

## **“Earth as Homeschool” Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the application process?**

Earth as Homeschool is open to legally homeschooled children ages 6 and up, and for Pre-K and Kindergarten ages. We recommend deciding on homeschooling as a first principle, then looking at Earth School’s farm-based education programs as supplementary, to add a sense of community support and focused, project-based learning with professional educators, to the homeschooling program you choose for your child. As a next step, we suggest spending as much time as possible on our website, reading articles and watching videos, finding out everything you can about Something Good in the World, to be sure this is the right educational environment for your child and your family. Read through all the FAQs and then give us a call or send us an email if you have more questions. After that, set up a free visit for you and your child(ren), to see the Earth as Homeschool programs in action. If mutually agreed by the Educational Program Director and the family, a full one-day visit without the parents is required; to be sure that Earth School is a good fit for everyone involved. If Earth School is already under way for the year, the Director will recommend a one-week visit for the child. There is a suggested donation of \$50 per day for visits. Because the enrollment fee is non-refundable, we want to be sure everyone is completely happy before registering for Earth School. In some cases, there can be a one-month trial period before full tuition would be required.

### **When do programs take place?**

For the 2017/2018 school year, farm-based education programs for ages 6-11 take place two days per week, Mondays and Wednesdays, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., from early September through mid-June. Ages 3-4 attend 1 day per week, Tuesdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Ages 11-13 attend once a week, on Thursdays, from 12:30 – 4:30 p.m. Earth School follows the Ossining School District calendar generally for holidays and vacations.

### **Can my child just attend 1 day a week, rather than 2?**

This is not recommended. Earth as Homeschool is a throughout experience, from September to June, and children generally prefer to be involved in all aspects of the year’s activities. It is certainly possible to take days off whenever needed, and often homeschooling parents will take weeks off for family travel or other homeschooling activities. However, there is no reduction in tuition for days or weeks missed.

### **Where do programs take place?**

Earth as Homeschool farm-based education programs take place primarily in our Children’s Peaceful Garden and Envira Pod mobile educational trailer, at Kitchawan Farm in Ossining, NY. This is a private, family farm, so visits must be arranged with permission in advance. Because the program includes many field trips and hikes, we are not always on site.

### **What ages do you accommodate?**

Earth School programs are created according to need, so while at the moment our programs are set up for ages 3-4, 6 – 11, and 11-13, we have often had programs for younger and older ages, because a group of

families got together and requested these. Let us know what you are looking for, and we can let you know if we can accommodate that wish in the coming year.

### **Do parents stay or is this a “drop-off” program?**

Parents only stay on site for the first visit. After that, we recommend leaving children to get to know Earth School on their own. We don't think of it as a “drop-off” program though, because families are so involved in homeschooling. We want families to feel they are a part of the Earth School community too. So we invite parents and siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents, to volunteer as much as possible, helping out in the gardens or with field trips or events. If a parent has a special skill to share, or a professional expertise that is relevant to our studies, we welcome them to lead volunteer workshops with our students.

### **What is the tuition?**

[Click here for the tuition schedule.](#)

### **What does the tuition cover?**

Everything we do every day at Earth School is covered! That includes art, music, dance, theatre, academic subjects, farming, hiking, and so much more. From time to time, there may be an extra fee of anywhere from \$5-\$20 for a special visiting educator or a field trip. However, all children can attend these extra events free of charge if the cost presents a major financial hardship for the family.

### **How do you calculate the tuition?**

The Earth School tuition is kept as low as possible, to try to accommodate families of all kinds. We calculate the yearly amount at about \$11 per hour, per child, per day, multiplied by the number weeks that Earth School is actually in session (we do not charge for vacation weeks). This yearly amount is then broken down into 10 monthly payments, to make it easier for families who are on a fixed monthly income. The tuition can be made in one lump sum at the start of the year, or in monthly payments using post-dated checks. However, parents are not paying for that month, they are paying for the year, broken up into 10 monthly payments. If a family joins in to Earth School partway through the year, tuition may be pro-rated.

### **Is there any financial aid?**

Limited, partial scholarships are available, based on how much is in the scholarship fund at the beginning of the school year. Scholarships are given on a first-come, first-served basis. If extra scholarship money comes in during the course of the year, families who have applied for assistance will be contacted. Limited work scholarships may also be available if a parent has a professional skill that Earth School is in need of, for example art or music teachers or teaching assistants may receive a reduction in tuition.

### **How do I apply for a scholarship?**

Partial scholarships are available according to genuine need, for families who have been enrolled in Earth School programs for at least one year. In order to apply for a scholarship, parents must submit a letter, specifying their financial need, by May 1st preceding the program year for which the request is being

made. Although every effort will be made to meet each family's needs, SGITW cannot guarantee that the full amount requested will be available to all those who apply.

### **Do parents have to volunteer?**

No. Assistance is always welcome, whether helping out with chicken care on holidays and weekends, or participating in open garden days or other events. But no one is required to volunteer.

### **What if my child doesn't want to participate in a particular activity?**

Children are not required to participate in every activity, but the spirit of Earth School is generally one of everyone pitching in and giving it a try. Our agreement with the children is that they will try everything, even for 15 minutes, before deciding they don't want to participate. If possible, alternative activities may be given, or a child may use the time to complete other projects, read, write, etc.

### **What is a “typical day” like?**

There is no typical day at Earth School! Because we are farm-based, our activities often depend on the season and the weather. Also, our immersion learning process is often child-directed, so we have the flexibility to stay engaged within a subject for weeks if we choose to. However, we do have certain activities we try to include each day, and each week. For example, most days start with “farm chores,” which may include (depending on the season) taking care of the chickens, weeding, watering, mulching, composting, pumping the seesaw, collecting maple sap, helping in the farm fields, shoveling snow, etc. After the first half hour of physical work, we often engage in “Mindfulness” breathing, “Brain Gym” stretches, and singing class songs. All of these activities get our energy and focus ready for learning fun. Depending on the day of the week, the mornings will usually include art, crafts, or music, and these will often be integrated with the thematic unit of study we are in (lump-learning), or will relate to the season. After lunch and free playtime (outdoors always if possible), the academic portion usually takes place, which might include social studies (acting out “Story of the World”), creative writing, natural science, or whatever else we might be immersed in at the time. We often take field trips to local museums, nature centers, and other farms, depending on what we are studying. Trips usually take place on Fridays, and often parents and siblings are welcome to join in.

### **What is your educational approach?**

Earth School uses the Golden Education Template (GET) method. [Click here to see a video and read articles about this international school model and approach to learning.](#)

### **What academic subjects are included?**

The Earth School (GET) approach is hands-on, whole body, sensory, experiential learning. So in every subject, this is how children engage, whether it's Science, English Language Arts, Social Studies, Geography, Health, Art, Music, Theatre, or any other area. We provide an environment within which learning can happen, rather than teaching from the top down.

### **Do I include Earth School in my reports to my school district?**

You are welcome to list the farm-based education program known as “Earth School” for Homeschoolers, which is run by Something Good in the World, as one of your resources, as supplementary programs for

homeschoolers. Earth School is not a “school,” it is only supplementary; therefore it does not take the place of schooling.

**What should my child do on days when s/he is not at Earth School?**

That's completely up to you! We send out reports every two weeks that let parents know what we have been studying, reading, learning about, and these reports include suggested activities for use at home. We also recommend books to read or movies to watch, museums to visit, any kinds of activities that we feel would supplement what the children are learning at Earth School. There is no requirement to do any of these things.

**Is there homework?**

Yes, for children ages 6 and up, there are weekly assignments to follow up and expand on what we are learning in class. These can include personal essays, reports, creative writing, or artistic projects. Children can spend as much time as they wish to complete these. Parents can assist children, or work can be done independently.

**Do you accept children with learning differences?**

Earth as Homeschool is a small group in a small setting. Although we can at times accommodate a child with mild learning differences, Something Good in the World does not have the professional staff to assist a child with major learning or behavioral differences. Additionally, we do not have the resources to support a child who requires extensive one-on-one attention. Given the nature of our learning environment, a student’s internal motivation and ability to focus are important for her/his success in our educational programs.

**How do you practice Conflict Resolution?**

Teachers always work to help children reach a better conclusion. As needed, we hold “class meetings” to discuss issues that come up that children are not able to work out on their own. The class meeting allows all of the children to offer reasonable solutions to an issue. In some cases, the “student council” (elected monthly by the students) may be invited to help the class decide on how to resolve an issue. There are no “time outs,” but we do offer children the option of a “walk and talk” outdoors with an adult, or taking a break to sit in a quiet area of the Children’s Peaceful Garden.

**What is your policy for medical emergencies?**

All of our staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. Our policy in a serious medical emergency is to call 911, and then to contact parents.

**How do I set up a visit to Earth School?**

We recommend that parents spend as much time as possible on our website, reading articles about our educational approach, and watching videos about our programs, to get a full picture of what Something Good in the World and Earth School are all about. Children often enjoy watching our videos too, to see what the environment looks like. If you are still interested after researching our website, and if you have any further questions, please get in touch by email or phone.