



Barn School 2021

Safety Procedures and Precautions

Since the beginning of the COVID 19 public health crisis, there have been many safety guidelines released with varying levels of recommendations. Last year we implemented an array of precautionary procedures in Barn School that kept staff and children safe. This year we have decided to continue these protocols as COVID-19 is still prevalent in our region. Our aim is to continue to provide quality agricultural education while keeping safety a TOP priority.

The following procedures and reminders are some of the more important changes our staff made last year that we will continue to implement this summer.. Please review them with your child so that everyone knows what to expect.

- **Drop-Off & Pick-Up:**

We are limiting all non-essential visitors to Barn School this year, which unfortunately means minimal parent activity. Drop-off and pick-up of your child will be done in the parking lot with no need for you to get out of your car. You may pull into the upper parking lot (by the Farm Market building) and follow the Barn School signs to the far end of the parking lot. A member of our staff will personally be there to greet you and sign in your child each day. If you are early and do not see someone standing out there, please wait in your vehicle until it gets a little closer to the beginning of class (we will not be accepting students prior to the start of class). Be sure to remain in your vehicle until our staff is able to approach your car with the clipboard and officially record your child's attendance each day- please do not send your child off to Barn School before sign in. A staff member will also need to check in with you as the parent/guardian for a simple health screening each day before your child is allowed to proceed with class (see below for more details). Once your child is greeted and checked in, they will be escorted to our home base for the day to drop off any personal items (backpack/water bottle, etc.) and wash their hands before beginning class.

Pick-Up will be a similar experience. A Barn School employee will greet your vehicle in the parking lot and radio home base to alert them that your child is ready for pick-up. If you arrive early, please do not exit your vehicle and approach the group in search of your child.. Instead, kindly wait in your vehicle to be approached by an employee. Once alerted, your child will gather their belongings, wash their hands, and be escorted to the parking lot for their ride home. If needed, please call me directly to schedule an early pick-up, 518-951-9858.

- **Health Screening:**

As per the New York State guidelines, we are required to implement a daily health screening assessment for both employees and children. For children, this will consist of a simple three question survey which a staff member will ask you in the parking lot while in your vehicle before checking in your child. The questions are as follows:

- 1) Has your child knowingly been in close contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive or has symptoms of Covid-19?
- 2) Has your child tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 14 days?
- 3) Has your child experienced symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 14 days?

Your responses will be reviewed and documented daily, with an appropriate action plan for any positive response as dictated by NYS. If you are anticipating a positive response to any of the above questions, please call ahead to discuss the corresponding action plan as it may result in your child needing to stay home for a period of time. If you are carpooling on the way to class and will not be present during drop-off, please call the education number directly with your responses in order for your child to be allowed into Barn School that day, 518-951-9858.

This is also a good time to remind you (as required) to keep your child home from Barn School if they are generally feeling unwell or showing any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to a COVID 19 positive person.. Please refresh yourself on the symptoms of COVID-19 here: [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#).

- **Face Coverings:**

All children will be required to arrive with a clean face covering each day. They will be required to wear them for activities that do not allow for 6 feet of distance between themselves and another child or employee. All staff are required to wear face coverings whenever they are interacting with your child. We will not be providing face coverings for participating children. Please send them with a face covering that is comfortable and fitted without the need for constant adjustment when hands are soiled.

We realize it will be hot at times and are attempting to limit the duration any child wears a face covering. If your child is wearing a face covering during a close contact activity and needs a break to take it off, we will have staff on hand to assist that child to an area where they can safely remove their face covering and cool down for as long as needed.

We hope to incorporate the use of face coverings in way that does not incur stress or anxiety, but instead treats them as a normal thing we do everyday to help keep ourselves (and those we love) healthy, just like hand-washing, which has always and continues to play a large role in Barn School.s.

- **Barn Chores:**

All students will be able to participate in caring for the farm animals. Staying safe while interacting with the animals in their pens makes it exceedingly difficult to stay 6 feet away from one another at all times. Therefore, most barn chores will require all participants to wear their face covering. Most activities will allow for each student to have their own equipment items, eliminating the need to share with one another. However, certain equipment items that need to be shared (e.g. using the hose) during barn chores will be disinfected between uses, using a 2% bleach solution as recommended by the NYS Dept. of Health. If your child has an allergy or sensitivity to this solution, please advise us before class begins.

- **Snack:**

Our kitchen staff has been making food to-go for months now , and has implemented strict safety guidelines in the handling of all food. Each student will receive a snack bag that has been completely prepared by the kitchen and includes an individually bagged apple cider doughnut, a

cup of our own apple cider with lid and straw, and a napkin. You are more than welcome to bring your own snack.

- **Activities:**

In an attempt to keep the class outdoors and socially distanced, we will be utilizing the entire farm this summer with activities such as berry picking, hayrides, pond visits, nature trail hikes, walking our farm animals on leash, and exploring other parts of the farm.

- **Rainy Days:**

Part of a farmer's responsibility is to care for the animals everyday rain or shine. Our barn chores and afternoon activities will take place each day, even in the rain. Students are required to have a raincoat in order to participate on rainy days. If inclement weather is forecasted, please do not send your child to Barn School without a raincoat. If you're not sure of the weather and don't want to rely on the forecast, please pack one every day.

In the event of lightning, the class will move indoors or under cover. Even though we are keeping class sizes smaller than usual, staying safe in reference to COVID-19 limits the space and activities that are available to us while indoors. In the event of severe storms forecast for that day, you may prefer to consider keeping your child at home. However, no refunds can be given due to inclement weather.

- **What to Bring & Wear:**

1. Each student should bring a beach towel every day. Our home base for the day will be outside under a shady tree (instead of inside the Education Barn). The beach towel will serve as your child's seat and help to keep everyone socially distant during snack and other breaks.
2. Each student should bring a large, refillable water bottle with his or her name on it.
3. It is not a bad idea to pack a raincoat every day either, as summer afternoon rains come fast and frequent.
4. A change of socks and sneakers (just in case) is also recommended. Students must be able to put on and take off their own footwear.
5. Don't forget a clean face covering each day (they are easy enough to wash by hand in the sink or can be thrown in with a load of laundry).

Put all these items in a backpack that your child can take to class each day.

Please dress for the weather, including the application of any sunscreen or bug repellent at home. Students should wear clothes that can get wet and dirty. We use the hose for various barn chores and farm activities, and on hot days the students usually end up wet as well. A hat is also recommended to help protect against the sun.

Footwear may get wet, muddy, and covered in manure (from entering animal pens), and old sneakers or tall, rubber muck boots are recommended. Ideally, students will arrive in muck boots and change into old sneakers after barn chores are complete. If your child is comfortable wearing muck boots for an extended period of time and walking on nature trails with them, they are welcome to keep them on for the duration of class- same goes for potentially wet sneakers. Mud and manure will be cleaned off footwear before returning home. Boots cannot be kept in the

Education Barn this year. Everything you bring to class that day must also go home with you that day.

Work gloves have been a common item to bring in years past. However, we are now requiring that all work gloves stay home this year. They are not a necessary item, are more difficult to wash than your hands, and don't allow the student to feel things like a sheep's wool or a cow's tongue!

Also please leave home any toys and valuables (including money), as our home base including your child's backpack will be outside and more visible to the public this year. The Barn School is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

- **Ticks:**

Ticks are common in Albany County in the spring, summer, and fall. Check carefully for ticks when you go home. Insect repellent, if you choose to use it, should be applied at home. For more information, contact the Albany County Health Department or <http://www.albanycounty.com/health/lyme.aspx>.

- **Open Barn:**

In an effort to limit all non-essential visitors this year, there will unfortunately be no open barn opportunity for families on Fridays

Thank you for reading our reminder letter this year! We are excited to have children back on the farm learning and having fun, even if it won't quite be business as usual. Your understanding of these changes and your patience throughout the process is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding Barn School, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Thanks again, we are looking forward to another great summer!

The Barn School Staff