



cincinnati nature center
NATURE SCHOOL
preschool through 2nd grade

Cincinnati Nature School Parent Handbook

2022-2023

Cincinnati Nature Center
4949 Tealtown Road
Milford, OH 45150

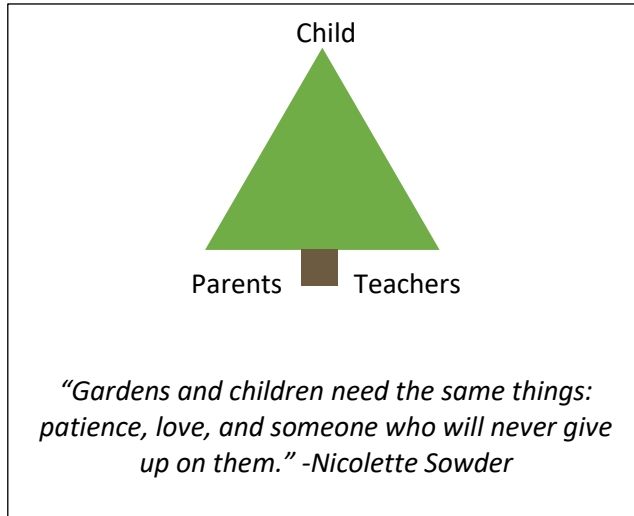
ephillips@cincynature.org

513-965-3342 x172

www.cincynature.org

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Cincinnati Nature School. Thank you for trusting us to support your child's education. Please know that our staff is here to support your family every step of this journey. Children succeed when parents and educators work together.



Let's work together to help your child grow.

It is our sincere hope that you will feel welcome and included in our warm community of parents, children, teachers and staff. We have events to build community like birthday celebrations, parent education events, family nature events, fundraising, and parent-teacher conferences. If you have specific interests or knowledge that you'd like to share with your child's class or the school community, please reach out to let us know.

We embrace the Montessori philosophy for our Nature School. Our classrooms and teachers attend to both the cognitive development of students and to their physical and social-emotional development. We hope to nurture empathic, confident, curious children, who feel sincere joy in learning and a deep love for the world around them.

This handbook is meant to be a tool for you. Use it to understand our policies, routines, and expectations, in order to help support your child to have the best possible experience at Nature School.

My door is always open. Reach out if you need me!

Kindly,

Erin Phillips
Primary School Lead Teacher & Director
ephillips@cincynature.org
513-965-3342 x172

Table of Contents

Mission, Values & Principles _____	4
CNC Educational Philosophy _____	5
Curriculum: Expanding Young Minds in Nature _____	6
Montessori Philosophy _____	6
School History _____	7
General Information and Sample School Schedule _____	8
School Calendar _____	8
Homeschooling Information _____	9
Admissions _____	10
Withdrawal _____	10
Tuition _____	10
School Directory _____	11
Jovial _____	11
Seesaw _____	12
Arrival & Dismissal _____	12
Attendance _____	12
Communication _____	12
Clothing Policies _____	13
Toys and Additional Belongings _____	13
Lost and Found _____	13
Birthdays and Holidays _____	13
Behavior Management _____	14
Concerns/Questions _____	15
Conferences _____	15
Requesting Student Records _____	16
Photo Release _____	16
Volunteers _____	16
Visitation Policy _____	16
Non-Custodial Parents and Custodial Situations _____	17
Medical Exams and Immunizations _____	17
Management of Communicable Disease (including COVID-19) _____	17
Health Care Plan _____	18
Food Allergy Policy _____	21
Bathroom Accidents _____	21
Medication Policy _____	22
Nutrition _____	22
Safety, Emergencies, Accidents _____	22
Weather Policies _____	23
CNC Trail Rules _____	25
Hikes & Field Trips _____	25
Technology _____	26
Inclusion/Special Education _____	26

Mission, Values & Principles

CNC Mission

Inspiring conservation

Nature School Mission

Inspiring life-long conservation by developing well-rounded children with a deep love of and comfort in nature

CNC Values: What We Believe

How this informs the Nature School's work

1. Power of COMMUNITY

We encourage people to see themselves as part of a community of nature enthusiasts within the community of nature. The Nature Center embraces Aldo Leopold's definition of community, which "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively the land."

Children are continually encouraged to consider how their actions affect those around them, and to remember that they exist within a community.

2. RESPECT for All Life

We show respect for all living things by seeking to understand, by celebrating diverse viewpoints, and by acting with kindness and empathy.

Children are taught to treat all living things with kindness. Conflict resolution involves voicing one's concerns, hearing the other's viewpoint and working together to find a solution.

3. Personal EXPERIENCE

There is no substitute for being IN nature. We maintain our lands for maximum biodiversity to provide unique personal experiences and education. Frequent experiences in nature are critical to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health of all people.

Children spend half their day outside, in all types of weather. Classroom learning is hands-on and tied to real experiences in nature whenever possible.

4. STEWARDSHIP of the Land

We recognize the interdependence of all living things and strive to maintain the web of life by preserving, restoring, and protecting our land. We embrace Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold 1949.

Children are encouraged to notice the complexity and interconnection of life and to respect the land as a gift lent to us to explore respectfully.

5. Commitment to SUSTAINABILITY

We make choices that are environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially equitable for the long-term stability of our organization, our region and the earth.

Children and families are exposed to a variety of environmentally responsible practices to encourage sustainable choices in their own lives and homes.

CNC Principles: How We Behave

How this informs the Nature School's work

1. Provide a Welcoming Atmosphere

We provide the best possible experience for each visitor by creating a welcoming atmosphere, maintaining a safe and natural environment, and respecting the individual's point of view.

The classroom is an open and welcoming environment where children and families feel encouraged to communicate and contribute.

2. Act with Integrity

We maintain the trust of members, donors, and the community by observing the highest ethical standards and being accountable to all constituencies for the achievement of our mission.

Teachers and staff act with the highest integrity and always seek to maintain the dignity of the child.

3. Provide Diverse Experiences and Educational Programs

We immerse people in nature through a variety of individual and organized group activities. We engage people in frequent experiences in nature beginning at an early age.

Children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences across all areas of the Nature Center.

4. Empower People to Share their Love and Knowledge of Nature

We foster an ethic of influence by providing opportunities for people to act on their conservation values through sharing with others, volunteer service, and financial contributions.

Families are encouraged to volunteer and participate in CNC community activities outside of the school day.

5. Deliver Science-Based Interpretation

We teach people how to think, not what to think. We provide hands-on, science-based interpretive experiences and utilize the inquiry method in our teaching. We define interpretation as “a mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.” National Association for Interpretation 2007.

Teachers and staff nurture children’s observation and inquiry skills, supporting learners to discover patterns through their own experiences.

6. Collaborate

We seek opportunities to build relationships in order to strengthen our community. Internally, we embrace a spirit of teamwork and mutual support with staff, volunteers, members, and visitors.

Externally, we seek to partner with other organizations that have common objectives.

Teachers and staff work across departments to involve the wider CNC community of staff, volunteers and families in the school community. Field trips to local conservation organizations further expose children to ways they can support sustainability in their lives.

7. Manage Our Lands

We actively manage our lands to provide and maintain in perpetuity a mosaic of bio-diverse habitats for visitor experience, education, and research. We strive to maintain healthy ecosystems by enhancing, restoring, and preserving native biodiversity.

Children are encouraged to “leave no trace” as they travel about in nature and are exposed to a wide variety of land management techniques being used on the CNC properties.

CNC Educational Philosophy

Strengthening The Bond Of People With Nature

Cincinnati Nature Center believes that by supporting and strengthening the bond of people with nature, we better enable them to share their values for, experiences in, and knowledge about nature with others. This approach is intended to increase the overall number of people who feel connected to nature. The Nature Center encourages positive values toward nature for people of all ages, so that throughout their lives, their behaviors will increasingly reflect these values.

Curriculum: Expanding Young Minds in Nature

Nature is the foundation for the curriculum.

Direct experience in nature is critical in meeting the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive needs of children. Children are included in a community of staff, volunteers, teachers, and visitors who all share a common interest in the natural world. Real-life learning can happen at any time. Our curriculum builds on the Nature Preschool experience, allowing children to continue to learn and develop through hands on, inquiry-based, developmentally appropriate experiences.

In addition to real-life experiences in nature, curriculum materials are prepared to peak interest and introduce the child to the whole of reality: Practical Life, Language, Natural Sciences, Sensorial, Cosmic Education, Math, Biology, Geography, Art, Music and Movement. Teachers draw on resources from Montessori and Environmental Education to enrich children's learning experiences. A thorough scope and sequence lays the overview of the curriculum for each classroom throughout the year. The teachers also follow the child's development through observation and assessment.

Children are provided a unique opportunity to develop a "Sense of Place" rooted in a deep appreciation and age-appropriate understanding of the land and its inhabitants (human and otherwise). The goal is to allow the child to discover the order of his world, culture, and universe, while developing skills to equip him for full participation in them.

The natural world with its inherent wonder, complexity, and beauty serves as a catalyst for each child's growth and development. Children "learn by doing" through active hands-on exploration of their environment where they gather information, pursue new questions, and construct their own theories of how the world works.

Curriculum and adult-child interactions are based on best practices applying modern research on human development. Adults show respect for the inner life of the child, provide freedom with responsibility and movement, focus on each child's personal interests, and provide ample opportunities for children to directly experience the world around them. Children's daily schedule allows for concentration, repetition, intrinsic motivation, and collaborative learning.

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori Philosophy sits as a solid foundation for how we teach and interact with children. The following is general information on some important aspects of the philosophy.

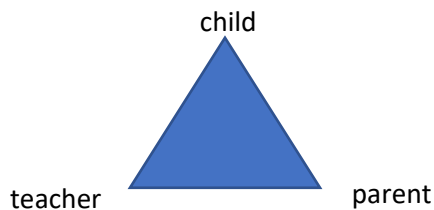
Montessori philosophy maintains a deep respect for children as individuals. The method seeks to develop the whole child, not just his intellect.

Multiage classrooms allow teachers and students to develop close, long-term relationships. Teachers get to know students' learning styles, and older students become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger classmates. Adults nurture children's independence, helping students become self-motivated and confident in their own abilities. Maria Montessori wrote that "the child who concentrates is immensely happy" (*The Absorbent Mind*). One of a child's earliest school tasks is building this ability to focus deeply on a task. When a child finds this "normalized" state, where he is concentrated on work, he finds an inner discipline. It is this which we seek to nurture, so outside rewards and punishments are not used.

Children learn to see themselves as part of a community, where their actions affect others in positive and negative ways. They work on communication skills to resolve conflicts and build caring. Natural and logical consequences also support children’s awareness of how they affect the world around them.

Hands on learning is the foundation of an integrated curriculum. Subjects connect to each other and to children’s own lives. Learning is highly individualized, and children move at their own pace. Students are active learners, rather than passive receivers of knowledge. Children have many opportunities for self-expression through the arts. The day is arranged to allow for a 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle, so that children can engage deeply with their work. The classroom environment is mindfully prepared for the individual children in it. Materials are beautifully arranged, sequential (moving from concrete to more abstract), multi-sensory and allow for the child to self-correct whenever possible. There is a strong sense of order in the environment to nurture this within the child.

The parent and teacher work together to support the growth of the child:



The teacher supports the child by:

1. Preparing the classroom environment, curriculum, and herself;
2. Observing children working and maintaining detailed records of development;
3. Acting as mediator and guide, nudging children towards success;
4. Communicating ground rules, setting limits for appropriate behavior in the classroom, and following up with anyone breaking these rules;
5. Protecting the concentrating child; and
6. Removing a child who is behaving in an uncontrollable manner, disrupting the activities of others, or doing harm to himself, others, or the environment.

The parents support the child by:

1. Helping children leave toys at home or in the car;
2. Talking about ground rules with children in a positive manner;
3. Encouraging the ability to distinguish between appropriate “work time” and “playtime” behavior;
4. Maintaining a predictable routine to give children a sense of security and peace;
5. Returning notebooks and teacher communications promptly; and

Attending conferences twice each year and notifying the teachers if you have any questions or concerns.

School History

Devoted Nature Preschool families that wanted to continue their children’s education at Cincinnati Nature Center asked for a kindergarten class. It took several years to plan a way forward and it came to fruition in 2020, under the direction of Tisha Luthy, Preschool Director, and Erin Phillips, Lead Teacher.

The Cincinnati Nature School began humbly with nine students, Kindergarten through second grade, in the Green Cottage. A volunteer, Mr. Don, made the shelves that lined the walls, and many of the materials were handmade, donated or purchased second hand. A Montessori-based approach, adapted to include significant outside time, was embraced from the beginning. The tiny, homey room truly felt like a *Casa dei Bambini*, or Montessori Children’s House. The program spent a second school year, 2021-2022, in the Green Cottage, adding more materials and one more student, bringing the student body up to ten.

The program’s third year brought a significant expansion, enlarging to twenty-two students, adding a part-time assistant and a second full-time, Montessori-trained teacher, and moving to the Pine Room, in the Rowe Woods Visitor Center. The CNC community continues to show enthusiasm for expanded, diverse learning opportunities for children. Who knows what the future will bring!

General Information and Sample School Schedule

The Cincinnati Nature School is comprised of one Kindergarten-2nd Grade classroom. Children are dropped off 8:30-8:40 am and picked up 3:00-3:10 pm. Class begins the Tuesday following Labor Day and goes through the third week of May.

Sample School Schedule	
Drop-off	8:30-8:40
Morning Work Time	8:30-11:30
Morning Circle	11:30-12:00
Lunch	12:00-12:30
Play	12:30-1:15
Hike	1:15-2:40
Closing Circle	2:40-3:00
Dismissal	3:00-3:10

School Calendar 2022-2023

Parent Orientations	End of August
First day of class	September 6, 2022
Parent/Teacher Conferences	TBD, early November
Thanksgiving Break (No School)	November 23-25, 2022
Winter Break (No School)	December 16, 2022 – January 1, 2023 (return on 1/2/23)
MLK Day (No School)	January 16, 2023
Presidents’ Day (No School)	February 20, 2023
Spring Conferences	TBD, mid-March
Spring Break (No School)	March 20-24, 2023
Last day of class	May 18, 2023

Homeschooling Information

The Ohio Department of Education respects the right of a parent to educate his/her own child. The ODE website states: "Parents should start by notifying the superintendent of the school district where they reside about their intent to home school their child/or children. Notification should be provided no later than the first week of the start of the public school building the child would attend in the school district of residence or within one week from the child's withdrawal from a school.

Parents agree to:

1. Provide 900 hours of instruction per year;
2. Notify the superintendent every year; and
3. Provide an assessment of the students work."

(<https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Ohio-Education-Options/Home-Schooling>, Accessed 11 March 2022)

Ohio law 3301-34 explains the assessment options:

(A) The parent(s) shall send to the superintendent an academic assessment report of the child for the previous school year at the time of supplying subsequent notification.

(B) The academic assessment report shall include one of the following:

(1) Results of a nationally normed, standardized achievement test.

(a) Such test shall be administered by:

(i) A licensed or certified teacher; or

(ii) Another person mutually agreed upon by the parent(s) and the superintendent; or

(iii) A person duly authorized by the publisher of the test.

(b) Results should demonstrate reasonable proficiency as compared to other children in the district at the same grade level. Any child that has a composite score at or above the twenty-fifth percentile shall be deemed to be performing at a level of reasonable proficiency.

(2) A written narrative indicating that a portfolio of samples of the child's work has been reviewed and that the child's academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child's abilities.

(a) The written narrative shall be prepared by:

(i) A licensed or certified teacher; or

(ii) Other person mutually agreed upon by the parent(s) and the superintendent.

(b) The parent(s) shall be responsible for the payment of fees charged for preparation of the narrative.

(3) An alternative academic assessment of the child's proficiency mutually agreed upon by the parent and the superintendent.

(C) If the parent(s) chooses to have the standardized testing conducted as part of the school district scheduled testing program, there shall be no cost to the parent(s). The time and location for testing shall be established by the school district.

(D) If the parent(s) chooses to have the standardized testing conducted privately, the parent(s) shall pay for the testing. The time and location for testing shall be established by the parent(s).

(<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3301-34-04>, Accessed 12 March 2022)

Cincinnati Nature School parents register child(ren) in their home district as "homeschoolers," and ultimate responsibility for children's complete education remains with parents. The School will provide parents with a Homeschool Declaration form to submit to their superintendent for this purpose. Cincinnati Nature School teachers will ensure the completion of a portfolio of children's work throughout the school year and facilitate the evaluation of the portfolio by a licensed teacher near the end of each school year. Upon completion of the

portfolio review, parents are responsible for submitting this documentation to their home district to ensure their child moves up to next grade.

Admissions

Recognizing the power of a long-term experience in a nature school to build a child’s life-long views on conservation and sustainability, we will seek to re-enroll current Nature School families first. Priority will then be given to siblings of currently enrolled children and to those coming up from the Nature Preschool. The Nature School Director will work with families to ensure the teachers will be able to fully meet the needs of enrolled children; a shadow day may be requested by staff to observe the child in the environment.

Starting for the 2023-2024 school year, admissions procedures will be as follows:

December 1-15

Currently enrolled families will be given a chance to re-enroll current students and enroll siblings before the class is opened to new students.

January 2-15

Remaining spots will next be opened to currently enrolled Nature Preschool students. Interested families must attend an information session/tour before they may enroll. Dates will begin in October and will be sent to current preschool families via email. Nature School Director will maintain an email list of families who have attended an information session; these families will be sent a link to enroll January 2 at 3:30 pm. Open spots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

January 16-until full

If any spots remain after January 15, enrollment will open to the public. Information sessions/tours will be posted to the website. Interested families must attend an information session/tour before they may enroll. Nature School Director will provide link to enroll after attendance at an information session. Child may be invited to spend a shadow day with the class before the link is provided. Open spots will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. When the class fills, parents who have attended the information session and wish to be put on a waitlist may complete the waitlist form on the Nature School’s Jovial Hello Portal: www.jovial.org/cincynatureschools/hello. We will reach out to the next person on the list as spots open.

A CNC membership at the family level or above is required to enroll for School.

Withdrawal

Children cannot attend CNC Nature School until the current semester tuition is paid in full. CNC will not issue a tuition refund if a child withdraws for any reason other than a medical problem or relocation. If a behavioral plan has been made for a child and many attempts have been made to support appropriate behavior in the classroom, a child can then be withdrawn.

Tuition 2022-2023

School Level	Yearly Tuition Fee	Class Schedule
Kindergarten	\$5,006 + CNC family membership*	Tuesday-Thursday, 8:30-3:00

First or Second Grade	\$6,546 + CNC family membership*	Monday-Thursday, 8:30-3:00
-----------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------

* Registration and participation in this program requires a current family membership or above.

The Cincinnati Nature Center accepts tuition in one lump sum payment or as a monthly auto-draft from a checking or savings account. Monthly payments begin in September. Questions about payments can be made to Theresa Miller, Accounting Coordinator, 513-831-1711 x154, tmiller@cincynature.org. Please refer to your tuition contract for further information concerning the contract.

School Directory

Connie O'Connor

Director of Applied Learning

Coconnor@cincynature.org

513-965-4891

Erin Phillips

Primary School Lead Teacher & Director

ephillips@cincynature.org

513-965-3342 x172

Meghan Connolly

Primary School Assistant Teacher

mburke@cincynature.org

513-965-3342 x167

Kelley Williams

Primary School Assistant

kwilliams@cincynature.org

A directory of names, addresses, and phone numbers of parents/guardians of children in your child's class will be available through Jovial. Parents/guardians can request to have their information withheld from this public roster when they register in Jovial.

Jovial

Jovial is a free software created to streamline operations for non-profit preschools. We will be utilizing this software to collect all paperwork from parents. The Nature Schools' public Jovial site is: www.jovial.org/cincynatureschools/hello. Once signed up for Jovial, parents will also be able to access a class roster, school calendar, and other important documents through the Family Portal: www.jovial.org/cincynatureschools/family. Families will receive email notification by early August providing instructions on how to access our school Jovial.

Seesaw

Seesaw is a free application that enables the creation of a student portfolio and the sharing of schoolwork between students, parents and teachers. We will be utilizing this application to support the children's portfolio of work and to share photos with parents. Photos are private, and parents will only have access to photos of their individual student's work or of whole class activities. Families will receive email notification by early August providing instructions on how to access their student's class Seesaw.

Arrival & Dismissal

Children will be dropped off at the outside door of the Pine Room between 8:30 and 8:40 AM. Parents will sign their children in before leaving. Families are encouraged to develop a goodbye routine to facilitate a quick and easy drop-off. Children will hang up their items, wash their hands, and begin their morning work. If parents have messages for teachers, they are encouraged to write them down and have their child hand them to an adult upon arrival, or to communicate via phone or email before the school day begins.

Children will be picked up from the inside door of the Pine Room between 3:00 and 3:10 PM. Parents should check their mailbox in the hallway and wait for their child to be sent out. Children will only be released to authorized individuals listed on the enrollment form. Written permission should be provided at drop-off if arrangements have been made to have someone else pick up a child. Emails or Seesaw messages to the child's teacher are considered written permission. In these cases, the person picking up the child should bring a photo ID to confirm their identity.

Attendance

We already have a short week together so regular attendance is important for children to gain the maximum benefit from our Nature School program and to feel like a full member of the community. That said, we also recognize the value and importance of family learning experiences. Parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring their children are receiving the full required 900 instructional hours throughout the school year. Teachers will track student attendance at school and parents are strongly encouraged to track their educational time at home. A log will be provided to parents for this purpose before the start of each school year.

In order to assist with planning, parents are requested to let teachers know of planned absences ahead of time and of illnesses or other changes of plans as soon as possible. It is also helpful to know if you are running late. Please make every effort to arrive on time as it helps your child's day begin smoothly when they can start their routine with the other children. If you are having difficulty with your morning routine, please reach out to your child's teacher.

Communication

If you have information to relay to teachers, please send a note with your child, call and leave a voicemail (see Directory section for appropriate number), send an email or send a message through Seesaw. It can be difficult to talk with parents at drop-off as teachers are trying to help children get started on their day. Written communication ensures your message won't be forgotten!

If you need an immediate response, you can call Erin Phillips, Primary School Director at 513-600-3760.

Clothing Policies

We will be outside for hours each day so please ensure that your child comes to school everyday with clothing/gear appropriate for the weather!

Clothing should be comfortable and fit appropriately. Layers allow children to adjust to different temperatures throughout the day. The following items are essential gear: comfortable walking shoes, rain boots, rain pants and coat, waterproof light-weight gloves, insulated winter boots, snow pants, insulated winter coat, heavy socks, waterproof heavy-weight gloves, and a hat. Closed-toe creek shoes are also nice to have.

Children are encouraged to leave seasonal outside gear as well as extra/back-up items on their hooks. All clothing should have child's name written on it.

Please do not send your child to school in flip-flops or in clothes they are afraid to get dirty. Umbrellas are not permitted.

Each child must also bring an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothes and shoes to be stored at school. Slippers are encouraged in the classroom.

The School maintains a supply of extra gear and clothes for emergencies; donations of items your child has outgrown are gladly accepted to augment this supply!

Toys and Additional Belongings

Children are encouraged to leave toys and additional belongings at home. There will be more leniency on this at the start of the year if children need a comfort item. The goal, as they gain comfort, is to wean them off this support. Toys are often a distraction in the classroom and teachers reserve the right to hold onto an item until pick-up if this is the case. If a child has a special item s/he wishes to share at school, please make arrangements ahead of time with the teacher. Each child will be provided with a hook and a bin to store his/her belongings at school.

Lost and Found

There is a lost and found bin near the parent mailboxes. The Cincinnati Nature Center also has a general lost and found for items found on the trails. It can be accessed by request at the Information Desk in the Visitor Center.

Birthdays and Holidays

Throughout the year, each child's birthday or half-birthday will be celebrated at school by telling the child's life story so far. The child will hold a model of the earth (a globe) and walk it around a model of the sun (a candle) to represent each year of his or her life. While the child walks around the sun, the teacher shares one or two small facts about the child's life each year. Parents are invited to join the class for the celebration too. The child's teacher will let parents know at the beginning of the year what day the birthday is planned, and she will check in with parents about a week ahead of time to confirm the date.

Children are encouraged to gift a book to the classroom library in honor of their birthdays. The goal of this is to provide children with the opportunity to feel the joy in giving as well as receiving. The teacher will place a sticker inside the book to memorialize the occasion so that children can find their books when they visit again in years to come. Teachers can make book suggestions if needed. Families are encouraged to look for nature books, Caldecott Medal and/or Newberry Medal winner books. Please try to avoid books with characters from movies or video games.

We do not celebrate holidays in the traditional sense at Nature School; however, we celebrate the seasons and events in the natural world.

Behavior Management

By providing a predictable, well-ordered environment, we seek to support children to develop independence and self-discipline to be respectful of each other and the community as a whole. We respect the right of each child to work in a carefully prepared, safe and nurturing classroom that encourages independence, concentration, cooperation and movement.

Behavior Management Policy

(adapted from XU Montessori Lab School Policy)

Staff employed by the Cincinnati Nature School who are in charge of children shall be responsible for their safety and discipline. We focus on nurturing and supporting children's inner discipline: to understand their own behavior, take initiative, be responsible for their choices, and respect themselves and others. By practicing these techniques, children will be able to internalize this positive process of thinking, interacting and behaving.

When behavior challenges occur, teachers will use a system of developmentally appropriate expectations and interventions, such as:

1. Modeling – Teachers will model and reinforce appropriate, safe, and respectful behavior.
2. Supporting Positive Behavior – Teachers will redirect negative behavior by directing the child toward another activity or lesson that fosters the best in the child.
3. Problem Solving – Teachers will help facilitate problem solving between children.
4. Natural and Logical Consequences – Whenever possible, teachers will offer the child a natural or logical consequence to their behavior.
5. Activity Replacement – When an activity is inappropriate for a particular child, that child will be re-directed to an appropriate alternative activity.
6. Separation From Group – Protecting the safety of children is very important. Separation may be necessary to assist the child in regaining self-control. Separation, when used as a discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within care of a Nature School staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space. If the student has physical contact with another student, he/she will be removed from the environment and the parents/guardians will be called. Depending on the severity of the physical contact, students could be dismissed for the day.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a power imbalance and a behavior that is repeated over time. Teachers will intervene when verbal, social or physical bullying is occurring. Parents/guardians will be notified.

Methods of Discipline

1. Nonphysical verbal discipline techniques will be used; however, if physical restraint is deemed necessary for the safety of a child or others, proper therapeutic hold (gently wrapping arms around a child and holding them close) will be utilized.
2. Children will remain in an open environment at all times.
3. Children will be spoken to using respectful language.
4. Failure to eat, failure to sleep, or toileting accidents are not to be considered behavior/discipline problems and therefore no disciplinary action will be imposed.
5. Discipline will be administered in a constructive manner to reinforce positive behavior so as not to humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
6. Children's needs such as food, rest, and toilet use will be provided at all times.
7. All children will be treated with kindness and respect at all times while under the direct supervision of Nature School staff.

Concerns/Questions

If a parent needs assistance with a concern relating to his or her child, a staff member, or the school as a whole, the parent is encouraged to:

1. Contact the staff member most directly involved as soon as possible.
2. Meet with the staff member most directly involved.
3. If the issue remains unresolved, contact the Primary School Director to arrange a meeting with the parent and the involved staff member.
4. If the issue still cannot be resolved, a meeting will be arranged with the Primary School Director, the parent, the involved staff member and the Director of Education.

Confidentiality is essential in all communication to ensure a community of respect. When addressing concerns, all parties are reminded to use respectful and positive language.

Conferences

Communication between teachers and parents will happen throughout the year; however, twice each school year, there will be a more formalized meeting between the two.

In the fall (usually October), parents and teachers will meet for a 45-minute conversation about the child's strengths/areas of growth and challenges/areas for growth. Before the meeting concludes, several goals will be set for the child.

In the spring (usually March), teachers will prepare a written report for parents about the child's growth and development. Parents are invited to sign up to come in for one hour working with their child in the classroom. Children will show their parents two works of the teacher's choosing to demonstrate their growth; any remaining time may be used by the child to show additional materials to his or her parents.

Throughout the year, if parents or teachers have concerns at another time, additional conferences may be requested by either.

Requesting Student Records

A signed Request for Student Records form must be submitted before records can be released. The form is available on our Jovial site.

Photo Release

Parents are asked to sign a photo release along with their enrollment paperwork. This release allows CNC to use images and/or video of the child for publicity purposes. If you are uncomfortable with this public usage, please indicate this on the form. This photo release does not include the posting of children's photos to a private Seesaw account, accessible only to current families in your child's class. Children's work will only be posted to their individual accounts. Group photos will be accessible to all families in the class. If you are uncomfortable with having your child's photos on Seesaw, please let your child's teacher know immediately.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of the Cincinnati Nature Center programs. They bring a variety of experiences and knowledge to assisting with and leading groups. This is true for our Nature School classes as well. CNC volunteers aid teachers and children in the classroom by listening to children read, reading to children, supporting the completion of independent work, watching handwriting practice, helping with logistics and routines, and more. Outside, they allow us to split our classes into smaller groups for more meaningful experiences in nature.

Volunteers complete in-depth training before school begins and must pass a background check. They commit to be with the class once/week for the entire school year to ensure predictability for the children and help build relationships.

Volunteers are committed to protecting the confidentiality of children and will not share anything about specific children with anyone outside the classroom. If parents have questions, they should reach out to their child's teacher.

Visitation Policy

Parents should feel welcome in their children's classrooms. That said, the environment and routine are thoughtfully prepared for the children by the teacher. In order to ensure the presence of visitors is not too disruptive, parents are encouraged to schedule visits ahead of time with the teacher.

If parents have any questions or concerns about what they see while visiting, they should reach out to the teacher via phone or email at the end of the day. For confidentiality reasons as well as respect for the children, teachers can only discuss a child's activities with his or her own parents. Parents are also reminded that what they see while visiting is confidential and other children should not be discussed with anyone else after leaving.

Parents are especially encouraged to let teachers know about any personal interests or cultural knowledge they might share with the class. We deeply value the time and energy given by community members to share their experiences with our children.

Non-Custodial Parents and Custodial Situations

A parent of a child enrolled who is not the child's custodial parent will be given the same rights as the custodial parent unless there is a court documentation limiting access and conditions of the non-custodial parent on file at the center. If custody or court papers are on file, they will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent requests a more liberal variation of the court order in writing. If there are court papers in the child's file that deny or limit the non-custodial parent/guardians' rights to visitation, we cannot release the child to that parent. Staff will call the custodial parent and report the circumstances. If the parent insists or is threatening the staff, we will call 911.

Medical Exams and Immunizations

An annual medical exam is required for any child enrolling in kindergarten. Elementary-aged children do not have to have a yearly physical. A physician signed Child Medical Statement form must be submitted to the School each year before a child can attend. **State law requires no student between the ages of 3 and 5 be admitted until these records are on file.** If your child's yearly form expires during the school year, please provide up-to-date records as soon as possible upon the completion of a new exam.

The Ohio Department of Health requires immunization for kindergarten and any newly enrolled students in grades 1-12. Please provide us with the updated immunization records (unless doctor has certified a religious exemption). Enrollment of children without immunizations are still required to complete a child medical form that is signed by the families' physician. Records should be submitted digitally through Jovial.

Management of Communicable Disease (including COVID-19)

Ohio Department of Education Management of Communicable Disease 3301-37-11

A staff member, trained to recognize the common signs of communicable diseases, observes each child daily as s/he arrives at school.

Management of communicable disease policy – the following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- (1) The program shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.
- (2) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his/her parent or guardian:
 - a. Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period);
 - b. Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
 - c. Difficult or rapid breathing;
 - d. Yellowish skin or eyes;
 - e. Conjunctivitis;
 - f. Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
 - g. Untreated infected skin patch(es);
 - h. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool; or
 - i. Stiff neck; or

- j. Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.
- (3) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. The director and the parent or guardian shall determine decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed in paragraph (2) of this rule as well as the following:
- a. Unusual spots or rashes;
 - b. Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;
 - c. Elevated temperature;
 - d. Vomiting.
- (4) Programs shall follow the Ohio Department of Health “Communicable Disease Chart” for appropriate management of suspected illnesses.
- (5) A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
- a. Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program;
 - b. Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised;
 - c. Children are made comfortable. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomit or other bodily fluid, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent;
 - d. Observed carefully for worsening condition; and
 - e. Discharged to parent, guardian or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.
- (6) Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at a minimum:
- a. The program’s means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand-washing and disinfection procedures;
 - b. Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child;
 - c. Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease;
 - d. Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. “Mildly ill child” means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this rule;
 - e. Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox or lice.

Health Care Plan

The Cincinnati Nature School will follow the most up-to-date procedures set forth by the Clermont County Health Department and/or the Centers for Disease Control with regards to COVID-19.

Many communicable diseases can be prevented through appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices. Contamination of hands, toys, and other equipment in the classroom appears to play a role in the transmission of disease in childcare settings. Illnesses may be spread by way of:

- Human waste, such as urine and feces
- Body fluids, such as saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge, open skin sores, and blood

- Direct skin-to-skin contact
- Touching a contaminated object
- Air droplets that result from sneezes and coughs

Since many infected people carry communicable diseases without symptoms, and many are contagious before they experience a symptom, caregivers need to protect themselves and the children they serve by carrying out, on a routine basis, Universal Precautions and sanitation procedures that approach every potential illness-spreading condition in the same way. With this concern in mind, the following policies shall be implemented at Nature School.

Incident Reports

An incident report will be completed anytime an accident occurs at CNC Nature School. The staff member who attended to the sick or hurt child will be responsible for completing the report.

Infection Control

If a child becomes ill while at Nature School, the child's parents will be called immediately to pick him/her up. The child will be moved away from the rest of the group and made comfortable until the parent arrives. If the child handled toys or other items in the classroom, the items will be sanitized to reduce the risk to other students. When performing tasks that involve body fluids, employees will adhere to the following Universal Precaution procedures.

A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:

- Cared for in a portion of the room not being used.
- Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times.
- Made comfortable and provided a cot. All linens used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cot shall be disinfected with appropriate products.
- Observed carefully for worsening conditions.
- Discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent as soon as possible.

Children will be readmitted after at least 24 hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If they are not symptom free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious. Parents/Emergency Contacts of sick children need to have children picked up from the school within an hour of being contacted. In the event of a diagnosed communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, measles, etc.), the parents of the other children will be notified by placing a sign on the door or by email. It is requested that you parents inform staff if their child has been exposed to or contracts any communicable disease.

Hand washing

Staff must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school.
- Before preparing or serving any food or drink. After washing hands, it is important not to touch anything (such as a child, chair, doorknob, etc.) before handling food.
- After handling animals.
- After sneezing or blowing the nose.
- When hands are dirty.
- Before administering medication.
- Before and after giving first aid (when appropriate).

- After using the restroom.
- After contact with a child's bodily fluids, including blood, vomit, sputum, and mucus.

Children must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school.
- Before eating.
- After using the restroom.
- After sneezing or blowing the nose.
- After playground activities.
- After handling animals.
- When hands appear to be dirty.

Children will be taught the correct hand washing technique as described below, including when and how to wash and dry hands (staff demonstrating correct techniques). Each child's hand washing technique will be observed and corrected as necessary.

How hands should be washed:

- Wet both hands.
- Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
- Rub your hands together for at least fifteen (15) seconds to work up a good lather.
- Be sure to wash between your fingers, under your nails, and over all hand surfaces from the tips of the nails to beyond the wrists.
- Rinse hands well under a stream of warm running water.
- Leave water running while you dry your hands – you do not want to turn off the “dirty” faucet with your now clean hands.
- Dry your hands well with a paper towel.
- Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Dispose of the towel in the trash.
- Consider the use of hand lotion to prevent chapped and cracked skin.

Handling Bodily Fluids

Nature School staff shall use Universal Precautions (i.e., protective gloves) when handling potential exposure to blood, including blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharges. Staff shall treat all situations involving potential contact with blood, body fluids, or medical waste with caution.

- Wash hands after contact with any bodily substance or articles contaminated with a bodily substance. Use liquid soap from a dispenser, not bar soap.
- Wear protective gloves on both hands for anticipated direct hand contact with blood, body fluids, medical waste, or contaminated objects or surfaces. Wash hands immediately after removing protective gloves.
- When unanticipated exposure occurs, remove contaminated substances by washing hands and other skin surfaces immediately and thoroughly. If splashed in the eyes, nose, or mouth, flush with water immediately. Notify the director immediately. It is recommended that medical help be sought within two (2) hours of exposure.
- Treat all linen soiled with blood and/or body secretions as infectious. Soiled linens and materials should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation. All linen should be bagged in a red-labeled biohazard bag at the location where it is used.

- Trash must be placed in covered containers bagged in impervious bags; secure tops when filled, and double bag if a break-through is anticipated.
- Areas, surfaces, or articles that are grossly soiled with blood or other body fluids must be cleaned with detergent/disinfectant.

Cleaning & Sanitizing of Equipment

Nature School staff shall complete regular cleaning and sanitizing of equipment, toys, and surfaces. Cleaning procedures will be conducted according to the timeline below and anytime a child contracts a communicable disease. Bleach solution in a spray bottle or bucket will be used.

Daily	Weekly	Bi-weekly
Counter tops & tabletops Floors (sweep or vacuum) Door and cabinet handles Trash Sinks Restrooms	Cubbies Toys	Rugs Pillows Aprons

Food Allergy Policy

Cincinnati Nature School and Nature Preschool strive to provide an environment safe for all children. Parents of children with known allergies should provide the respective school with written instructions from the students’ health care provider for handling anaphylaxis and all necessary medications for implementing the student specific order on an annual basis.

To support a safe environment for the children, Cincinnati Nature School and Cincinnati Nature Preschool will make reasonable accommodations for those children who have specific doctor’s orders. When a child with a contact or ingestible allergy is involved in a program that requires them to pack a lunch, the lunches will be eaten on a student mat and students will be asked to wash their hands after eating, and before playing. Lunches are never shared.

If at any time a child presents with a new allergic reaction, parents are asked to notify the teacher right away so allergy/anaphylaxis protocols can be put into place.

Bathroom Accidents

Accidents happen, especially with young children. Staff will be kind, seek to maintain the child’s dignity and simply help the child resolve the situation. If a child has an accident in their clothing, they must change their clothes. Soiled clothing will be put into a bag to be sent home to be washed with a note asking for a new set of clothes to be sent to school. Teacher will wear protective gloves to help child wipe up floor, allowing child to do as much as possible. Teacher and child will wash hands thoroughly when done. Bag with soiled clothes will be kept by teacher out of the reach of children and handed to parents at dismissal. Teacher will maintain CNC Two-Deep Policy while assisting the child, ensuring that she is always in sight of another adult while assisting the child.

Medication Policy

In order for medication to be administered at school, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, directions for administering and the physician's name.
2. A parent, legal guardian or physician must complete the appropriate form from the Ohio Department of Human Services.
3. Expired medications will not be administered.
4. Non-prescription medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name; it will be administered according to the directions on the container.
5. School-age children are not permitted to administer or carry their own EpiPen or inhaler. These medications will be administered by trained staff.

Nutrition

The Cincinnati Nature School aims to support children's healthy growth and development across all domains. As such, we will offer nutritious snacks and food preparation activities in our classrooms to support the healthy growth of children's bodies. Parents may be asked to help provide groceries for snacks on a rotating basis. Items may include fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grain items, etc. Teachers will work with parents to ensure all items are safe for allergies in the classroom.

Children bring their own lunches. Lunches should be nutritious and provide children with adequate protein to get them through an active day. Items and containers should be manageable by children without assistance and lunchbox should keep food cold or hot without requiring refrigeration or microwaving. A thermos is a helpful tool for this. Please send reusable containers when possible. Water is available in the classroom; however, children should bring a water bottle they can carry on hikes. Families are encouraged to avoid junk food, high sugar foods or drinks and candy. Any food not eaten by the child will be sent home. Parents will be notified at the start of the year of any food allergies in the classroom. Depending on severity, these items may need to be avoided in lunches as well.

Safety, Emergencies, Accidents

The primary concern of faculty, staff and volunteers is to ensure children are safe when in our care. Children will be supervised at all times by a teacher, volunteer or other qualified adult. Staff will carry a radio and phone at all times should an emergency arise. Fire drills are held monthly. Tornado drills are held in September, March, April and May. A safety evacuation plan is posted in each classroom. The school Director will maintain records of all drills.

In the case of a major emergency or accident, parents will be notified immediately by the child's teacher and/or the school Director. If the parent cannot be reached, other emergency contacts will be called until someone is reached.

If the accident is severe or seems life-threatening, emergency medical care will be called before notifying parents. Staff will follow the written directives of parents regarding transportation, hospitalization, or notification of the physician.

In the event of a fire emergency, teachers shall calmly inform the class to line up and prepare to exit the building. One teacher will exit immediately to lead the class out of the building; second teacher will sweep the bathrooms then follow children out. After exiting, the staff and children will meet in the pre-arranged designated spot (Oak Allee if in VC). The roll will immediately be called. If any child is not accounted for, the Lead Teacher will use the radio to alert Visitor Services of a missing child. They will immediately alert any authorities present of the missing child and will safely and calmly do everything possible to locate the child and return him/her to safety with the group.

Weather Policies

Snow Days/Inclement Weather

The Cincinnati Nature School will follow Milford Schools closings for inclement weather.

High Winds

Strong winds of wind gusts present a potential threat to hikers on the trails because of the possibility for falling trees or tree limbs. For this reason, staff and staff-led groups are required to return indoors if sustained winds reach 25 MPH or if the wind is frequently gusting to 25 MPH or higher. In some cases, CNC may make the decision to close the trails altogether, or to issue a wind advisory to incoming visitors who choose to hike at their own risk.

Thunderstorms

When thunder is heard, staff must bring their group indoors, where they are to remain for 30 minutes after the last thunder clap is heard. Structures like a bird blind, the log cabin, or the PlayScape pavilion do NOT provide protection from lightning. You must be inside a grounded building such as the Krippendorf Lodge, Rowe Visitor Center, or Green Cottage. Several outdoor spaces close to the buildings are also acceptable in mild storms: Side porch of the Visitor Center and the wooden porch of Krippendorf Lodge (not the terrace). The Fernwood Shelter is relatively safe in low level storms, but stronger storms require moving to Groesbeck Lodge. At Long Branch, the barn and the bathrooms are safe spaces.

Tornados

In the case of a severe storm warning or tornado warning, you will probably hear sirens. (Siren tests are done on Wednesdays at noon.) In addition, the front desk will attempt to reach you by radio and/or cell phone. Take your group to the closest appropriate shelter immediately. This may be the basement of the Krippendorf Lodge, Rowe Visitor Center, or Groesbeck Lodge. At Long Branch, the lower part of the bathrooms should be used.

Heat Advisory

When temperatures and humidity are high, use preventative measures to avoid heat stroke for your group. This includes guiding the group to: stay in the shade as much as possible; move slowly and avoid strenuous exercise; drink lots of water, cool off with water spray or fans. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include: Confusion, Dark-colored urine (a sign of dehydration), Dizziness, Fainting, Fatigue, Headache, Muscle or abdominal cramps, Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, Pale skin, Profuse sweating, Rapid heartbeat. If you, or anyone else, has symptoms of heat exhaustion, it's essential to immediately get out of the heat and rest, preferably in an air-conditioned room. If you can't get inside, try to find the nearest cool and shady place. If such measures fail to provide relief within 15 minutes, seek emergency medical help, because untreated heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke.

Extreme Cold Advisory

Single digit or sub-zero temperatures can lead to frostbite, and even temperatures above freezing can lead to hypothermia if your participants are not properly prepared, if they get wet, or if the wind chill is below zero. Before heading outdoors, make sure your group participants have proper clothing. Consider dressing yourself to the least dressed person in your group if they won't wear our extra clothing so you can feel the same way they do. CNC has extra gloves/mittens, boots, coats, etc. if needed in the side porch closet by the auditorium. Stay active while outdoors and come in frequently to warm up. Avoid unnecessary exposure of any part of the body to the cold. Get out of the cold immediately if the signals of hypothermia or frostbite appear. Frostbite is the freezing of a specific body part such as fingers, toes, the nose or earlobes. Signs of frostbite include lack of feeling in the affected area; skin that appears waxy, is cold to the touch, or is discolored (flushed, white or gray, yellow or blue). If frostbite is suspected: 1. Move the person to a warm place. 2. Handle the area gently; never rub the affected area. 3. Warm gently by soaking the affected area in warm water (100–105 degrees F) until it appears red and feels warm. 4. Loosely bandage the area with dry, sterile dressings. 5. If the person's fingers or toes are frostbitten, place dry, sterile gauze between them to keep them separated. 6. Seek professional medical care as soon as possible.

Hypothermia is caused by the cooling of the body caused by the failure of the body's warming system. The goals of first aid are to restore normal body temperature and to care for any conditions while waiting for EMS personnel. Signs of hypothermia include: shivering, numbness, glassy stare; apathy, weakness, impaired judgment; loss of consciousness. Move the person to a warm place and call 911. Remove any wet clothing and dry the person. Warm the person *slowly* by wrapping in blankets or by putting dry clothing on the person. Hot water bottles and chemical hot packs may be used when first wrapped in a towel or blanket before applying. *Do not* warm the person too quickly.

Location	Thunder/Lightning/Excessive Rain	Tornado
Preschool Building	Preschool Building	Groesbeck Basement
Fernwood Shelter	Center for Conservation Living Room, Guest House, or Preschool Building	Groesbeck Basement
Outdoor Learning Center	OLC (has lightning rod) In extreme winds, the OLC has too many windows to be safe. Other options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krippendorf Basement • Green Cottage lower level • Visitor Center Auditorium 	Krippendorf Basement
Green Cottage	Green Cottage (has lightning rod)	Krippendorf Basement
Pine Room	Pine Room	Pine Room
Auditorium	Auditorium (stay away from windows or move to Pine Room if <i>extremely</i> windy). Side porch in mild storms.	Pine Room
Long Branch	Creekside Barn (stay away from windows or move to Restroom Basement if <i>extremely</i> windy)	Restroom Basement
Krippendorf Lodge	Krippendorf Lodge (1 st floor) & wooden porch during mild storms (not the terrace)	Krippendorf Basement

CNC Trail Rules

For your safety, preservation of our natural resources, and consideration for other visitors, please observe the following trail rules:

1. Please remain on trails — foot traffic only. *Group leaders may take participants off-trail for an activity or to explore if an area looks to be safe and free of dead trees, poison ivy, and other hazards.*
2. Observe but do not disturb plants and wildlife. We do not allow collecting, hunting or fishing on CNC properties. *Group leaders may use bug jars or nets to catch small creatures. All creatures must be returned to their original homes. Pond dipping and handling amphibians will be limited to warm weather months to keep amphibians safe.*
3. To protect our streams and ponds, stay on designated trails and boardwalks.
4. Please walk in groups of 12 or fewer. Groups of 12 or more must pre-register.
5. Children younger than high school age must be accompanied by an adult.
6. Pets must be leashed and under control at all times. Always carry out your pet's waste. Discourage pets from wading in water. Pet waste disposal bags are located at trailhead.
7. Please do not litter. Pack it in; pack it out.
8. Picnic only in designated picnic areas. *Group leaders may do picnics on trail as long as the group cleans up every little scrap before walking away.*
9. Turtle and fish feeding is allowed only in Powel Crosley Lake. Feed ONLY PELLETS available at the Rowe Visitor Center. One handful per family. DO NOT FEED BREAD. Feeding waterfowl and other wildlife is prohibited.
10. Dipping nets can only be used at Matt's Pond with a permit, available at the Visitor Center Front Desk. *Group leaders may dip at Lotus, Reservoir and Marsh ponds, leaving Matt's pond for public exploration.*
11. Cincinnati Nature Center is a smoke-free environment.

Hikes & Field Trips

One of the highlights for students enrolled in CNC Nature Schools is the time we spend outdoors daily! The class and at least two staff will often be accompanied by trained volunteers and/or naturalists as we hike the trails of Rowe Woods. Your signature on the Routine Field Trip Permission Form provides permission for the entire school year for your child to engage in these daily excursions. These daily hikes are part of our curriculum except on days when there is a high wind advisory, or when thunder is heard (at which time we go indoors and remain there until thunder has not been heard again for 20 minutes).

During these routine hikes, children will have access to ponds that are two feet or more in depth. Water activities are not planned other than dipping for tadpoles and observing pond life from the safety of the boardwalk. Children will be supervised, and all safety rules will be explained and enforced, around the pond areas and elsewhere on the property. Safety devices such as life preserver ring, ropes, and poles are located next to the pond board walks.

You are responsible for dressing your child for the weather (warm coats and boots and mittens in winter, rain gear on rainy days, etc.) If your child is unprepared, the entire class must remain indoors for the day, since we all hike as one class and do not have enough staff to supervise a child who must stay behind because they are unprepared.

Additional field trips may be organized to enrich and extend learning beyond what is possible at the Nature Center. Usually parents will be asked to drop off and pick up children from the field trip location. Permission

slips will be sent digitally and must be returned through Jovial before the day of the trip. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and necessary medications must accompany a teacher trained in first aid on all field trips.

Technology

Technology is used sparingly, when appropriate, to support children's learning in meaningful ways.

Inclusion/Special Education

The Montessori approach lends itself to adaptation to meet individual children's needs. Though teachers strive to adjust classroom learning to serve each child, if they cannot, they will contact the parents to meet to discuss a plan to meet the child's needs.

Teachers will share observations of children early and often. The Cincinnati Nature School is not able to provide additional testing or support services to children in school. If testing is recommended, parents will be notified as soon as possible so that they can pursue this through their home district or privately. Teachers can provide resources and contacts for parents if requested. The teacher will work with outside experts as needed to support individual children.