Nature School
OF YORK

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What makes Nature School of York different?

At Nature School of York, we believe education is more than academics—it's about nurturing the **whole child** in an environment where they feel seen, valued, and accepted.

Our values center around:

- Creative and critical thinking
- Community and connection
- Independence and confidence
- Resilience and resourcefulness
- Respect for childhood and natural development

Children here are not rushed, labeled, or expected to fit into a mold. They are supported in becoming confident, capable, and deeply connected humans.

Why nature-based learning?

At NSY, children learn through hands-on, sensory-rich experiences that foster both learning and well-being. There is a growing body of research linking nature-based education to:

- Stronger academic outcomes
- Improved physical health and focus
- Deeper understanding of science and math concepts

What does a typical day look like?

Each day follows a gentle, predictable rhythm that balances structure and freedom and are designed to support both growth and joy:

- Outdoor exploration and nature-based learning
- Group gathering, storytelling, and connection
- Snack/lunch and social time
- Specials like art, music, creative movement, and cooking
- Open-ended play and project-based learning
- Monthly Field Trips

What are your hours?

Monday–Thursday 8:45 AM – 3:00 PM & 9 AM- 12:30 PM for half day PreK

What are class sizes?

Our classes are intentionally small, typically **8–10 students**, allowing for:

- Individualized attention
- Strong relationships
- A calm, connected environment

Why mixed-age classrooms?

Children are met where they are. Mixed-age classes:

- Encourage leadership and mentorship
- Allow children to learn at their own pace and gain mastery of skills
- Build confidence in both younger and older students

What makes your Kindergarten program unique?

Our Kindergarten is a one to two year program (K & K+), allowing children the time they need to fully develop before moving on to first grade.

We follow a Scandinavian-inspired approach, which means:

- Play remains central to the day
- Learning is joyful, hands-on, and developmentally appropriate
- Children are not rushed into academics before they are ready

What curriculum do you use?

While we use the **Common Core Standards** as a guide, we do not follow a single, set curriculum.

We intentionally draw from a variety of educational approaches to design learning experiences that meet the needs of each class and each child. Rather than relying on a one-size-fits-all model, our goal is to **meet children where they are** and support true skill development over time.

We prioritize **depth over speed**—focusing on meaningful understanding and mastery rather than moving quickly through content. At NSY, we teach to the individual child, not to a test.

What are the homework expectations?

Homework varies slightly by class, but is typically assigned at the beginning of the week and due at the end.

Assignments may include reviewing concepts, reading, practicing spelling words, or working on a small project. Whenever possible, homework is designed to involve family members, helping parents stay connected to their child's learning.

Homework is not intended to be overwhelming or time-consuming. We deeply value home and family time, and assignments are meant to be meaningful, manageable, and supportive of what's happening in the classroom.

Is the program fully outdoors?

We are outdoors daily, in all seasons, with indoor classrooms as needed for safety and comfort.

What should my child wear?

Children should come prepared for the outdoors every day:

- Weather-appropriate layers
- Rain boots and rain gear / Snow boots and snow gear can live in their cubby
- Extra clothes also live in their cubby. Learning sometimes gets messy and that's ok!

There is no bad weather—only the wrong gear. 😊

Is there a nurse on staff?

While we have a nurse who supports our annual hearing and vision screenings, we do not have a full-time nurse on staff.

That said, your child's safety and well-being are always our top priority. All of our teachers and main volunteers are First Aid and CPR certified and are experienced in caring for children in an active, outdoor environment. They are well-prepared to handle the everyday scrapes, bumps, and minor injuries that can naturally occur during play. Teachers also carry first-aid kits with them at all times, ensuring that care is immediate and responsive.

Our Story

Nature School of York blossomed from the shared vision, passion, and dedication of the teachers and families behind Seven Tribe Playground—York's first nature play preschool.

What began as a homeschool cooperative in 2020 grew into NSY in 2022. With recognition from the PA Department of Education in 2023, we established our permanent home in Seven Valleys in 2024. This journey was made possible by the commitment, generosity, and belief of our families and community.

At our core, NSY was created out of a deep understanding that children need different educational options. We believe that no single approach can meet the needs of every child, and that education should be flexible, responsive, and rooted in the whole child—not just academics.

We also believe that it is our responsibility as educators to continually evolve—to listen, reflect, and grow alongside the children and families we serve. As our community grows and changes, so do we.

Nature School of York is more than a school—it's a shared commitment to reimagining education, honoring childhood, and creating a place where children can truly thrive.

What is a Co-Op? Why does NSY use this model?

Nature School of York is a community-supported school built on partnership between families and educators.

Our co-op model allows families to contribute through service, financial support, or a hybrid of both. This structure allows us to:

- Distribute responsibility equitably
- Sustain our teachers
- Plan for long-term growth

It reflects our commitment to shared stewardship and strong community.

Does Nature School of York offer scholarships?

At this time, NSY does not offer a formal scholarship program. Tuition reflects the cost of operating the school responsibly and supporting our staff. Families can explore: Flexible payment plans (annual, bi-annual, 10-month, or 12-month) as well as Service and Hybrid Co-Op tracks to offset tuition through involvement.

💛 Still have questions?

We'd love to connect and get to know your family. Please email: info@natureschoolofyork.org