***HSW Family Handbook***

**School Location**

Louisville Community Park at main shelter & Barn Classroom (9905 Isabelle Rd)

**Contact**

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**Mission & Values**

At Heartseed Wildschooling we collaborate, support and build a wider community of connected and intentional people all with the goals of caring for the earth and caring for people. Our school does not follow one particular educational theory. Some theory concepts we appreciate and integrate are Waldorf education with the emphasis on children being outside often and for extended periods, as well as an emphasis on social-emotional development. We educate the whole child, balancing educating head, hand, and heart in order to cultivate a profound love for learning, themselves, friends, nature, and our community.

At forest school, we believe that we are raising the next generation of caretakers. These are the children that one day will be the protectors of the earth. They will do this because they have a strong bond with nature that began when they were very young. When students immerse in the forest through play and exploration, they cultivate a bond with the earth that can never be broken. Our school is a community. Every family that joins us becomes part of our forest school family. We care for each other as well as our environment. Each child who joins us at forest school is a whole person, each with their own thoughts, dreams, and interests. We are here to guide each child to discover the joy of life and learning. School should be a joyful place where children grow and develop at their own pace. Seeds sprout and emerge from the soil when they are ready, and it is the same for our children. We believe that play is the most important work of childhood, and at forest school, that time is protected and cherished. We set the foundation for children to let their imaginations run wild and free. Childhood should be magical, infused with wonder, exploration, and creation. We allow the forest to be our teacher, and each day is a new opportunity to let the magic unfold.

Values:

-small relationship-based class sizes (5:1 student to teacher ratio)

-connection with the natural world

-inspiring awe & wonder

-cultivating a lifelong love for learning

**School Day**

* Our school week runs Monday-Thursday each week. School starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m.
* Drop off begins at 9 a.m., and pick-up at 2 p.m.
	+ If you are going to be late to school it can be hard to find your child’s class—we are a truly child-led program and every day is different and unfolds authentically—so finding us may require some hiking & communication with teachers.
	+ If you are running late at pick up time please contact another family with a child in your child’s class to arrange for support, if nobody can be contacted then reach out to your child’s teacher to make arrangements.

## **Tuition**

## Full-time (4 days/week) tuition is $1500/month, for the 9 months of the school year. We also have a $250 materials fee, which is due upon enrollment.

Tuition is due at the first school day of each month, or may be paid in full at any point. Tuition may be paid with cash, check made out to Heartseed Wildschooling, or electronically (with a 1% fee).

\*Payment is based on the school year, not the actual hours of attendance. Payment is expected on the first day of each month within your contract period (September-May unless you have made a 12 month payment arrangement), regardless of the number of school days your child will be attending that month- this includes missed days due to illness, vacation days and planned closures.

\*\*We will have multiple field trips, etc. throughout the year that will often have an associated cost.

We are proud to announce a new opportunity at Heartseed Wildschooling! We have partnered with BOCES, as a state funded program that offers enrichment to homeschoolers and nonpublic school educated students. In order to participate in this program your student cannot be enrolled in any other state funded enrichment program. Enrollment in this program pays for $3190 of your child’s yearly tuition, or $350/month. Please note that a registration fee is still required.

**Tardy/Absence Policy**

* Please notify teachers via Seesaw message if you have a planned absence or if your child will be absent due to sickness.
* We do not have make-up days or offer refunds for days that your child misses school.
* If you will be bringing your child in late, please coordinate this with teachers beforehand via Seesaw message.

#### **Releasing Students During School Hours**

* Please give teachers one days’ notice by Seesaw message to release your child early from school so that we can arrange early pick-up.
* When dropping off or picking up early in the field, please understand you may need to walk to meet the group so that a lesson does not have to stop, nor a teacher be removed from the group.

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### **Field Trips**

### We will have field trips throughout the school year. On field trip days, drop off (9 am) and pick up (2pm) will be held at the field trip location.

Our field trips are designed as supplementary learning for our full-time students who come to school every day. Students who are part-time may miss field trips that are planned on a day that is outside of their regular weekly schedule. If you would like your child to attend any field trips that are on days they do not attend school, you are always welcome to bring your child to the field trip, however you/ a parent must be present with your child the entire time.

### **Adverse Weather and Emergency Closures**

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency that requires school closure, parents will be notified as soon as possible. A Seesaw message will be sent to families when a late start or closure decision is made. On the rare occasion we have to close mid-day, you will receive a phone call to come pick up your student. We follow Boulder Valley school district inclement weather notification, late starts and closures. You can sign up for their notifications on their website.

\*we do not offer make-up days or refunds for adverse weather and emergency closures

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## **Parent Expectations**

Heartseed Wildschooling holds parents and guardians to the same high standards of behavior and conduct to which we hold our students. We are a village and we seek to create a positive, safe, and respectful environment for all involved.

* Communicate with respect, honesty, and integrity.
* Complete registration, forms, and pay school fees on time.
* Attend conferences and school gatherings.
* Know and abide by and support the school’s policies, as outlined in this handbook.
* Respect the privacy of staff, children, and families within the organization as appropriate.
* When you have questions, comments, or concerns, please share them with staff members.

#### **Student Rights & Responsibilities**

* All students have the right to pursue their curiosities, interests, and passions with the responsibility to demonstrate what they have learned.
* All students have the right to learn in a way that works best for them with the responsibility to learn in a way that is safe, non-disruptive and productive.
* All students have the right to have their beliefs and feelings respected with the responsibility to respect the beliefs and feelings of others.
* All students have the right to be listened to with the responsibility to listen to others.
* All students have the right to build community in a safe space with the responsibility to act accordingly in that space.

### **Gear and Attire**

* Students need to wear outdoor and weather appropriate attire as we go out in all conditions (rain, snow, or shine!).
* A change of dry pants, underwear and socks in a plastic bag in their backpacks is encouraged, especially for those kids who tend to like getting wet or are prone to accidents.
* Sturdy outdoor shoes are recommended.
* A day pack that fits your child and is convenient to carry.

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### **Food and Water**

* Students need to bring a large and variety filled lunch with them each day. Students eat more in an outdoor setting than when sitting in a classroom environment. Please refrain from sending them with juice, chips, cookies or foods with a lot of sugar.
* Water bottles are required and can be refilled throughout the day. Please make sure the water bottle fits their backpack and is not too large or heavy.

### **When to Stay Home**

Children who show signs of illness should not be in school. This is for your child’s health as well as that of the other children and families in our school community. A child should not come to school if they have one or more of the following symptoms:

* Fever over 100 degrees. Your child should be free of fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school
* Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stools per day)
* Nausea or vomiting
* Severe cough/ cold symptoms (excess mucus, sneezing, coughing, runny eyes)
* Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are severe, weeping, or pus-filled

If your child contracts a communicable condition such as chicken pox, measles, pinworms, lice, impetigo, pink eye, etc., report it to the school immediately so that other families may be alerted to possible exposure. No mention will be made of the child or family’s name in any notification.

### **Parent/Staff Communication**

We strive to provide families with clear communication throughout the year. Teachers often provide quick check-ins about students at drop off or pick up. You are welcome to message staff directly with any questions, comments, or concerns throughout the year. We encourage any and all thoughts and feedback and want to hear them, that is how we grow our program to be better and meet the needs of our families!

#### **Photography**

Students are sometimes photographed by teachers and other staff for classroom and school use. Photographs may be used on the school website, social media, and in school publications. Families wishing not to have their child photographed or wishing to exclude their child’s photograph from specific uses may update this information on the HSW Waiver form.

**Behavior Expectations and Accommodations**

We recognize that students come from a variety of backgrounds and all have different needs. Our ability to make accommodations to our behavioral expectations is based on whether those accommodations allow us to meet the above priorities, with safety being our top priority. As a nature school already encountering risks present in the natural world, we can not accommodate ANY physically harmful behavior from students. We expect all students to be kind, gentle, and respectful to teachers and peers. Depending on our ability to make accommodations within that framework, HSW may decide that the student’s interests will be served better in a learning environment different from the one our forest school can offer.

If a student exhibits “serious misconduct” (defined below) that puts others at risk, teachers may immediately skip to second intervention.

### First Intervention

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When a student does not respond to redirection or continues to demonstrate the same challenging behaviors for safety or social situations, we will have a three way conversation between parents, teacher and student. Our goal in this conversation is to identify the behavior that is causing a disruption in the group, and to make an agreement with the student about expectations we have for being present in the program. This conversation may include steps that we can take to help them meet expectations, as well as ways that they are going to adjust behavior so they can continue to participate.

* If the student is unable or unwilling to make an agreement or understand their behaviors’ impact, depending on the impact of their behaviors this may escalate to the next intervention.

#### Second level of Intervention

Student may no longer participate in the full extent of the program. The student’s schedule will be reduced to part-time. This may be called for when a student continues to demonstrate unsafe or disruptive behaviors despite parent conversation in previous intervention. This will also happen if a student cannot follow agreements made with parents and teacher(s).

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#### Third level of Intervention

If after amending the student’s schedule without observable progress by the student, or ANY additional behavior violations, the school reserves the right to fully expel students from our school to maintain the integrity and safety of our program.

#### Serious Misconduct

Some types of behavior violate our schools code of acting respectfully within the school community as well as to our spaces and tools. Serious misconduct will be immediately accelerated to Second Intervention. Some examples of serious misconduct include but are not limited to:

* Physical or emotional harm including abusive/ bullying language or intentional violence
* Messages either in person or electronically meant to harass or intimidate
* Racial, ethnic, or religious harassment
* Sexual harassment or any harrassment or unwanted attention regarding any person’s identified or perceived sex, orientation, gender or presentation
* Vandalizing the school or its property
* Stealing or intentionally damaging another’s property
* Violating rules related to academic honesty, responsibility and safety that have been communicated to students orally or in writing
* Lying to a member of the staff or administration
* Bringing a weapon to school

**Student Growth, Development, & Academic Standards**

Through progress reports, parent teacher conferences and other communication HSW will make sure that families stay up to date with students' progress. If teachers or families feel that a student requires more support, we will work with families to help identify student needs.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

A school is a community of families, and a strong community engages all its members. HSW invites families to contribute and volunteer in ways that fit your schedule. There will be opportunities to help out, including:

* Accompanying the class on special field trips
* Coming into the class to share important events in your family (introducing a new sibling, talking about a cultural celebration or holiday your family observes, sharing your work or passions with our students)

Keep an eye out for Seesaw’d invitations to help out in the class or with other school tasks. You can also always let us know if there is any area in which you are particularly excited to volunteer.

**Elementary Daily Rhythm**The daily rhythm at forest school can be compared to the natural cycle of breathing. Just as we breathe in and out, and each breath builds into the next, our day expands and contracts through our focused and exploration activities.
Sandwiching our moments of focused time between exploration and unstructured play gives students the opportunity to move through their natural cycle of learning.

Here is what a day at forest school might look like:

**Morning circle**: check-ins, songs, stories, academic mini-lessons, decision making about the day’s activities.
**Unstructured exploration:** Forest time for students to immerse in play and exploring.
**Academic time:** Independent work and teacher time in literacy, math and writing.
**Lunch/Free time**
**Academic time:** Independent work and teacher time in literacy, math and writing.
**Focused Exploration:** Guided exploration in art & craft, music and outdoor skills
**Closing circle:**  Storytelling, songs, recap of the day and goodbyes

**Elementary Curriculum**Academic Curriculum used in the school age program includes but is not limited to:

Oak Meadow Curriculum
Wild Math & Wild Reading Curriculum
Handwriting Without Tears
Explode the Code Phonics Orton-Gillingham for reading
Heggerty Phonics
Step up to Writing
Go Math

Academics are built around the framework of the Common Core Standards for your child’s grade level but are not limited to these standards only.

**Homeschool Enrichment & Full-Time Schooling Requirememts**

If your child will be 5 by October 1st, you must submit your notification of intent to enroll in homeschool before your child’s first day of forest school. This is required in the state of Colorado, and for us as a state approved homeschool enrichment program & school. You can submit the notification to any district in Colorado (it does not need to be your district of residence).

**Working Together**

HSW kids are out in the elements! They are moving their bodies constantly and need

to be ready to greet each day with their best self forward. Here is how we can work

together to make sure that happens.

1. ***Make sure your children get a good night's sleep***. A preschooler between the ages of

3-5 needs 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night, and children ages 6-12 should get 9 to 12 hours of sleep.

*What we can do*: We follow the body and natures natural daily cycle by starting our mornings with a story to inspire the day, then take a big breath of play following that. A time to create follows the outbreath with an in breath and finally afternoon brings a time for internal growth and integration of what they have learned which happens right after pick-up.

1. ***A healthy meal before bed and before school***. A belly is like a fire, so before forest

school make sure you throw a slow burning log in there to keep their light shining bright the whole school day! Slow burning carbohydrates, proteins and healthy fats are a great way to start your child’s day.

*What we can do*: The children are free to eat their snacks from home any time they choose during the school day. We do, however, have a designated time for them to pause and peacefully eat with their friends mid-way through the school day.

1. ***Be a role model***. Take your kids outside into nature regularly, to show them that this

is a family value. Let your children name the plants and share with you what they have learned at school. Model a positive attitude and resilience, expressing joy in every weather!

*What we can do*: At HSW, adults roll in the mud just the same! And we get just as deep in the fort being built, song singing and crafting. We understand that your child is watching us all the time and we strive to express that being messy and silly is okay!!

**Statement Of Inclusion**

*“HSW is committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and connectedness. We are able to grow and learn better together with a diverse community of families and employees. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression, and talent that our students and staff invest in their play/work represents not only part of our culture, but our ethos as a program. We welcome the unique contributions that each child, family and staff brings in terms of their education, opinions, culture, ethnicity, race, sex, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veteran status, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation and beliefs. HSW believes our differences as a community are what make us stronger.”*

**Statement of Nondiscrimination**

*"HSW admits students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It doesn't discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs."*