

Hawthorne Valley

PARENT PACKET

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM TRIP

Your child is about to embark on a wonderful adventure with their classmates! Going away from home for a full week with the class and teacher can be a daunting challenge for a youngster, and perhaps an even **bigger** challenge for parents! Your child may already be accomplished at overnight family visits, sleepovers with friends, or overnight camps, or they may have never spent a night away from home. For parents, such thoughts as “my child is too young. I don’t think he can manage to be away from home” or “I don’t think I can stand to have her gone for so long” are common. We are here to assure you that these feelings are normal and widely shared. We encourage you to reach out to us if you have **any** questions or concerns.

You may wonder why this trip is planned at all if so many parents are concerned about being separated from their children. Hopefully, your teacher has articulated the value of having a farm experience and how much it benefits children of all ages. The farm and the animals speak to a child with warmth and love that is truly an inspiring experience. For those of you who are Waldorf school parents, the Farm Block as well as the trip are very appropriately planned for the third grade. At this age of development (ages 9 to 11) children want to ‘do things for themselves.’ They begin to see themselves as separate from their family, a bit more their own person. This of course does not mean family and parents are no longer important. View this trip as an opportunity that will assist your child to experience independence in positive and safe ways and will lead to enhanced self-worth for the youngster. The staff that will work with the children are warm, friendly and very committed to ensuring the most meaningful time possible for your child.

What can parents do to help prepare their children for the Farm Trip? Be positive! Encourage them and offer support through their feelings of concern or fear. We all feel a little anxious when taking on new experiences! It is in the process of facing uncertainty, having courage to overcome the challenge and then the recognition of personal accomplishment that we all grow.

STUDENT HEALTH FORMS link: <https://hvamarketing.wufoo.com/forms/z1anhi5k00heqyo/> **Please Access NOW!** These forms provide us with the necessary information about your child’s dietary issues or special needs. With this information we can offer the best trip possible for your child. We must have a form for every child attending the trip even if there aren’t any issues. These forms also gives permission to treat in an emergency situation. These forms need to be accessed and submitted at the latest 4 weeks prior to your trip. If medications are required, please give it to your class teacher in the original packaging. Teachers are responsible for the administering of all medicines.

Clothing: Please adhere to the packing list and check the weather conditions in Ghent, NY before the trip to insure that you have packed adequate clothing and gear for your child to be comfortable during the week; a comprehensive list is attached. The children will be outside most of the day in all types of weather.

What will my child be expected to accomplish on the trip? Children will take care of their own belongings, and clean both their rooms and the communal spaces in the house and dining hall. They will be waiters at meals and wash dishes for each other. The animals will depend on them to bring food and clean the barns/paddocks. Many parents have admired at how much more mature and willing to take on responsibility their child was upon returning home after a week on the farm.

Your child will also be encouraged to be responsible for themselves in ways that they may not have experienced at home. Your child will make important (guided) choices for themselves each day such as what clothing is appropriate for their scheduled activity and the weather, how much food to serve themselves, how to be timely, helpful and collaborative. They will be encouraged to taste new dishes, push themselves through tasks that they may not have ever experienced and to do good work that they can be proud of.

What challenges are most common during the trip? Homesickness does occur from time to time. We would caution parents about putting surprise notes in suitcases. We've found that when children are first unpacking, it is a bit too soon to be reminded of home! You can send your child a letter to: Hawthorne Valley Farm – Main House, 327 County Route 21C, Ghent, NY 12075, Attn: Your child's name/school. Please make sure that all class parents are in agreement. It is unfair for one student to receive mail and another not. It is also our experience that phone calls home make matters worse. Certainly calls to the teacher and staff can be made and decisions to speak with your child can be made between you and the teacher. One good solution if a child needs to call parents is that he/she can call in the morning. This is soothing in the evening - the hardest time, and the morning often finds him too busy to want to call! If he does call in the morning it is a less emotional time, activities are happening and he will be anxious to get out with friends so a totally different mood prevails. If you do find it necessary to speak to your child be sure to stay light, supportive and positive and assure him/her of your love and how very soon you will see them.

Bed wetting can also be an issue. This is not an unusual problem. All of our mattresses are plastic covered. If your child uses disposable undergarments at home please discretely send them – we will make sure that a private changing area is provided. If this won't work for your child, the teacher can remove the sleeping bag and pajamas when other students are out on an activity, wash and dry them and no one will ever know. Please assure your child that this is not an uncommon situation and it can be worked with. It is always good to get a child up to use the bathroom late in the evening. Talk to your teacher about what works best for your child.

Our meals are all organic and vegetarian; we serve seasonal fruits and vegetables, dairy products, baked goods and lacto fermented kraut made right here on the farm. We eat family style in our large, sunny dining hall with set tables and enjoyable conversation. If your family does not dine at a table or take meals together, your child may find this challenging. We do not make custom dishes for children who don't wish to try new foods. Our meals have a wide array of options and sides – protein is found in plant-based sources as well as dairy and eggs from our hens. We encourage children to take a “farmer's taste” of new foods and they generally like several items and most times will enjoy the whole meal. Part of the third grade experience is to harvest and prepare the soup, bread and butter for the evening meal, the child's relationship to the farm and food encourages tasting and they often forget any apprehension with tasting and enjoying new foods. We are very watchful of children's eating patterns and try to step in with solutions if meals are being skipped. Our meals are planned with children in mind and we have years of experience creating child friendly menus.

Staff Classes have been visiting the farm for over 40 years. We are a well-established program. There is a director plus four permanent full-time staff members. Together we have decades of experience in parenting and teaching children. Each fall and spring semester, young interns join us. These are people in their 20s or older, usually having graduated from college or taking some time off to do hands-on work. They are often education, biology or environmental majors. They are carefully screened and trained by our full-time staff. The full-time staff and the interns, together with the class teacher work with the children. Children are never without adult supervision. Activities are conducted in groups of 5 – 9 students. There are also times when the class is together as a whole. All of our employees in the PBLC are background and reference checked prior to hire.

Packing Please, no candy or gum, phones or electronic toys. A packing list is attached to this packet. Pack enough for the week. The key is to pack so that the luggage can be self-contained and carried by the child, especially if your class is traveling by train. LABEL EVERYTHING. If things are not labeled it is nearly impossible to match child and the article! No spending money or expensive jewelry should be brought to the farm. Please limit stuffed animals to just one very special (and small) friend.

Schedule of the day Wake-up is at 7:00, except for a few who will have started the day at 5:45 to begin animal feeding! Everyone gets a turn to feed the animals either in the morning or evening, in the same way as

the other duties like waiting tables and kitchen chores are assigned. It is a job much loved by students, especially in the early hours when only they, a staff member and the farmer are in the barn with all the animals.

Breakfast is at 7:30 and house-keeping is at 8:00. Our activities begin at 8:30. Morning might include yogurt making, food preparation, bread baking, barn cleaning, wood chopping, or a gardening project. Afternoon activities include butter making, exploring, hiking and seasonal maple syrup tapping or apple cider pressing. Older or returning classes have varying activities that are class/age appropriate coordinated with the teacher.

Our day follows the rhythm of in-breathing, contemplative or quiet times and out-breathing active times. There are two snacks as well as three hearty meals. A quiet time on bunks follows the noon time meal. The day ends with all gathered together for a quiet story time.

Farm Products The class can take a taste of the farm home with them. Our **Bread and Cheese package** includes a loaf of Hawthorne Valley Farm fresh baked bread and a piece of farm cheese. The cost of this package is **\$10.00** per child. This is entirely optional. This cost will be included on your school's invoice. Our Farm Store is not available to classes during their stay.

Medical: The Philmont Fire Co., about 3 miles away, has an Emergency Medical Response Team and medical fire ambulance vehicle that will respond to Hawthorne Valley Farm in about 8-10 minutes. In the city of Hudson, 12 miles away, is a county hospital, and more rescue squads are readily available. All full time staff have a minimum certification in CPR-First Aid. We have traditional first-aid supplies - i.e. bandages, disinfectants etc. We also have an extensive supply of homeopathic remedies. We are glad to share them with the visiting students as needed.

HAWTHORNE VALLEY DINING HALL SAMPLE MENU

PLEASE NOTE: In most cases with advanced notice, we can accommodate vegan, nut-free (*we are a strict peanut free facility*), gluten free, and many other medical dietary allergies but are not able to provide meals to order according to taste.

BREAKFAST: Hot cereal with honey and raisins, fresh fruit, or applesauce, Yogurt, Toast with butter and jelly, Milk, Hot tea

10 AM SNACK: Popcorn and juice tea

FARM LUNCH: Green salad with one of the farm's sauerkrauts, Brown rice, Stir fry vegetables with Toasted sunflower seeds, Marinated tofu, Tamari

Variations: Polenta and roasted vegetables, pasta and vegetables, roasted potatoes with vegetables, chili and corn bread, bean burritos with salsa. A salad is served with all dinners.

4 PM SNACK: Seasonal fresh fruit

SUPPER: Salad; Soup, freshly made from scratch by your students! Bread (usually baked by the students or from our farm bakery); Cheese, hard boiled eggs or almond butter

Refined sugar is not available at meals. Sweeteners are honey, maple syrup, and unrefined sugar.

If you have any questions, please contact: Helen at Helen@hawthornevalleyfarm.org, she will be able to direct you to the appropriate Staff Manager to discuss your questions and concerns. Or Call, (518) 672-4465, ext. 201 or ext. 203.

PACKING LIST FOR: _____

- Label all items with permanent marker or sewn-in labels
- Please adjust the weight/type of clothing depending on the month you are visiting. We can have very cold nights in April and later in the fall. During late spring months and early fall, hiking boots would replace winter boots, snow pant are not needed, etc.
- Do not bring items with you that cannot be soiled, damaged, or, on rare occasions, lost.

WINTER & EARLY SPRING

MANDATORY ITEMS

SEASONAL ITEMS

Rubber Muck Boots – 1 Pair	Winter Boots (insulated/waterproof)
Slippers 1 Pair	Balaclava
Socks – 6 pairs (Wool/blend)	Snow pants – 1 pair
Warm PJ's	Winter Gloves – 2 pairs
Underwear – 6 pairs	Warm Hat – 2 (must cover ears)
Warm Waterproof Jacket - 1	Warm Scarf/neck warmer - 1
Seasonal Hat -1	Long Johns – at least 2
Vest to fit under jacket - 1	
Rain Jacket	
Rain Pants	OPTIONAL FUN STUFF
Long Pants – 2 pair	Disposable Camera
Sweat Pants – 1 pair	Special Stuffed Animal or doll
Long Sleeved Shirts-4	Special Blanket
Short Sleeved Shirts - 2	Musical Instrument
Hooded sweatshirts - 2	
Thermal Shirts – at least 2	
Sweater/polar fleece top - 1	
Sneakers/work shoes	
PERSONAL ITEMS	
Sleeping Bag & Pillow case	
Laundry Bag	
Hand Towels	
Comb and Brush	
Toothbrush, paste, floss	
Tissues or handkerchief	
Sunscreen	
Sunglasses with security strap	
Book Light/ flashlight/head lamp	
A book to read for quiet time	
School supplies <small>requested by teacher</small>	
2 plastic bags for rubber boots	

We kindly request that you do not send your child to the farm with the following items:

- Cell phones, hand-held games, MP3 players, radios, or any other electronic device
- Money
- Precious Jewelry
- Candy or gum