



**The Good Earth Day School, LLC
d/b/a Good Earth Farm School**

2018-2019 Family Handbook

www.goodearthfarmschool.com

INTRODUCTION

History

The Good Earth Day School (now referred to as the Good Earth Farm School) was established in August 2006 as a licensed in-home preschool program to meet the need for exceptional early childhood programs in the Cedar Park area. In November 2008, the school expanded to a small farm within the city limits of Leander. Originally, the school served just 12 children between the ages of 2 ½ and 5 years. A small infant/toddler program for children three months to three years was added at the new location, and the school became a licensed childcare center serving 50 children. In 2012, the center ceased infant care, and in the 2012-2013 school year, a mixed age kinder-first grade class was added. In the spring of 2014, we opened additional classroom space adjacent to the administrative office. Our center now serves seventy-two children daily.

School Mission Statement

The mission of the Good Earth Farm School is to provide a high-quality, nature-based education to children in the first phase of childhood (18 months to 6 years) in a home-like setting. Activities now absent from most urban children's lives will be a key part of the curriculum, including: cooking, gardening, outdoor exploration, sewing, woodworking, caring for animals, and housekeeping. Woven into these experiences will be lessons that will well-prepare children to enter public or private school, or homeschooling arrangements. The Good Earth Farm School attempts to educate the whole child, touching the child's heart and will besides his/her intellect.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, CLASSES, OPERATIONAL HOURS, ENROLLMENT

Curriculum

At the Good Earth Farm School, we prefer to use the methods found in Waldorf education (www.waldorfanswers.com) and LifeWays early childhood programs (www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org). Our school is non-denominational, and we greatly value nature as a teacher. Children will spend significant portions of their day outdoors in all sorts of weather.

Our days on the farm are designed to create a balance between free, creative play and more structured activities. Our daily and weekly rhythms focus on the following:

Creative Arts: coloring with natural beeswax crayons, modeling beeswax, watercolor painting, drawing, seasonal crafts, music, story-telling and puppetry.

Domestic Arts: cooking, cleaning, sewing, woodworking, repairing, gardening and caring for animals.

Nurturing Arts: natural foods, hair brushing/combing with lavender spray, hand/face washing, daily outdoor time and rest.

Social Arts: empathy, kindness, sharing, leadership, conflict resolution and love.

Children are grouped by age but our program provides many opportunities for mixed-age partnering throughout the day.

Rhythm and Routine

Rhythm and routine are a support to the young child's development, both emotional and physical development. Reoccurring activities, food, and a clear schedule (though flexible) are paramount in our program. Not only are our rhythms in tune with the necessities of the day, but also the seasons of the year and the weather of a given day.



Saplings and Sprouts: 18 months – 3 years

Saplings and Sprouts are ready for potty-learning, more creative and domestic arts experiences such as cutting cheese, working with homemade play dough, coloring, exploring the outdoors, wet on wet watercolor painting and a circle time with singing, puppetry, finger plays, and storytelling. Language is emerging and developing in this classroom, as are self-help skills. The Saplings and Sprouts are both in diapers or working on potty learning (2 ½-3 years). Children are required to be in underwear by age 3 in this class.



Treehouse: 3 - 4 years

Children in the Treehouse have mastered toileting and dressing themselves. Their imaginations are in full bloom and they are ready for richer experiences in the creative and domestic arts such as a circle time with a longer period of singing, storytelling and discussion along with beeswax modeling, woodworking, crafting, sewing and all of the activities offered on the farm.



Kinder: 4 - 6 years

This class is a nature-based, liberal arts mixed age class that completes the education of young children through the first phase of childhood, birth to 6 years. The class meets every day of the week and provides both an enhanced preschool experience for the younger children in the class and a private kindergarten experience for those students attending 5 days a week.

Hours of Operation

Our regular class hours are from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, but we do have a half-day option 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM and an extended day up to 7:15 AM to 5:15 PM.

Families picking children up late will be charged a late fee of \$15/15 min. or fraction thereof they are late, unless other enrollment arrangements have been made. We understand that everyone is late occasionally, but being chronically late is an indication that our school and its hours may not be suited to your family's schedule and will be considered a reason to discontinue enrollment. Late pick up for our half-day students is 1:10 PM, regular schedule students 3:45 PM, and 5:30 PM for extended care students.

Enrollment and Records

When enrolling children, the needs of the group will be considered in order to maintain the highest level of quality for each classroom.

To enroll a child, the parents must submit the following enrollment forms prior to their child's first day:

1. Admission Form
2. Preschool Tuition Contract
3. Pre-Enrollment Developmental Checklist

4. Health Information Form with current immunizations or a notarized immunization waiver from the Texas Department of Health
5. Vision and Hearing (for children ages four and older)
6. Dietary Modifications/Food Allergies Form with letter from physician or registered dietician (for children with special diets or food allergies)

Other Forms

The Schedule Change Request/Withdrawal form may be found on the school's website. Two changes are allowed annually, subject to availability. Additional requests will be billed at \$150 each.

The Topical Cream/Ointment/Sunscreen Permission Form may also be found on the school's website. Staff cannot apply any diaper cream/ointment or sunscreen without having a completed permission form on file at the school

Immunizations

All children must maintain a current record of immunizations according to requirements established by the Texas Department of Health. Any child who is not immunized must maintain a waiver for immunizations, as provided by the Texas Department of Health (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/#exclusions>). Please note that children and staff who are not vaccinated may be present at school.

THE CHILD'S DAY AT GEFS

Arrival

Children should arrive by 9:00 AM. Arrival after 9:00 AM is a disruption of the school day for the other children already engaged in classroom activities, and causes the child to miss valuable school time. Appointment, lessons, and other extracurricular classes should be scheduled before or after the child's school day, or on days that the child does not attend school.

Time and experience as both staff and parents demonstrate that short, predictable drop-offs are best. Within minutes of the parent's departure, the child is likely to be engaged in an activity or visiting with the staff. If a child is having exceptional difficulty after his or her parent leaves, we will inform the parent and work on a plan with the parent to make the drop off experience a better one for the child.

Extended Day Arrival before 8:00 AM, Saplings/Sprouts/Treehouse/Kinder

Children who arrive between 7:15 AM and 8 AM will be welcomed to school and the day by staff in the school kitchen, where they are welcome to finish a breakfast from home or sit at the table to play with table activities. A staff member will help parents sign the child in, and will receive the child's water bottle, back pack, etc. At 8:00 AM, children move to the play yard or their classrooms with a staff member where additional children are received.

Arrival at/after 8:00 AM, Saplings/Sprouts/Treehouse/Kinder

Children arriving at or after 8 AM are received by staff members who help parents sign-in. Water bottles and backpacks are received at the same time. The location of each classroom's drop-off location varies seasonally by class.

Departure at 1:00 PM and 3:30 PM, Saplings/Sprouts/Treehouse/Kinder

Children will be available for pick-up from each classroom's designated departure location, which varies seasonally by class. When an adult picks up a child at the end of the day, as soon as the parent has taken their child's hand, the parent is legally responsible for their child. Any children not picked up by 1:10 PM and 3:45 PM will be checked into extended care and their account charged accordingly.

Departure Extended Day, Saplings/Sprouts/Treehouse/Kinder

Weather permitting, all children will depart from the back main play yard from 3:30 to 5:15 PM. Occasionally, children will be moved to the school kitchen during inclement weather for pick-up from the front door of the school. Again, once a child is signed out of class, the parent is legally responsible for their child.

SCHEDULES, FOOD, ITEMS FROM HOME**Preschool Schedule (18 months - 4 years of age)**

A balance of teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and child-initiated routines will be included in the daily schedule. Schedules are edited by the teachers seasonally and are available upon request. Outdoor play will occur every day, weather permitting. Children should have a variety of seasonal clothing available to them to be comfortable outdoors including: rain boots, a rain jacket, a hat, gloves and a winter hat, and winter boots. A rest period will be provided daily, and all children must rest quietly on their nap mats for 60 minutes. After this time, children who are unable to fall asleep will take part in quiet activities while other children continue to rest.

Kinder Schedule (4 – 6 years of age)

Children will be active all day, engaged in both teacher-guided and child-initiated activities. Schedules are edited by the teachers seasonally and are available upon request. Outdoor play and exploration will occur every day. Children should have a variety of seasonal clothing available to them to be comfortable outdoors including: rain boots, a rain jacket, a hat, gloves and a winter hat, and winter boots. A rest period will be provided daily, and all children must rest quietly on their nap mats for 45 minutes. After this time, children who are unable to fall asleep will take part in quiet activities while other children continue to rest.

Meals and Healthy Food Policy

Meal time is a highly valued time at The Good Earth Farm School. A morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack will be offered. Children will take part in preparing lunch or snacks, including setting the table, wiping tables, and serving their friends. Harvesting garden items will be a part of the program, as well, dependent on garden success and season.

Meals will be served family style, with children serving themselves as much as possible in the Treehouse and Kinder classrooms. Seconds are always available! Meals will at least meet the TX Department of Family and Protective Services and USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Students should bring absolutely no food from home except for pre-approved dietary reasons necessitated by a medical condition, allergy, or religious reason. Any food brought from home should be clearly labeled with the child's name and include an ice pack to keep food cold.

As part of our "Healthy Food Policy," food will be low sugar, with whole foods preferred (i.e. a whole apple or apple slices vs. applesauce), preservative-free, and dye-free. We generally serve a vegetarian menu as

students assist with our food preparation--eliminating animal proteins relieves food health and safety concerns.

Reverse-osmosis filtered water is accessible to children at snacks, meals, and throughout the day. 100% juices are served occasionally.

Don't worry, we are used to working with picky eaters! Over time, you'll be amazed at how much your child will love to eat when they are part of preparing delicious foods! Adventurous peers are also great role models.

Items from Home

Please refrain from bringing toys and books to school other than a small stuffed animal or doll for nap time—neither should make noise, please. Specifically, in an effort to streamline pick-up and to provide the best care for children as opposed to excessive time managing personal items, please bring the following items for your child:

Saplings and Sprouts:

- Self-serve water bottle/sippy cup (will go to/from school each day);
- 2-4 seasonally appropriate changes of clothes;
- Diapers or underwear (if cloth diapers, add a zippered wet bag for soiled diapers);
- If in diapers, one 70-80 count pack of unscented wipes (please bring monthly);
- Backpack or reusable bag to bring/send home soiled clothes, linens, etc. weekly;
- Crib sheet and small blanket for nap (or a nap roll);
- If desired, a small lovey or special blanket;
- Sun hat, if desired;
- Rain coat or windbreaker; and
- Rain boots.

Treehouse:

- Self-serve water bottle (will go to/from school each day);
- 2-4 seasonally appropriate changes of clothes (more if child has lots of toileting accidents);
- 4 pairs of underwear;
- Backpack or reusable bag to bring/send home soiled clothes, linens, etc. weekly;
- Crib sheet and small blanket for nap (or a nap roll);
- If desired, a small lovely or special blanket;
- Sun hat, if desired;
- Rain coat or windbreaker; and
- Rain boots.

Kinder:

- Self-serve water bottle (will go to/from school each day);
- 2 seasonally appropriate changes of clothes;
- 2 pairs of underwear;
- Backpack or reusable bag to bring/send home soiled clothes, linens, etc. weekly (backpacks may go to/from school daily);
- Crib sheet and small blanket for nap (or a nap roll);

- Sun hat, if desired;
- Rain coat and windbreaker; and
- Rain boots.

NOTE: PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING BROUGHT TO SCHOOL!

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

We use an educational approach, known as positive discipline, to foster self-control in young children. The goal of positive discipline is to help children build their own self-control so that they may share, cooperate, handle their anger, and feel successful and in control of themselves. This is accomplished by guiding children to identify and select alternatives to their misbehavior; giving children choices of appropriate ways to solve their problems; and providing children with a few, simple rules stated in terms of they should (versus should not) do. Absolutely no physical punishment is used. A “Quiet Spot” will be utilized where children can collect themselves and re-enter the group when they can regulate their behavior as the teacher has indicated is necessary. We believe that the best reward for good behavior is participation in our school day without restriction. We believe the most effective “punishment” for negative behavior is to immediately lose the ability to participate in what is happening in the school at the time of misbehavior—natural consequences teach lessons.

A normal part of child development usually includes incidents that can be identified as aggressive or inappropriate behavior. It is the teacher’s responsibility to work with children, teaching them to learn more appropriate behaviors and ways of communicating. Aggressive or inappropriate behavior is defined as any act that intentionally causes serious injury to another child, physically or emotionally, such as hitting, kicking, hair pulling, biting, inappropriate touching of another child’s body, or may include threatening language or inappropriate behavior.

The first time there is an occurrence of overly aggressive/inappropriate behavior, an Incident/Illness Report will be completed. The second time there is an occurrence of this severe behavior, the child must go home immediately and must stay home the next school day. Meanwhile, a behavior plan will be developed between the school and the parent(s) that sets a timeline for improved behavior. If there is a third incident, consideration will be given to the status of the behavior plan and whether the school is the appropriate setting for the child.

The following incidents are grounds for immediate student dismissal:

1. A student who attempts to open gates, climb fences or leave the school property.
2. Biting that cannot be controlled after behavior plan is implemented.
3. Repeatedly injuring another student after behavior plan is implemented.
4. A student who is repeatedly disruptive during the required rest time after behavior plan is implemented (may only be eligible for half-day enrollment without a tuition break).
5. Developmental or medical needs that cannot be met by the school (e.g., child needs smaller group size, child is a danger to other children, or school cannot keep the child safe or provide adequate/safe care).

Our policies are in keeping with Licensing’s Discipline and Guidance Policy, which states:

1. Discipline must be:

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;*
- (2) Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding; and*
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.*

2. A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;*
- (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;*
- (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and*
- (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child’s age.*

3. There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;*
- (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;*
- (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;*
- (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;*
- (5) Putting anything in or on a child’s mouth;*
- (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;*
- (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;*
- (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and*
- (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child’s age.*

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Importance of Community

We believe that you have chosen our school for your child(ren) not just because you need care for them, but because you wish for them to connect with like-minded children, families, and staff who generally believe that natural/gentle parenting, wholesome food, family life, and connection with nature are important in a child’s development. We look forward to building a supportive community within our school. This is achieved through time to commune with one another, tending to the school and its grounds (volunteerism) and through celebrations and festivals. Please make yourself available to the experience of being supported through the joyous, trying, exhilarating, exhausting steps of raising young children!

Volunteerism

Families are encouraged to participate in our curriculum! Please let us know if you have time and talents to share. Volunteer needs may arise throughout the year, and you will be invited to help meet those specific needs. A list of volunteer needs and a wish list for donations is included in the school's monthly newsletter.

COMMUNICATION

The Good Earth Farm School works in partnership with you regarding the education of your child. We hope that our communication with you can be open, respectful, and direct. Please communicate with us when you have a concern rather than letting your concern grow into something unmanageable. When in doubt, bring it up!

Please remember that time is limited during operational hours, because our focus must be on the children in care. A time can be scheduled to talk by phone or in person outside of school hours or during planning time. Your child's teacher or assistant director should be your first line of contact.

We respectfully request:

1. If your child needs extra help from teachers for a smooth drop-off, please arrive by 8:30 AM so that the teachers can assist you and your child.
2. Please keep conversation to a minimum during drop-off. Communicate a specific need on the classroom clipboard as you sign in.
3. Please enjoy conversation with other parents on the front yard.
4. Please do not manage another child's behavior. Do alert a teacher if you see a behavior issue that needs attention.

Sign-In/Sign-Out/Notes...Daily Class Notes

Each day, teachers make notes about the daily menu and class activities in the sign-in/sign-out binders, as well as any short notes about information that needs to be communicated between parents and staff. If there is something your child's teacher needs to know about your child that day, the sign-in page is a great way to communicate that information at drop-off.

School Menu

A school menu is posted on the school blog (<http://www.goodearthfarmschool.com/blog>).

Dietary Modifications/Food Allergies

Dietary modifications and food allergies are very common today, and can be a life-threatening issue for children in our care. For children with dietary modifications or food allergies, a Dietary Modifications/Food Allergies Form, accompanied by a letter signed by the child's physician or registered dietician, must be on file with the school. The Dietary Modifications/Food Allergies Form can be found on the school's website. This process ensures that we are fully informed of your child's needs and can provide the safest care possible.

If your child's dietary restrictions cannot be met by simply not serving that food to your child (bread, yogurt), you will be expected to provide alternative snacks or meals for your child on days he or she cannot eat the food provided. When completing the Dietary Modifications/Food Allergies Form, please indicate when you will provide food substitutes for your child (i.e. for lunch or snacks, or both). When alternative

foods are provided, please note that they must be packaged ready to serve – cans cannot be opened and items cannot be warmed or toasted before service.

School Phone Number

The school telephone number is (512) 259-3922. We ask that you call the school directly to report an absence, request an early pick-up, check on your child's welfare or status as a new enrollee, or request same-day drop-in care (full day or extended day). Because emails are checked only a couple of times a day, placing a phone call helps transmit information in these situations as efficiently as possible.

Email

goodearthschool@gmail.com

drop-in days (scheduled in advance), classrooms messages, programming and particular concerns about your child's experience, schedule changes

goodearthschoolrecords@gmail.com

tuition billing, tax statements, health forms and immunization copies, questions about immunization waivers

Conferences

Conferences may be requested at any time. School-wide parent conferences will be offered in November/December/January of each year, by sign-up. In May, parents will be able to review their child's portfolio; conferences in May will be by request only.

Tuition Statements

Tuition statements are emailed monthly ahead of the tuition due date. Each statement shows the balance due and the date it is due, and includes the school EIN for tax purposes.

Monthly Newsletter

Each month, a family newsletter is published and distributed via email to all enrolled families. Contained within the newsletter you will find important dates to remember, descriptions of class activities for the coming month, school-wide announcements and volunteer/donation requests. This is a great way to keep abreast of happenings on the Farm each month. The school also shares information on the school Facebook page, school Pinterest and Instagram pages.

Parent Directory

The school maintains a directory of parent contact information for each child, by classroom, on the website. The directory is password protected and updated monthly. The password is available by request and in the monthly newsletter. The parent directory is a great resource to connect with other families, send invitations, etc.

FEES AND GENERAL OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Fees

Our fees have been carefully considered for our market, program quality, the quality of the food served, and most importantly for the ratios and personal attention provided your child by our staff.

Tuition entirely supports the cost of our program, including: classroom and grounds materials, renovations, food, local/state/federal taxes, staff wages and benefits.

A special note on personnel: Tuition dollars provide paid time off for our staff so that they may be refreshed and provide the best care for your child. Our staff leave package is one of the most valuable benefits we extend to staff, and is an important recruiting tool. Tuition dollars also provide medical, vision and dental benefits, a retirement plan and childcare benefits for our staff.

Enrollment Deposit

To secure your enrollment, a non-refundable deposit equal to your child's first month's tuition will be collected. This deposit will be applied to your first month's tuition. In addition, a one-time family registration fee of \$100 is due the first month of your child's enrollment at Farm School.

Tuition is due on the first business day of each month, and is considered late by the close of business on the second business day of each month. A late fee of \$10 per day will be assessed beginning the third business day of the month until the account is current. Effective May 1, 2017, only electronic tuition payments will be accepted – no cash or checks will be received at Farm School.

Children cannot be received for care beginning the third business day of the month and until tuition is paid in full. A family whose payment falls behind one week (five business days) will be asked to find other care for their child. Refunds and make-up days are not given for any reason, including absences due to illness, vacation or holidays.

Monthly Tuition Rates

June 2018-May 2019

SAPLINGS & SPROUTS (18 mos - 3 yrs)

Half Day (9:00AM - 1:00PM)

2 days: \$325 (T/Th)

3 days: \$425 (M/W/F)

5 days: \$640 (M-F)

Regular Hours (8:30 AM - 3:30 PM)

2 days: \$465 (T/Th)

3 days: \$625 (M/W/F)

5 days: \$940 (M-F)

Extended Hours (7:15 AM – 5:15 PM)

2 days: \$570 (T/Th)

3 Days: \$765 (M/W/F)

TREEHOUSE (3 - 4 yrs)

Half Day (9:00AM - 1:00PM)

2 days: \$305 (T/Th)

3 days: \$405 (M/W/F)

5 days: \$620 (M-F)

Regular Hours (8:30 AM - 3:30 PM)

2 days: \$445 (T/Th)

3 Days: \$585 (M/W/F)

5 days: \$890 (M-F)

Extended Hours (7:15 AM – 5:15 PM)

2 days: \$540 (T/Th)

3 Days: \$715 (M/W/F)

5 days: \$1,130 (M-F)

5 days: \$1,055 (M-F)

KINDERGARTEN (4 yrs – 6 yrs)

DROP-IN RATES (all classes)

Half Day (9:00AM – 1:00PM)
2 days: \$305 (T/Th)
3 days: \$405 (M/W/F)
5 days: \$620 (M-F)

Half Day (9:00 AM – 1:00 PM)
\$45/day

Regular Hours (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM)
2 days: \$440 (T/Th)
3 days: \$560 (M/W/F)
5 days: \$865 (M-F)

Regular Hours (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM)
\$65/day

Extended Hours (7:15 AM – 5:15 PM)
\$75/day

Extended Hours (7:15 AM – 5:15 PM)
2 days: \$525 (T/Th)
3 days: \$675 (M/W/F)
5 days: \$1,030 (M-F)

Adding Extended Hours to Regular Day
(7:15 AM – 8:30 AM and 3:30 PM to 5:15 PM)
\$20/day

Note: Tuition for all classrooms includes supply fees, and lunch + one snack (half day schedules) or lunch + two snacks (regular and extended schedules).

Sibling Discount: 10% off total tuition for families with more than one child simultaneously enrolled in any of the programs.

Other Fees

In addition to monthly tuition (as set forth above), the following fees will apply when necessary:

Registration fee	\$100
Wait list fee	\$50, \$25 for add. siblings, \$0 for current families
Late tuition fee	\$10/day
Late pick-up fee	\$15/each 15 minute period
Adding extended hours to regular day	\$20
Schedule change fee	\$150 each after 2 changes annually

Withdrawal Policies

A family may terminate its childcare at any time with 30 days' written notice. The Schedule Change/Withdrawal Request form is available on the school's website. There is no guarantee that space will permit re-enrollment at a later date for any child withdrawn from care. Failure to provide 30 days' notice of withdrawal will result in billing for one month's tuition, due upon departure from the school.

Drop-In Care

We offer drop-in care (additional days on regular or extended day schedules or extended day only) for current families, provided space is available. Advance notice is required; please email goodearthschool@gmail.com or, with less than 48 hours notice, call the school directly at (512) 259-3922 to arrange drop-in care for your child. The fee schedule is outline above.

Schedule Changes

A note on summer leave...

Tuition-free summer leaves of any length are not offered. The administrative time required to manage deposit payments, leave dates, etc. is too cumbersome and is not in the school's best financial interest. Instead, families may request a reduction of schedule to accommodate travel plans, etc. Schedule reductions are limited in availability, however, and will be granted as available.

All families may make two free schedule change requests per school year. Requirements:

- Requests must be recorded on a Schedule Change Request form.
- All requests require at least 30 days' notice.
- All requests are subject to availability.
- Two requests per year are free; after two schedule change requests, each new request is billed a \$150 fee.
- Changes in schedule must be for at least one calendar month and may not begin/end except at the beginning/end of a month.

Open Door Policy

The Good Earth Farm School has an open door policy, meaning that you may stop by the child care center any time during regular business hours to observe our operations. Though our drop-off and pick-up procedures are meant to expedite drop-off and pick-up, and to clearly define when children have been signed in to our care, the open door policy is always in effect.

Clothing Policy

With years of experience and observation, choices have been made about the clothing children should wear during our program. Synthetic fabrics in a school setting generally yield uncomfortable and distracted children. With this in mind, please honor the following:

- All clothing, shoes, water bottles, boots, nap items, lunch bags (if needed) and backpacks must be licensed character-free and free of licensed sports characters and graphics. Characters, particularly shirts with super hero logos, have become very disruptive to the tone of our classrooms and have encouraged inappropriate classroom play.
- Clothes should be cotton and comfortable.
- The children are coming to do their work—playing and learning—therefore, clothes should not be their very best. The children will get paint, mud, etc. on their clothes when they are busy having a good time. We will change them as needed, but are happy for them to delve into experiences with none of us having to worry about their clothes.
- We will go outside as much as possible, even on days after a rainstorm or in cold weather. Rain boots or waterproof shoes must be on hand for each child. Rain jackets are highly recommended, and winter boots, gloves, and hats in colder months.

- Shoes must be fastened with Velcro or simple buckles that the child can successfully use to put his/her shoes on and off—“self-serve”. When your child can tie their own shoes with proficiency, he/she may wear shoes with laces! We will work on tying shoes as part of our curriculum for those children for whom it is developmentally appropriate, or for those children who have a particular interest in learning! Well-fitting tennis shoes or whole foot athletic sandals are recommended year-round.

Illness

Per Licensing Standards, children must go home if:

- They have an armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees or more.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness, such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, diarrhea, two or more episodes of vomiting in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores, wheezing, and behavior changes.
- Signs and symptoms of a communicable disease per the TX Department of Health.

Once called, parents or emergency contacts have 60 minutes to pick up sick children. Children must remain home until they are well, including 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea, and 24 hours after a fever, without medication. Children diagnosed with a communicable disease must have a doctor’s note stating they are no longer contagious to return to school. If an antibiotic is required for the communicable disease, the child must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

When your child seems better, but you are unsure whether or not to send him/her to school, it may help parents to consider the differences between caring for a child in the home and caring for a group of children. An ill child often requires more rest, an altered diet, frequent monitoring, and increased comforting in order to fully recover from an illness, which a group setting does not easily permit. We want your child to come to school, but a lethargic, unwell child does not benefit from the increased activity and stimulation a school setting provides.

Medication

The Good Earth Farm School does not dispense medication of any kind, except for children with a documented chronic medical condition, i.e. an EpiPen for a child allergic to bee stings or an inhaler for an asthmatic. Please make arrangements to give antibiotics and other medication before and after the school day. A specific note from your child’s doctor detailing how and when to administer medication must be on file with the medication in order for the medication to be stored and dispensed by the Administration of The Good Earth Farm School. When medication is given in this limited situation, it will be recorded and kept in the child’s file.

Sunscreen and Diaper Cream

In order for staff to apply sunscreen or diaper cream to your child, we must have a completed Topical Cream/Ointment/Sunscreen Permission Form on file for your child. A copy of this document may be found on our website. Please label all creams, ointments and sunscreens with your child’s first and last name.

Sunscreen will be applied by staff after rest time, if families provide it (and submit the appropriate form), in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Families are responsible for the child’s first application at drop-off.

Diaper cream and ointment will be used as needed, if families provide it (and submit the appropriate form), in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The Healing Basket

Unless a request is made to the contrary, enrollment in our school permits the use of "The Healing Basket" contents as needed on your child. The contents of the "The Healing Basket" are as follows:

- red or dark washcloths used to wipe bloody scrapes, etc.
- a pair of tweezers
- a thermometer
- calendula salve for scrapes
- arnica gel for bumps and bruises
- tea tree oil diluted with water on a child's classroom comb, hair
- aloe vera gel for burns
- band-aids
- tissues
- lavender oil-mixed in water to calm a child, for after nap grooming, or footbaths
- lavender lotion for hand/foot massages

Photographic/Videography Permission

Unless otherwise specified, enrollment in our school permits the use of your child's picture on the school website, blog, social media, and in other marketing efforts (including short videos showing a day at Farm School). Photographs and videos are always taken with sensitivity to whether the child wishes to be photographed or videographed (if he/she is aware) and in a way that honors the child and his work.

Medical Emergencies

Staff are CPR and First Aid certified. In the case of a minor injury or illness, parents are notified. If a parent cannot be reached, an authorized emergency contact person indicated on the child's admission form will be contacted until the parent can be reached. Incident/Illness reports will be completed as a matter of record, per Licensing standards.

In the case of a medical emergency, 911 will be contacted, followed by a phone call to parents, then authorized emergency contacts if the parents cannot be reached. Please note that in the event of a medical emergency that necessitates transportation by ambulance, the caregiver(s) at The Good Earth Farm School may not be able to accompany your child in the ambulance due to the responsibility to care for other children who are at the school at the same time.

School Calendar 2018-2019 (also posted on the school website)

Our school calendar is carefully considered and reflects trends in family and staff vacations, most of which coincide with the local school district calendar.

Every attempt will be made to stay open in inclement weather, with the exception of days when Leander ISD is closed. Good Earth Farm School will be closed on days that Leander ISD closes its schools because of the weather. Parents should use their own judgment on the other days when there is questionable weather. Notice of closure will be provided by Facebook, the school website/blog, and via message on the school answering machine.

2018-2019 Good Earth Farm School Calendar

2018

March 23 – May 11 Spring 2018 Seedlings Session

March 30 NO SCHOOL, Good Friday

April 4 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

April 7 Open House 10AM-12:00 PM

April 13 Spring Family Night 6-7:30PM

April 22 Brushy Creek Lake Park play meet-up/clean-up, Earth Day! 10:30AM-12:00 PM

May 2 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

May 14-15 Mother's Day celebrations at morning snack

May 28 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day

May 31 Kinder Graduation Ceremony, 10:00--11:30 AM (Kinder students withdrawing May-August 2018)

June 6 Staff Meeting 5:00-7:00 PM

June 8 Last day of School, Leander ISD

June 11-August 15 Summer Camp Sessions

June 18-19 Father's Day Celebrations at morning snack

July 2-6 NO SCHOOL, Summer Break

July 11 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

August 8 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

August 15 Last day of Good Earth Summer Camp

August 16 First day of school, Leander ISD

September 3 NO SCHOOL, Labor Day

September 5 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

September 10 and September 11 Grandparents Celebration at morning snack (and letter writing project for out-of-town grandparents)

September 14, Back to School Dessert Social, 6:30-8:00 PM

October 3, Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

November 3, Open House 10:00 AM-12:00 PM (online registration required)

November 7, Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

November 9, Lantern Walk 5:30-7:00 PM

November 12-December 23, 8:00-8:30 AM Parent Conferences (sign-up sheets)

November 19-23, NO SCHOOL, Fall Break

December 5, Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

December 21, Solstice Festival/Spiral Walk 6:30-8:30 PM

December 24-January 4, 2018 NO SCHOOL, Winter Break

2019

January 7, Classes Resume

January 12 Open House 10:00 AM-11:30 AM (online registration required)

January 16 Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

February 2 Open House 10:00 AM-12:00 PM (online registration required)

February 6, Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

February 14-15, Friendship Celebrations in Classrooms at Morning Snack

March 2, Open House 10:00 AM-12:00 PM (online registration required)

March 6, Staff Meeting 5:00-7:00 PM

March 18-22, NO SCHOOL, Spring Break

April 3, Staff Meeting 5:00-7:00 PM

April 6 Open House 10:00AM-12:00 PM (online registration required)

April 19, NO SCHOOL, Good Friday

April 12, Spring Family Event 6:00-7:30 PM

May Optional Parent Conferences TBD (by parent or staff request)

May 4, Open House 10:00 AM-11:30 AM (online registration required)

May 8, Staff Meeting 5:30-7:30 PM

May 13-14, Mother's Day Celebrations at morning snack

May 27, NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day

May 31, Kinder Graduation Ceremony, 10:00-11:30 AM

Release of Children

Licensing requires that you designate emergency contacts and authorized pick-up persons for your child, which you will indicate on your child's admission form. Children may only be released to a person or persons designated by the enrolling parent(s). The Good Earth Farm School will not release a child to an authorized pick up person if prior notice has not been given by the enrolling parent. In this case, the Good Earth Farm School will contact the parent(s) to verify that the authorized pick up person has been asked to pick up the child on the given day. No child will be released to an authorized pick up person without verifying identity of the person with a valid photo identification card such as a driver's license.

Note that both parents have legal permission to pick up a child unless the school is given a copy of a court order stating otherwise.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the event of an emergency, all children will shelter/lock down in the safest portions of the school building, as recommended by the local fire marshal, evacuate to a designated area outside the buildings on the school grounds, or relocate to Wiley Middle School, should it be deemed unsafe for children and staff to remain on the property. To address staff responsibility and facility readiness with respect to an unforeseen emergency, an emergency preparedness plan has been drafted pursuant to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers, §§746.5201 to 746.5204. A copy of this plan is available on the family board or by request, and evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. Monthly fire drills and quarterly sheltering/lock down drills are conducted so that children learn to exit from the building or shelter in place in a safe manner.

Loss of Utilities

In the event of a power loss, resulting in no heat in cold weather or no air conditioning in hot weather, for a period of time that would threaten the health and well-being of the children, parents will be contacted to pick up their child(ren). In the event that there is not heat, the teachers will dress children warmly and use blankets to keep them warm. If there is no air conditioning, children will be dressed in a cool manner and given plenty of water. If there is no power for more than two hours, parents will be notified that school is closing. Likewise, if there is no water for more than two hours, parents will be notified to pick up their children and school will be closed.

Transportation/Field Trips

The Good Earth Farm School does not transport children or take them on field trips. Instead, we prefer to bring guests to our school periodically so that trips are not necessary.

Animals

Our Farm School family extends to various animals housed throughout the Good Earth campus. All animals are treated by a local veterinarian, examined at least once each year.

The students of the school are part of feeding and caring for the school's animals. A staff person assists the children in refilling rabbit water bottles, pouring cat food and rabbit food, and in pouring grain into feed bins for the larger animals. Children will wash their hands immediately after caring for animals, and they will wash their hands upon entering the school. Children will not handle, but may feed and gather the eggs of, animals designated by Licensing as posing a high risk for the spread of salmonellosis: chickens, ducks, reptiles such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians such as frogs and toads. All school

animals will be kept safe and healthy for the children, and unknown animals will be prohibited from school grounds.

Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations

A special ceremony will be held for your child at morning snack on or near your child's birth date. You will be invited to participate in this special ceremony. Your child may bring a healthy snack to share. If you would like to invite children to an off-site birthday party for your child, please distribute invitations to children using contact information in the Family Directory.

A variety of school celebrations will occur during the school year, without particular focus or preference for any one religion or culture, instead taking cues from Mother Nature. If you would like to share information, traditional dress, etc., related to a holiday celebrated by your family, please make arrangements to plan a time to do so with your child's teachers.

Tobacco

No person is allowed to possess any form of tobacco on school property.

Breastfeeding

All mothers are welcome to breastfeed their children on school property. Currently, a rocking chair is located in every classroom, but any location comfortable to mom/child is acceptable.

Changes in the Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in the home that could cause distress to the child, parents should inform the teachers as soon as possible. Examples may be: a new person in the home, divorce or separation, a parent travelling for an extended period of time, moving, death of a pet or loved one. All information will be kept confidential.

Staff

Individuals employed by Good Earth Day School LLC, doing business as Good Earth Farm School may not work for any family in any capacity during their employment with the school. This includes but is not limited to: babysitting, transporting children to and from school or trading for any type of service. Please understand that if staff work with a family outside of the school setting, a conflict of interest could arise that compromises the professional boundaries we seek to maintain between families and staff members. No staff member may be engaged in social media with a school family unless a relationship existed prior to employment or enrollment (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, My Space, Linked In, etc.). Our staff are asked to adhere to this policy, as well, and by signing the Employee Handbook Acknowledgement, understand that violation of this policy may result in their termination and end the relationship with the school family, as well.

Gang-Free Zone

Per the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Licensing and Inspections

A copy of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards is available for your review at the school, as is the most recent Licensing inspection report for our school, which is located on the Family Board. You may contact Licensing at:

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
355 Texas Avenue, Suite 100
Round Rock, TX 78664
(512)388-6240 www.tdfps.state.tx.us

You may report suspected child abuse and/or neglect at 1-800-252-5400.