



Saplings Gear Guide

Saplings students need weather-appropriate clothing and outdoor gear all year long. Our “classrooms” are the forest, creek, meadow, pond, and farm fields and we will be outside as much as possible. Expect any clothing that comes to the farm to get wet and dirty.

Year-Round Essentials

For Every Student

- Reusable water bottle
- Morning snack
 - A filling, protein-rich snack that is easy to eat – trail mix, bar, etc.
- Well-balanced lunch, with ice pack during warm months
 - We encourage reusable lunch containers and healthy eating habits
- Sturdy, closed-toe, closed-heel shoes for hiking
- Full changes of clothes, including extra underwear, socks and shoes

For Full-Day Students

- Afternoon snack
 - A filling, protein-rich snack that is easy to eat – trail mix, bar, etc.
- Nap mat or combination fitted sheet/blanket for rest time
 - All full-day students rest after lunch to prepare their bodies for afternoon adventure. Even if your child does not usually nap, please send them with a mat or sheet to cover their cot

Each student will be issued a small backpack for the school year, to be packed daily with snack, water, and extra gear and taken on adventures.

Recommended Extras

- Sunscreen and insect/tick repellent
 - Apply before school in the mornings. Teachers can help full-day students reapply after rest upon request.
- Sunglasses
- Separate reusable bag for wet/muddy clothing to go home in
- Swimsuit

Fall/Spring Gear Guide

The fall and spring seasons can be unpredictable. Keeping extra layers in your child's cubby keeps them prepared all year long. Expect any clothing that comes to the farm to get wet and dirty.

Mild Weather Gear

- Base layer: T-shirt and/or long-sleeved shirt, layered as needed
- Outer layer: Fleece pullover, sweater, light jacket, or windbreaker
- Bottoms: Shorts or long pants
- Socks: tall, white socks help with tick protection
- Hat for sun and insect protection
- Sturdy, closed-toe, closed-heel shoes for hiking
- Creek shoes (clearly labelled as creek shoes)
 - Every child needs a pair of closed-toe, closed-heel shoes that can be worn in the creek. These shoes will become quite dirty with our orange creek mud. Rainboots are not a good option, as they easily fill with water and cause a lot of discomfort on the walk back. We recommend a sturdy water shoe, such as Keens, or an old pair of sneakers that can be dedicated to the creek.

Rain/Mud Gear

Rain gear should be kept in your child's cubby at all times. Even on a dry day, the Saplings WILL find a muddy puddle and we want them to be able to explore freely.

- Rainboots (best paired with long pants or with shorts and tall socks)
- Waterproof rain pants/raincoat combination OR one-piece rainsuit
 - Each student will be issued a pair of Oaki rain bibs for the school year, which can be worn on their own on mild wet days or paired with a personal raincoat for extra protection.
- Rain mittens
 - These are waterproof, shell-like mittens with long cuffs. They are great for muddy play on a cool, wet day.

Winter Gear Guide

Staying warm and dry is essential for our outdoor winter adventures. Using the right materials with proper layering allows us to extend the amount of time we spend outside each day. Always remember to pack extra layers and accessories!

Base Layer: A thin, moisture-wicking layer worn closest to the body

Wool, silk, or polyester work best – NO COTTON!

Thin mitten liners and merino wool hats can be worn under the thicker, waterproof layers for extra warmth, too.

Mid-Layer: The insulating layer

Fleece or knit sweaters or zip-ups work well

Something that can comfortably fit under the outer layer

Mid-layer pants could be a fleece pant or looser knit wool

Outer Layer: Waterproof is key!

Warm, waterproof snow jacket/pants combo OR

Insulated, waterproof one-piece snowsuit

Even if it is not actively snowing or raining, mud and ice play is inevitable and encouraged. Once a student gets wet beneath their layers, they need to be brought inside to change immediately, which disrupts their learning.

Accessories

Tall, wool socks keep feet dry and won't slip down inside boots

Warm hat that covers the ears

Neck warmer (doesn't snag on branches like scarves can)

Long-cuff, waterproof mittens – keeps the hands warmer than gloves and easier to put on

Insulated, waterproof boots are essential!

What's in the Cubby

Each Sapling will be assigned a cubby in the barn on their first day. Here is a sampling of what should be found in a Sapling's cubby on any given day.

The Home Pack

- This is a large backpack, duffel, or other bag from home that holds gear and changes of clothes
- Includes extra pairs of underwear, socks, shoes, and layers (pants, shirts, sweatshirts, etc.)
- Can stay in cubby or go home each day
- If your child is going home in different clothes than they arrived in, then you may need to replenish the layers in the home pack! Check the pack daily for any missing items that need to be refilled.
- Layers should be seasonally appropriate, so will need to be changed out regularly (plus, Saplings tend to outgrow things quickly!)

The Adventure Pack

- Fernbrook-issued REI pack that all students take on daily adventures
- Gets packed at morning drop-off with snack, water bottle, and any extras for the day (sweatshirt, gloves, hat, sunglasses etc.)
- Gets emptied out at the end of the day, stays in cubby overnight

Accessories

- Creek shoes and rainboots
- Fernbrook-issued rain pants (stay in cubby overnight)
- Home rain gear (one-piece suit or coat) and/or snow gear
- Hats, mittens, neck warmer
- Sunscreen and/or insect repellent
- Recommended: Reusable bag for wet/muddy clothing to go home in
- Recommended: swimsuit

Additional Items

- Lunchboxes go in group's designated crate in the barn
- Nap mats/blankets for full-day students get dropped off in child's classroom and get sent home once a week to be washed and returned.

Helpful Tips and Tricks

We cannot stress enough how easy it is for personal items to get misplaced at Fernbrook. **Please label EVERYTHING with your child's name.**

- [Inchbug](#) and similar companies offer personalized stickers to make labelling easier
- Mitten clips reduce the chances of losing mittens

[Insect Shield](#) offers a clothing treatment service that provides long-term protection against ticks and other insects.

Where to Purchase

- [Outdoor School Shop](#) (ODSS) – an online outfitter specifically designed for outdoor schools; **follow the link to shop our personal shop and use the code FERNBROOK for a 15% discount**
- [REI](#) – quality gear + members have the option to shop or trade in used gear
- [Sierra](#) – a discount outdoor gear store located at the Moorestown Mall
- Amazon
- Facebook groups – kids outgrow things quickly; search Facebook groups for gently used options

Trusted Brands

- Oaki
- Polarn O. Pyret
- Smartwool
- Helly Hansen
- Didriksons
- North Face
- Keen, Sorel, Bogs

Maintaining Your Gear

- The less often you wash your waterproof gear, the better. A wipe down with a wet cloth or outerwear sponge cloth (found on ODSS or other outdoor gear suppliers) is better than machine washing
- ODSS and other suppliers sell patch kits for waterproof gear. Alternatively, electrical tape can patch up some small rips or tears.

Great Gear Examples

