognizing the distress of their classmate, understanding what they did and why it was bullying, and asking what they can do to make it right.

Additionally, staff may address the situation if it affects the larger class (without naming names) during Morning Meeting, focusing on strategies for all students to:

- Treat each other respectfully.
- React firmly and assertively with their words.
- Practice the Time Machine®.
- Encourage students to form positive friendships.

In all instances of bullying, staff will contact the parent/guardian and make a written record, describing the situation and the steps taken towards resolution and restoration. If the bullying persists, further steps will be taken with the Director of Nature School, the child’s teachers, and the school counselor to develop a specific behavioral plan for the student. These steps may include, but are not limited to:

- Teacher/student counseling
- Removal of student from the setting
- Teacher/parent/student conference
- Referral of student to professional counseling
- Teacher/parent/director (with the input of the executive director) conference at which time the student may be suspended or dismissed

The Nature School at Camp Albemarle prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any school member who reports an act of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

Nature School teacher and admin procedures for handling behavior is available upon request from the Nature School Director.

## Health and Safety

### Weather Policy

We will be outside **EVERYDAY** rain or shine unless:

- There is thunder and lightning
- There is a tornado watch or warning
- High winds are present that could cause flying debris
- Weather conditions could result in children becoming overheated or excessively chilled
- Wind-chill factor and heat index will play a role in determining how long we stay outside

On days that the Carteret County Public Schools are delayed, Nature School will start at the times detailed below. Our schedule is different from other schools in the area so please take special note of the start times. If you have a child in the public school system and our start time will cause a conflict, please inform the Nature School Director.

- If there is a 1-hour delay preschool will start on time at 9am. Lower School will start a half hour late at 9am.
- If there is a 2-hour delay both Preschool and Lower School will start at 10am.
- Preschool and Lower School will be cancelled if the Carteret County public schools are cancelled. In some cases, if the weather clears, and it is safe for people to be on the road in the afternoon homeschool classes may be held. The Nature School Director will e-mail/text parents by 10am to let parents know if the afternoons classes will be in session for the day.
- If Carteret County Public Schools release early for inclement weather, Preschool and Lower School will release early. In this case, parents will be notified of Nature Schools early release time. Afternoon classes will be cancelled if the public schools release early for inclement weather.

### Sunscreen, Bug Spray and Ticks

Students should have sunscreen and bug spray on before arriving at school. Teachers will not apply sunscreen or bug spray unless it is necessary to reapply on extremely hot or buggy days. We will have sunscreen and bug spray for these occasions, but parents must supply these if there is a specific brand that you would like your child to use. Please notify the Nature School Director and your child's teachers if you want your child to use a specific brand of sunscreen and bug spray. Nature hikes to the woods will occur regularly and parents should check their child for ticks daily.

### Water Explorations

PFD's will be provided by Camp Albemarle to all students and adults participating in our water explorations. Parents may send a PFD from home and will be informed in advance of water exploration days.

## Illnesses

Every student enrolled must have a health form in their school file signed by the child's physician. Parents/guardians will be notified when contagious diseases are present in the classroom, and you **MUST** notify teachers when your child is out with a contagious illness. Children with the following illnesses or symptoms may **NOT** be brought to school:

- Covid-19
- Chicken Pox
- Lice (contact the Nature School Director for a copy of our Lice policy)
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Pink Eye
- Sore or Strep Throat
- Scarlet Fever
- Constant or severe cough
- Heavy yellow, green or brown nasal discharge
- Temperature of 100 degrees or above
- Stomach, head or other painful body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea

A child should be clear of vomiting, diarrhea, rashes and a temperature for 24 hours (without fever reducing medicine) before returning to school. If a child comes to school after being home sick with these symptoms, the child will have to return home immediately. Any child that is on antibiotics must wait 24 hours from the start of their first dose of medicine before returning to school.

If a child becomes ill at school, they will be removed from the group and a parent/guardian will be called to pick them up immediately. An adult will stay with the child until their parents arrive to take them home. Symptoms that the teachers will watch for include vomiting, diarrhea, unusual rashes or spots, severe coughing, heavy and colored discharge from nose, fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, headache and rapid or difficulty breathing.

## Allergies

If a child is diagnosed with an allergy, please supply Nature School with written notification from the doctor including a care plan.

## Medications

Teachers are not allowed to dispense medication to children except for allergy related emergencies and written permission from the parents to do so must be on file. A medical form with instructions from the doctor must also be in this file and should include the child's name, name of medication, dosage, and time frame for administration. Medication must be in its original container.



## CPR/First Aid Training For Staff

All staff will be up to date on CPR/First Aid training. A school nurse will be on call part-time.

## Injuries

In the event of a minor injury such as a scrape, bump or bruise, the child will receive proper treatment including ice or bandage and an accident report will be filled out by a teacher. Parents will be notified of their child's injury at check-out and will be given a copy of the report upon request.

In the event of a semi-serious injury such as a sprained ankle or wrist, bump on the head, or large cut, the child will receive First Aid Treatment and an accident report will be filled out by a teacher. Parents will be notified immediately to inform them of the injury.

In the event of a serious accident or injury to a child, we will make an immediate call to 911 and a parent. If we cannot get in contact with either of the child's parents, we will call the emergency contacts listed on the child's registration form. A teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and stay with the child until the parents or authorized pick-up person arrive. Please make sure to inform the Nature School of any changes in home, cell, work or emergency numbers. The child's parents are responsible for all costs incurred with emergency transportation and treatment.

## Emergency Procedures

- In case of an emergency, teachers and/or other Camp Albemarle staff will group text all parents/guardians at once followed by individual phone calls. The first emergency contact listed for the child will be called if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- In case of a fire and depending on location, all children will be taken to assembly areas list in our Fire Drill Procedure. You may request a copy of the Fire Drill Procedure from the Nature School Director.
- In the case of a tornado watch or warning, children will be taken to the bathhouse which is located right outside of the dining hall.
- In case of an intruder or active shooter, teachers will follow the procedures developed with the assistance of the local police department and proceed to safe and secure locations to shelter in place.

## Child Abuse Policies

Employees are legally mandated to report known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

## Confidentiality

All personal information and records of the children are kept confidential and will only be released to the child's parents/guardians upon request. Teachers will not discuss your child's development or situation with anyone outside of the program or with any other parents in the program.

## Family Involvement

### Family Participation

To help ease the transition from home to school, talk regularly with your child about his or her experiences. These conversations will encourage your child to recall their day and provide you the opportunity to “**experience**” a day of school. Class newsletters, photos and periodic documentation panels may be used as a tool to discuss the class activities with your child.

We welcome parents and families to our school! Opportunities include helping with special projects or being a guest reader. Teachers will inform families of class specific volunteer opportunities. We encourage parents to make other arrangements for siblings on the days that you volunteer so you can place your full attention on our students. We understand that some of our families do not have relatives around to help care for siblings and we do not want that to be the reason you do not volunteer in our classroom. Inform the Nature School Director if this applies to you so a solution can be formed.

If a parent or family member has a unique skill that they would like to share with the class, we invite you to come share your talents with us! Examples of this could be leading yoga or an art class, playing a musical instrument, being a guest reader, teaching about a special technique in the garden, etc. These are just ideas, and the possibilities are endless.

### Parent Communication

Communication is very important between teachers and parents. Most of our communication will be via e-mail as it is paperless and an efficient way to share information with a large group. Please inform the Nature School Director if there is a concern with receiving e-mails or if your e-mail changes.

We ask that parents keep the staff informed of any significant events and changes in their child’s life. These changes such as illnesses, deaths, visitors, divorce, and additions to the family affect the children not only at home but also at school. This will better equip the teachers in helping the child overcome any challenges during the day. Teachers will be available at drop-off to discuss any important issues that will affect your child’s day. If it is not an urgent matter, teachers will be available after class each day to answer questions or to discuss your child’s day. Please be considerate of other parents waiting to talk to the teachers. Should the conversation be more than a few minutes, the teachers will be glad to schedule a time to meet one-on-one.

### Parent and Teacher Conferences

Parents and teachers may request a conference at any time during the school year.

## Spring Family Festival

Nature School hosts an annual Spring Family Festival every year. This event usually raises over \$10,000 for our school and funds raised go towards scholarship funds and a project that all the classes will benefit from using. It is required that all families in the program send at least one volunteer to help with the event. Time commitment is an average of 1 – 1 ½ hours. This can be a parent, family member, friend, or neighbor. If your family will not be in town the day of the event or you already have a prior commitment, please send another person in your place. Volunteer sign-ups for the event will take place about 2 months prior to the event. We want parents to join on planning committee and information on this will be provided at Open House.