

Green Adventure Project Parent Handbook

Policies & Procedures 2022-2023



Welcome to the Green Adventure Project Family!

We are thrilled to have your family join us on this adventure. The coming year will be full of learning, excitement, and wonder. We guide our Learners into becoming thinkers, problem solvers, creative innovators, and explorers.

The following pages are a foundation to start the year off right, you will find:

- Policies & Procedures which will outline expectations for our families.
- A supply list, which covers outdoor gear and recommendations.
- Paperwork that will need to be completed and returned to our Green Adventure Project office:
 - Tuition Agreement & Waiver with first month's tuition **due within 72 hours of acceptance** to confirm enrollment
 - Health History Form
 - Triple C Camp Waiver
- School calendar

If at any time you have questions, or need anything at all, please give us a call, text or send an email. (Call/text 434-996-3933 or email to hello@greenadventureproject.org) It is important to us that your whole family feels welcomed into the Green Adventure Project community.

Program Philosophy: When observing children, you will find that they are naturally curious, with a strong desire to learn by exploring the world around them. Learners who are allowed to wonder, explore, and discover will ask questions, find answers, and retain information at a higher rate than students whose engagement is forced. We create an environment where Learners develop relationships, learn how to appropriately interact, and navigate relationships both within our community, and beyond. Our curriculum is developed from the interests and curiosities of the Learners, we maintain a high ratio of adults to students to help nurture those curiosities and offer meaningful interactions. Learners at Green Adventure Project (GAP) learn about themselves through problem-solving, teamwork, exploration, and imagination. Our days are spent primarily outdoors, with the occasional indoor activity to combat cold, wet weather or when necessary based on what we're learning. Our outdoor classroom provides room for Learners to continuously explore and observe, growing comfortable in their setting and develop a sense of ownership over the site. We treat our Learners with patience and respect, knowing they are responsible, caring human beings.

Interdisciplinary Education: Following the Virginia Standards of Learning our Learner's will be invited to guide the day based on their interests while Educators will be able to incorporate learning into those interests.

For example: John and Sara are interested in building a whistle, there are several steps they will need to take:

1. Research whistles (reading, writing, science comprehension)
2. Inventory supplies & create a list of needed supplies with cost (reading, writing, math)
3. Create a proposal to present at a Morning Meeting (writing, problem solving, creative innovation, public speaking)
4. Present proposal for approval or receive ideas to expand their proposal (public speaking, growth mindset)
5. Gather materials & follow instructions for building the whistle (reading directions, measuring, safely using tools (with adult support), testing & retesting)
6. Upon completion, presenting the project at a Morning Meeting (public speaking, confidence building)
7. Celebrating the journey!

Through this simple project a child learned invaluable lessons and practiced foundational skills. The project only takes a few days, but the lifelong impact is immeasurable.

A child-led learning philosophy can sometimes be challenging to observe from the outside. For this reason, it is important that our families grow to become part of the Green Adventure Project community. This will be done through community events for Learners to show off their work.

Educators & Ratios: We maintain an Educator to Learner ratio of 1:12. Our Educators come from a diverse background of experiences both in education and hands on learning. They have a passion for working with children and families. They are eager to share their knowledge, talents and interests with Learners and fellow Educators. Our Educators are First Aid & CPR certified, Medication Administration Trained, and meet requirements for a private school as set by the state of Virginia.

School Schedule: School will run from August 29, 2022 to May 26, 2023 with the exception of observed holidays, school breaks and closures. (see last page for GAP calendar) Any changes to the schedule will be announced to parents at least one month in advance, with the exception of weather. Based on the distance some of our families will have to drive, we will close anytime the Albemarle County School District closes due to weather, matching late starts and early dismissals. GAP educators will be in touch via text and email by 7am.

Schedule Options:

AM Bus Transportation: 7:45-7:50

Drop Off: 8:00-8:15

School: 8:15-3:00

Pick Up: 3:00-3:15

After School Club: 3:00-6:00

Our daily schedule will maintain a flow that guides us from one activity to the next. If Learner's are deeply immersed in learning, we will give them time to complete their task before moving on to the next activity.

- Our days will start with an "invitation to play" as Learner's are arriving where they can wake up their minds.
- We will begin our Morning Meeting to discuss the day, listen to project proposals, give reminders, and review expectations.
- We work together every morning to make sure our animals are fed, classrooms are clean, and belongings are put away.
- Nature time will take place each day where we incorporate literacy, math, science, art, and music into our daily explorations.
- We will have lunch time and play time.
- Projects will be an opportunity for Learners to develop their own ideas, create a procedure, and test their process.
- Before the end of the day, we will clean up our spaces and come back together to talk about how the day went and discuss the next time we're together.
- Students will be dismissed either to the adult picking them up or to After School Club.
- After School Club Learners will focus on outdoor exploration.

Tuition:

Please reference your 2022-2023 Tuition Agreement for all fees.

The first month's tuition is due within 72 hours of being accepted to the program. Families can choose to pay in full or nine equal monthly installments (September-May) via check, card, or eCheck. Payments are due by the 15 of each month. There will be a 4% processing fee applied to any card payments. Payments will be processed by Triple C Camp. Any late payments will be subject to a \$25/day late fee.

Installment Processing Dates (for credit card or eCheck payments):

September 15, October 15, November 15, December 15, January 15, February 15, March 15, April 15, May 15

Refunds will not be granted for holidays, scheduled closings, inclement weather closings, or illness. Refunds or credits are also not granted for Learners missing program for personal reasons. If fees are not received by the designated date, there will be a late fee of \$25 per day each day that payments are not received. The late fee will be added to the next month's payment. Two late payments in one calendar year are grounds of termination, as are payments that are more than two weeks late. Terminations will be notified via email, and the Learner's space will be filled from the families on the waitlist.

Late Pick Up: Families who are late picking up their Learner(s) will be charged \$2.00 per minute, per Learner for the extended care service. Payment will be added to the following month's payment. Your Learner will be added to After School for any time they remain at school past dismissal.

Additional Expenses: It is necessary that children come prepared for the elements. Please adhere to the gear list provided and send your Learners to school prepared with the necessary equipment to help them remain engaged and comfortable. (GAP gear list on page 4)

Your child will need lunch and snacks each day, as well as a refillable water bottle. We request using lunch containers that are reusable to help reduce the amount of waste we send to the landfill.

We will have community events for families. The events will be different throughout the year, you may be asked to bring a dish to pass for a potluck, an art supply to contribute to a large project, or other materials. The cost for families to participate in these events will either be none or very minimal based on what the Learner's organize.

COVID-19 Policy: If there is a state mandate to close schools, we will reduce monthly tuition to \$400 per month which will guarantee a Learner's space will be reserved when schools are allowed to reopen. During any closures Green Adventure Project will provide nature activities, project support, learning opportunities, and scheduled time for individual families to access the school trail network.

Withdrawal Policy: If you choose to withdraw your child from Green Adventure Project, you must fill out a 30-Day Notice of Withdrawal form (available upon request). This form must be signed by the Green Adventure Project Education Director and submitted at least 30 days in advance of your child's intended date of withdrawal. You will be responsible for two months tuition following your child's withdrawal.

Enrollment Requirements: Learners must be 5 years or older by September 30, 2022. Learners are required to be fully capable of going to the bathroom by themselves (no pull-up diapers) by the start of the school year. Please practice working through the necessary layers your Learner will be wearing in advance to reduce the risk of accidents in all types of weather. Your child must be prepared (and want!) to be outside at all times, no matter the weather or temperature, this will require parents/caregivers to maintain a positive attitude at all times. Learners must provide a current vaccination record and current physical examination with a doctor's signature and date.

Paperwork: All paperwork needs to be completed and returned to Green Adventure Project. All forms will need to be updated annually. Necessary forms:

- Tuition Agreement & Waiver (due within 72 hours of school acceptance)
- Health History Form (due by August 29)
- Triple C Camp Waiver (due by August 29)
- Physical from Learner's physician valid within two years (due by August 29)
- Medical Authorization Form (only if medication is required at school):
www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/licensing/fdh/intro_page/current_providers/forms/all_other/032-05-0570-05-eng.pdf

Attendance: Attendance and participation is necessary for all Learners, and an important aspect to community building. If your Learner is going to miss a day or more of program, be late or picked up early, please let us know as soon as possible. This can be done by calling or texting 434.996.3933 or emailing hello@greenadventureproject.org.

Weather: Learners at Green Adventure Project experience different types of weather, this is a necessary and meaningful aspect of the program. If there is extreme or dangerous weather, activities will be moved inside. The safety of our Learners is always our priority. Please check the daily forecast in advance and send Learners to school with the proper clothing and equipment. If a child is not appropriately attired, and cannot participate in program, parents will be contacted to either bring your child necessary gear or pick them up from school for the day.

Clothing Requirements: It is vital that all Learners are adequately prepared for the elements. If a child is warm and comfortable, they will be able to accomplish a great deal more than one who is focused on being uncomfortable. Please review the gear list and start collecting equipment as soon as possible. Anything sent to school has the possibility of being sent home very dirty. Please label all gear and belongings with your Learner's first and last name.

Necessary Gear & Equipment:

- Comfortable clothes that can get muddy, wet, and dirty
- Rain pants & jacket
- Rain Boots
- Sturdy enclosed shoes for dry weather
- Sun Hat/Sunglasses/Sunscreen
- Backpack comfortable enough for the Learner to carry on trail
- Water bottle (reusable, nonleaking)

Cold Weather Gear:

- Warm, synthetic or wool hat
- Long underwear, or thermals for top and bottom (not cotton)
- Fleece or other non-cotton mid layers
- Waterproof winter jacket, with hood
- Waterproof mittens that are easy to get on and off
- Waterproof Snow Pants (no bibs or overalls)
- Wool socks
- Waterproof winter boots
- Travel mug for hot chocolate/tea

Learners may leave a complete change of clothes, rain pants, rain jacket (snow pants, winter jacket, hat, mittens), and extra layers at school. Please make sure your Learner's backpack is a manageable size and weight that your child can carry it comfortably.

Toileting Accidents: If your child has an accident while at school, wet clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag in their backpack. We will make every attempt to tell you at pick up, however it can be a busy time of day, please check your child's backpack each day.

Bathrooms: Our Learners have access to multiple bathrooms around Triple C Camp. However, while on trail the best option may be to go to the bathroom outside. If your child has never gone to the bathroom outside, we recommend practicing before the start of school. Green Adventure Project Educators will enforce strict outdoor toileting requirements to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all participants.

Open Door Policy: Parents are always welcome!* Parents may visit at any time. In order to adhere to the goals of the program we ask that parents remain in an observer's role, unless asked to join by the Educators. If visiting, please allow and encourage your Learner to focus on school. If you would like to bring other visitors to school, please discuss it with the Educators in advance. We do ask that there are no visitors in the first month of program. This is to ensure a smooth transition for all participants, it is important to have this time between the Learners and Educators to establish a community of trust and respect.

*While Social Distancing guidelines are in effect, we request no onsite visitors.

Get Involved: If you have time to donate to the Green Adventure Project, we always have projects available. Please contact us to discuss ideas you would enjoy sharing and benefit the program.

Communication: We will do our best to communicate with you regarding your Learner and their time spent at school. You will receive a monthly newsletter via email to update you on our school's learning, projects, accomplishments, and inform you of what's coming next. Please help us keep the lines of communication open by informing us of anything that may affect your child either negatively or positively, both at home and at school. When we are informed of changes in your child's life (visitors, work trips, moving, divorce, new sibling's, illness, death, etc.), we are better able to create a plan to help them through the transition. We will always be transparent about things that we notice happening with your child, and in some cases will recommend that you discuss our concerns with your child's primary care provider. Although hearing these observations may be challenging, please know that we will be coming from a place of kindness. We are always happy to schedule time to discuss your child's experience either by phone, email or in person.

Adjusting to Nature/Project based Education: Any change takes adjustment. We will spend the first weeks of program focused on observing children, incorporating play, and learning about our community. Children acclimate in different ways and at different rates. There is no right or wrong way for your child to face this transition. Each of our Learners will handle the adjustment in their own way, and we will be sure to support each child in a kind, respectful way as we earn their trust and begin building our school community. You can help to prepare your child for their new adventure by telling them in advance about school at Green Adventure Project, answering their questions honestly, and maintaining a positive attitude. Take the time to acknowledge your child's excitement, fears or concerns, and feel free to tell us about them. The more you tell us about your child, the better we'll know them the first day. If you think a visit to the school, or meeting with our Educators in advance would be beneficial to your child's transition, please let us know.

Snacks & Lunch: Please provide your child with snacks and lunch each day. We will be working hard outside, so your children may be hungrier than usual. We request using lunch containers that are reusable to help reduce the amount of waste we send to the landfill.

Behavior Policy: We work closely with our Learners to set clear expectations from the first day of school. If a child chooses an action that is deemed unacceptable, educators will address and seek to resolve it immediately with the Learner. It is important that parents and educators work as a team when resolving discipline issues. Please be aware that problem solving, and consequences need to be immediately tied to the behavior. This allows the Learner to understand the action and consequence.

Our policy is as follows:

- Hurting another child or throwing a tantrum leads to time away from the group until the child is calm enough to rejoin the activity, this will also include a conversation with an Educator.
- Abuse of an activity or object leads to a loss of the privilege of using that object or material for an agreed upon length of time.
- Unprovoked harm to another child and/or using objects as weapons to injure staff or children leads to a call to the parent(s) to come and take the child home.
- Serious injury of a child or staff member, habitual behavior that compromises the safety of the children, or habitual behavior that disrupts the program often may lead to termination of enrollment.

Bullying Policy: Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. It is repeated over time and the person being bullied has a difficult time defending him or herself. Bullies can work alone or in groups. Bullying can be: Physical (such as hitting or pushing), Verbal (such as teasing, name-calling or threatening), Social (such as causing someone to be left out or rejected by others) or Cyber (such as saying something mean to or about someone else online).

We take incidents of bullying seriously and train staff to intervene immediately, keep everyone safe and model respectful behavior when intervening. If an incident of bullying is communicated, we work in partnership with all parties to resolve the situation. This includes having open communication between Educators and Learners, Learners and parents, and parents and administration.

Discipline: Green Adventure Project fosters an environment in which children learn to respect others and their surroundings. We teach and encourage children to use problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Other discipline techniques we employ are prevention, teacher shadowing, redirection, positive modeling and gentle reminders. Discipline shall be fair, consistent and appropriate for the age and maturity of the child. Physical punishment is strictly prohibited. Every effort will be made to help parents and children resolve difficulties that may arise at school. Steps toward resolution include:

- Scheduling a parent/educator discussion.
- Developing a written plan of action agreed upon by parent and educators.
- A referral to an outside agency if there seems to be developmental or behavioral concerns.
- Possible withdrawal of child if a behavioral problem is so severe that no positive solution can be found.

Sick Policy: It is vital that ill children stay home for the health and safety of the community. We understand the challenge this may present and thank you in advance for your commitment to keeping our school healthy. Families must tell us of any communicable diseases (COVID-19, lice, pink eye, chicken pox, etc.) so we can communicate it to our community.

Due to the nature of our program, we ask that you keep your child home if they have:

- A fever over 100 degrees in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea more than once in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting more than once in the past 24 hours
- Severe coughing or runny nose and mucus
- Unidentifiable rashes, pink eye, lice or any illness that would prevent them from fully participating in an outdoor program.

Please let us know if your child will be absent due to illness.

If a child appears ill while at school, we will separate the ill child, take their temperature, and give them space to rest and contact the family once the child is resting, so you have a heads-up. If there is no improvement, we will call the parents or emergency contacts to pick the child up from school. If there is a minor injury while at school, the child will be treated, the injury will be recorded, and the parents will be contacted. If there is a serious injury or illness, 911 and parents will be called. If a Learner requires transport to a hospital they will be taken to UVA unless their family requests otherwise. Any other injuries that occur, the family will be notified, and a plan will be created together.

COVID-19: While we navigate nuances of COVID-19 we will update this policy. Here is our current protocol:

- Drop off:
 - We ask that parents roll down the Learners windows of the car so our educators can ask a series of questions pertaining to recent symptoms and exposure to COVID-19. If any answers are yes, the Learner will be asked to go home.

- Before exiting the vehicle, we will take a contactless temperature of each Learner to make sure it is below 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Learners will then be invited to exit the car and begin their school day.
- We will be socially distanced to the best of our ability throughout the day. When we are not able to socially distance, we will ask all Learner's and Educators to wear face coverings.
- When we are indoors, we will wear face coverings.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 we will notify all families immediately.
- We ask that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 remain at home until symptom free.
- Hand washing and hand sanitizing will be required before starting each activity, prior to eating, after using the restroom, and coughing or sneezing.
- Our supplies and classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

Medication: If your Learner requires medication while at school, you will need to submit a signed Medication Authorization form. This form is necessary for both prescription and over the counter medications, including but not limited to Tylenol, Benadryl, Advil, etc. All prescription drugs must be in the original bottle with the pharmacy label including the child's name, dose, and expiration date. Over the counter medication must be in the original packaging with the child's first and last name on the packaging. All medications must be in a Ziploc bag, that has the child's name and birthdate listed on the bag. If a child needs to be given a medication at home and at school, such as antibiotics, please ask the pharmacy to split the doses. Please send your child to school sun screened.

Our staff will maintain Universal Precautions when dealing with bodily fluids. Washing hands will be required of all staff and participants after dealing with gloves or bodily fluids. Any surface that comes in contact with blood or bodily fluids will be immediately disinfected using a bleach solution.

Child Abuse Reporting: Educators are mandated reporters in Virginia. Any suspected child abuse and/or neglect will be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). Educators are responsible for submitting reports. Parents are not notified when CPS has been called about possible abuse, neglect or exploitation except on the recommendations of CPS or police personnel. As mandatory reporters our staff must report any Learners who are not safely secured in a proper child restraint system, upon arrival or departure from school.

Anti-Harassment: We are committed to providing a work environment where staff and families are treated with respect. We will not tolerate harassment from staff, families, vendors or visitors. Harassment takes many forms, and can include unwelcome comments, slurs, jokes, innuendos, cartoons, pranks or other verbal or physical conduct that creates an uncomfortable environment.

Nondiscrimination Policy: Green Adventure Project does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, disability, religion or age in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and all other Green Adventure Project programs.

Triple C Camp: We are incredibly grateful to maintain a positive, working relationship with Triple C Camp. From time to time, Triple C Camp Staff may be hired for their expertise to work with our students. All Triple C Camp staff have required background checks and documentation on file.

Concerns: We know first-hand that parents are the most important influence in their child's life, and that you know your child better than anyone. A positive working relationship between parents and Green Adventure Project is of the utmost importance for a Learner's continued success. Please let us know immediately if you have any concerns. Green Adventure Project respects the privacy of every child and family and holds confidential all records regarding your child's personal information. All records will be kept secure in the child's file in the office.