

# **Frontenac Arch Biosphere**

## *Forest School Fall Program*



# **Policies and Procedures**

**A Handbook for Parents**

Revised September 2024



## **Welcome to Fall Forest School!**

Welcome to the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Forest School Program! We are delighted that you will be joining the FAB Family this season. Our Forest School is dedicated to offering enriching, nature-based learning experiences in the unique changing of the season landscape. Our programs emphasize safety, individual attention, and a deep engagement with the local environment.

As you embark on this Autumn adventure with us, please thoroughly review this manual. It contains essential information to ensure you and your child(ren) have a safe, enjoyable, and educational experience in the Fall forest setting. For any specific inquiries regarding our Forest School Program, feel free to reach out to our dedicated FAB Education Manager, Kim Chamberlain at: [education@fabn.ca](mailto:education@fabn.ca)

## **Registration**

For the Forest School Program, participants must be at least 5 years old prior to the commencement of their session. It is important to note that our program does not qualify as a Registered Daycare, and therefore, *we are legally unable to offer care to children under the age of 4.*

Our primary objective is to deliver an enjoyable and enriching educational experience, tailored to suit the age and maturity level of each child. To ensure a fair and positive experience for all, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Network kindly asks families to adhere to our age requirements and Program Policies. This helps us maintain a safe, age-appropriate, and engaging learning environment for every participant in our Forest School Program.

## **Fall School Program Registration**

Please be aware that same-day registrations for the Forest School Program are not accepted. For any inquiries related to this policy, or if you need assistance with late registrations, please reach out directly to our Program Facilitators.



Regarding our waitlist procedure, spots are filled based on the order of sign-up. In the event a registered participant withdraws, an email notification will be sent to you if a spot becomes available. Please note that this spot is not reserved; prompt completion of the registration process is necessary to secure your place in the program.

**REFUND POLICY:** Our policy stipulates that for withdrawals occurring 7 or more days before the program start date, a refund of the registration fees will be issued, minus a 25% processing fee. Withdrawals made less than 7 days prior to the start of the program are generally non-refundable. Exceptions are made only if a medical letter is provided.

Due to the logistical complexities involved in rescheduling, as well as the allocation of equipment and supplies for our programs, we adhere to a strict refund policy. This ensures the effective management and quality of our spring Forest School experiences.

## **Program Forms and Waivers**

All necessary forms, including the medical form and waiver, are located on the last page of this handbook. For the Forest School Program, it's essential that these forms are filled out and brought with you on the first day. The waiver encompasses several critical elements, including a photo release, our refund policy, and a release of liability statement. If you need a printed copy of this form in advance, please reach out to the Program Facilitators. In case these forms are forgotten on the first day, we request that you stay to complete them before leaving your child at the program.

## **Medications at Forest School**

For the safety and well-being of our participants, a Medication Record Form must be completed for any medication that needs to be kept onsite. This form, along with the medication, should be handed to the program facilitator upon arrival and will be stored securely. While our staff are equipped to assist campers with their medication, they are not authorized to administer medications.

It is imperative for participants requiring an auto-injector or inhaler to have them on hand throughout the day in a portable bag (such as a fanny pack) clearly labeled with their name.

All prescription medications must be in their original container, labeled with the participant's name, dosage, directions for use, and type of medication. The same applies to non-prescription medications. Please ensure that all medications, including Epi-pens and inhalers, are not expired. If a Medication Record Form is needed, please indicate this at the time of registration.



## Health & Safety Policies

The FAB Forest School Program is dedicated to providing a safe, inclusive, and healthy environment for all participants. We prioritize the well-being of each child, volunteer, and staff member involved in our program. To uphold these standards, we have established the following health and safety policies:

**1. Illness Prevention:** For the health and safety of everyone, we request that children who are ill should not be sent to the program. In case a child becomes ill while attending, parents or guardians will be contacted immediately for prompt pick-up.

**2. Emergency Procedures:** In the event of a medical emergency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be contacted immediately, and we will make every effort to notify the parent or guardian as quickly as possible.

**3. Inclusivity and Safety:** Our program is committed to being welcoming and accommodating to all children. We ask that the medical information on the registration form is filled out thoroughly to help us plan effectively and provide necessary support.

### 4. Updated Health Measures:

- a) **Self-Assessment Requirement:** All volunteers, staff, and other individuals entering the program area must complete a daily self-assessment for symptoms of illness.
- b) **No Illness Policy:** Anyone showing signs of illness will not be permitted to participate in program activities.
- c) **Immediate Pick-up for Ill Participants:** It is essential for parents or guardians to be available for immediate pick-up if their child becomes ill.
- d) **Parent and Guardian Protocol:** Parents and guardians are asked to follow health measures during drop-off and pick-up, including not entering the program area if unwell and maintaining safe distancing.

By adhering to these policies, we ensure a nurturing and secure environment for all involved in the Forest School Program. Your cooperation and understanding in following these guidelines are greatly appreciated.

## Personal Protective Equipment for the Fall Forest School Program

Participating in the Forest School Program means engaging with the outdoors, often in chilly and varied Autumn conditions. To guarantee both safety and enjoyment for all participants, it's important to be well-prepared with appropriate personal

protective gear and essentials. You will receive a detailed packing list specific to your program prior to its commencement, but here are some general items you should consider:



**Hat:** Both a warm hat to retain body heat, and a brimmed hat for sun protection.

**Sunglasses (Optional):** Useful for protecting eyes from bright sunlight .

**Layered Clothing:** A combination of a moisture-wicking base layer, an insulating middle layer, and a protective outer layer for warmth and weather protection.

**Change of Clothes:** A spare set of clothes in case the primary set gets wet or dirty.

**Energy-Rich Food:** High-energy snacks to maintain energy levels during outdoor activities.

**Refillable Water Bottles:** Essential for staying hydrated, even in colder weather.

**Waterproof Boots:** Waterproof boots to keep feet warm and dry, insulated ones still may be necessary on some days.

**Warm Gloves or Mittens:** Insulated, waterproof gloves or mittens for hand protection against the cold.

**Thermal Socks:** Extra warmth for feet is provided by wool or thermal socks.

**Scarf or Neck Warmer:** Additional protection for the neck and lower face from the cold.

**Rain Gear:** Necessary for activities on rainy days to stay dry and warm.

**Backpack:** To carry extra layers, food, water, and other essentials.

## **Rainy Day Essentials**

At the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Forest School Nature Programs, we embrace outdoor learning in all weather conditions, including rain. To ensure your child is comfortable and can fully engage in activities during rainy days, please equip them with the following essential items:

- **Rain Jacket:** A must-have for wet weather, keeping your child dry and comfortable.
- **Rain Pants:** Protects against rain, ensuring lower body clothing stays dry.



- **Rain Hat:** Essential for head protection and keeping rain off the face.
- **Umbrella:** Offers additional protection and comfort in rainy conditions.
- **Rubber Boots:** Keeps feet dry, preventing discomfort and cold.
- **Layered Clothing:** Useful for adjusting to changing temperatures and conditions.
- **Change of Clothes:** Important for after wet outdoor activities, ensuring comfort throughout the day.

Preparing your child with these items will help them enjoy their time at the Forest School, regardless of the weather.

## **Belongings Management**

Each child should have a backpack or bag large enough to store their belongings. It can be helpful to have the backpack filled with lunches and easily accessible daily items, and then a secondary bag with changes of clothes and footwear, to leave at base during longer hikes. To streamline our activities and maximize our time for adventure and exploration, we request that all items, including water bottles and lunch bags, come pre-labeled. This preparation helps us avoid taking time out of our program to label items.

## **Expectations for Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play in our programs often means having fun while potentially getting dirty. We want to remind parents and guardians that while we encourage playful and immersive outdoor experiences, we cannot guarantee that clothing will remain stain-free. Please keep this in mind when selecting attire for your child to wear to the FAB Nature Program, choosing clothes that are comfortable and okay to get a little messy in.

## **Lost and Found Policy**

During the Forest School Nature Programs at the Frontenac Arch Biosphere, we understand that items can sometimes get misplaced. To assist with this, we have established the following lost and found procedures:

**Display of Lost Items:** Lost and found items will be displayed during pick-up times for easy identification and retrieval. We encourage parents and guardians to check this area regularly.

**Staff Assistance:** If your child loses an item, please inform our program staff. They will

make every effort to help locate the missing item(s). Your prompt notification is key to increasing the chances of recovery.



**Importance of Labeling:** Labeling your child's belongings greatly facilitates the process of matching found items with their rightful owners. We strongly recommend that all personal items, including clothing, water bottles, and lunch bags, are clearly labeled with your child's name.

**End-of-Week Procedure:** At the end of each week, any unclaimed items from the lost and found will be donated to a charitable organization. We encourage parents to ensure all personal items are collected by this time.

**Liability Disclaimer:** Please be aware that the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Forest School Nature Programs does not take responsibility for lost or stolen items. We advise against bringing valuable items to the program and encourage a thorough check for personal belongings at the end of each day.

By adhering to these procedures, we hope to minimize the inconvenience of lost items and maintain a smooth and enjoyable experience for all participants and their families.

## Fall Forest School Program Checklist

Ensure your child is ready for their Fall Forest School experience with the following items:

### Items to bring:

- Hat (toque and brimmed)
- Layered clothing
- Change of clothes
- Energy-Rich foods
- Refillable water bottle
- Waterproof boots
- Thermal socks
- Scarf or neck warmer
- Water-proof pants and jacket
- Backpack
- Sunglasses (optional)
- Medication for camper - inhaler, epi-pen, prescription medication



Items not to bring:

- Electronics
- Money
- Items of value
- Favourite toys
- Animals/pets





## **Sign In and Out Policy for FAB's Forest School Nature Programs**

To ensure the safety and security of all children participating in the FAB's Forest School Nature Programs, we have established a specific Sign In and Out Policy:

### **Sign In and Out Location:**

**Mac Johnson:** In the Main Parking lot, off Debruge Road. Follow the Mac Johnson Wildlife signs.

### **Authorized Individuals:**

Only those individuals listed on the Registration Form will be allowed to sign children in or out of the program.

If an alternate person is to pick up a child, the parent/guardian must notify the Program Manager in writing via email at: [education@fabn.ca](mailto:education@fabn.ca) or a phone call at least 24 hours in advance.

### **Identification Requirement:**

Staff will ask for photo ID from anyone picking up a child. This is to ensure child safety and proper authorization.

### **Unlisted Individuals:**

If an individual attempting to pick up a child is not listed and the staff has not been informed of any changes, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately for verification.

Children will not be released without confirmation from parents/guardians.

### **Late Drop Off/Pick Up Policy:**

Parents/guardians who do not drop off or pick up their children on time will receive one verbal warning.

Subsequent late drop-offs or pick-ups may incur additional fees.

This policy is in place to safeguard the wellbeing of all children attending our programs.

We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these guidelines.



## Staffing and Food Policies

### Staffing:

**First Aid/CPR Certification:** All staff and volunteers aged 18 years or older working with the FAB Forest School Nature Programs have completed their Standard First Aid/CPR as a minimum requirement.

### Criminal Record Checks:

- New staff and volunteers aged 18 years and above must have their Criminal Record Checks completed no more than 6 months prior to the start of the program.
- Returning staff can use the same Criminal Police Information Check (CPIC) for up to one calendar year.

**Staff-Participant Ratio:** The Forest School maintains a ratio of minimum 1 adult for every 8 participants to ensure adequate supervision and safety.

### Snacks and Lunch:

**Participant Requirements:** Each child needs to bring two snacks, one lunch, and a minimum of 2 water bottles for a full-day program.

### Allergen Management:

- While our programs operate on public/private properties where we cannot prohibit certain foods/snacks, we adopt an allergen avoidance strategy.
- Upon notification of a food allergy, an email will be sent to all participants discouraging the use of that allergenic product.
- Our approach aims to create an “Allergen-safe” environment, rather than guaranteeing an “Allergen-free” one.

### Safe Eating Procedures:

- No sharing or sampling of food between children
- Children must wash their hands before and after eating.
- A safe eating area is established in programs where anaphylactic children are present.

These policies are in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and comfort of all participants in the FAB School Program.



## Activities and Behavioral Expectations

### Activities

**Voluntary Participation:** Children are encouraged to take part in all program activities, but participation is based on their comfort level. We promote a supportive environment where children can choose activities that interest them.

**Choice and Autonomy:** A variety of activity options will be provided, allowing children to direct their own learning and experiences.

**Advance Notice for Special Items:** If specific items are needed for an activity, participants will be notified at least one week before the start date of the program. This ensures that everyone is adequately prepared for the activities planned.

### Behavioral Expectations

**Conduct Standards:** Participants and parents are expected to behave in a mature, respectful, and cooperative manner during their time at the FAB Forest School Nature Programs.

#### Participant Responsibilities:

- Everyone is responsible for their own actions.
- All rules and safety measures set by FAB Staff must be followed.

#### Inappropriate Behaviors Include:

- Disrupting another participant's positive experience.
- Engaging in threats, bullying, harassment, intimidation, abuse, or fighting.
- Vandalizing or misusing camp equipment.
- Non-compliance with health and safety measures outlined by the Ministry of Health.

**Zero Tolerance Policy:** The program maintains a zero tolerance stance towards behavior that physically or emotionally impacts other participants. Such behavior may result in removal from the program without a refund.

By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to create a positive, safe, and engaging learning environment for all children attending the FAB Forest School Nature Programs.



## Medication Record Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Medication Name</b>	<b>What it looks like</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>How/When to use</b>	<b>Time Period</b>