# White Pine Wilderness Academy
# Family Guidebook
# 2026-2027 School Year

Last Updated: 7-19-26

# WELCOME to the White Pine community!

We're thrilled to have your child join us for our 13th school year in the woods of Indianapolis and along the Wapahani (White) River!
We know this will be White Pine's best year yet!!

Here at White Pine, we believe that nature is the best teacher. We work hard to help people of all ages find their place in community through nature skills and connection. If you're new to this model and are interested in learning more, including the research behind it, we recommend checking out www.whitepinewilderness.org/about to read about our custom curriculum.

The content of this guidebook is meant to help lead you through this beautiful journey with White Pine Wilderness Academy. It includes policies, holiday/break information, programming, and more!

We're always here to help and are excited to connect with you. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at the phone number or email address below.

## STAY WILD!

Kindly,

Amee Waltman

Youth Programs Director

White Pine Wilderness Academy

amee@whitepinewilderness.org

https://band.us/@whitepinewilderness

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# ABOUT WHITE PINE WILDERNESS ACADEMY

## About

White Pine Wilderness Academy, founded in 2014, is a traditional technologies school at its core. Children who attend our programs will form a deep connection to nature and their community by learning wilderness survival by the philosophies, traditions, and crafts from many of the ancient cultures that created and honed these skills and traditions.

## Mission

Our mission is to address the effects of nature deficit disorder through reconnection to nature, community, ancestry, traditional cultures and skills.

## Our Promise

It is a great honor to be a trusted Nature Connection Mentor. We, the White Pine Team, promise we will...

- Keep your child safe and supervised at all times

- Connect with you and your child as a Mentor and friend
- Inspire, through sharing our passion for the life changing qualities of nature connection
- Prepare and present new engagement opportunities and challenges each day
- Have lots of fun!

We make this promise for the health and happiness of the future generations.

## Programs

We offer five types of Youth and Teen programming. Student must be within the age limits of their class by August 1 of the school year.

- Forest School
    - Woolly Bears (partial day; ages 3-4) (Must also be bathroom independent, able to walk a ¼ mile carrying their backpack with waterbottle, and have a developmentally appropriate understanding of our Five Agreements (described in the section "Rules and Expectations").)
    - Tree Frogs (full day; ages 5-6) (Must also be bathroom independent, able to walk a ½ mile carrying their backpack with waterbottle and lunch, and have a developmentally appropriate understanding of our Five Agreements (described in the section "Rules and Expectations").)
    - Flying Squirrels (full day; ages 7-9)
    - Scouts (full day; ages 10-12)
    - Teens (full day; ages 13-17)
- After-School Shikari Sessions
    - Flying Squirrels (ages 7-9)
    - Scouts (ages 9-12)
    - Teens (ages 13-17)
- Overnights
    - Teens (ages 13-17)
- Mentor Training
    - Firekeeper Program (ages 13-17)
- Summer Camps
    - Ages 4-17

## Location

Our home campus, since 2014, is located in Rocky Ripple. This quiet neighborhood, tucked in between the Indianapolis Canal and the Wapahani River, is loved by many for it's peace and quiet. Here, we explore the beautiful woods and shorelines of the river to connect ourselves to nature.

## Organizational Structure: North, West and South Teams

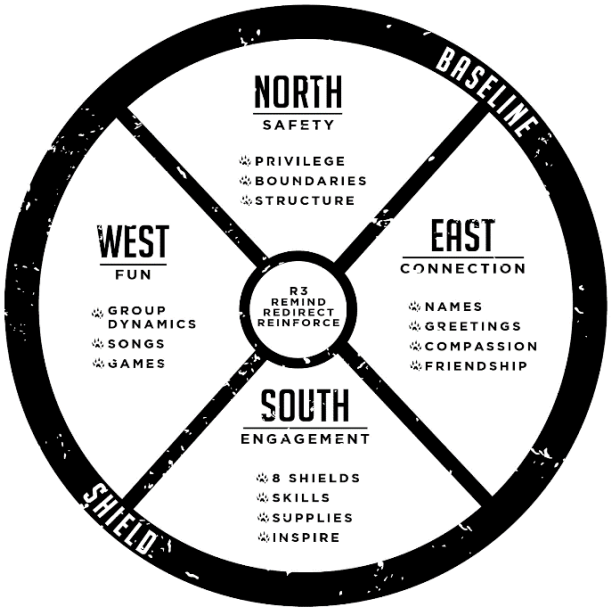
The North team is composed of the following staff involved in administrative roles at White Pine:

- Founder and Executive Director: Matt Shull
- Youth Programs Director: Amee Waltman
- Support Assistant: Katie Glass

The West Team provides extra support to our staff, students and families. They restock supplies, provide advanced mentoring in skills safety and connection, and connect the community together. The West team is composed of the following staff:

- Shikari Integrator: Nate Garvey
- Community Coordinator: Dustin McCreery

The South team is composed of Lead Instructors and Assistant Instructors involved in program delivery and instructional roles at White Pine. The South team is in charge of preparation of all materials, curriculum, and program structure for the day. All Lead Instructors have at least a year of teaching experience and have demonstrated their aptitude in the 4 Baseline Shields.



There will always be at least one West Team member on campus during Forest School, one South team member per patrol (small group of kids), and the North team members are present several days per week. The North team is in charge of managing the majority of communications and inquiries with the public. The North team will provide additional support when needed for any disciplinary, medical, logistical or program concerns.

## Who do I contact?

White Pine utilizes a regenerative community design model. We welcome and encourage parent feedback and engagement. Please feel free to approach any of our staff members about any concerns at any time.

- Questions about your child or another child in the classroom
    - Your child's Instructor, either in-person or through our communication app, BAND
- Questions about our curriculum, guilds or activities
    - Your child's Instructor, either in-person or through our communication app, BAND
- Questions about health or safety issues
    - Your child's Instructor, either in-person or through our communication app, BAND
- Questions about tuition or other fees
    - Amee Waltman, amee@whitepinewilderness.org
- If you need financial assistance or have to pay tuition late
    - Amee Waltman, amee@whitepinewilderness.org
- Questions about getting more involved as a parent
    - Visit www.whitepinewilderness.org/about/volunteer to fill out our Volunteer Interest Form
- Questions about the school calendar
    - Visit www.whitepinewilderness.org/calendar or Amee Waltman, amee@whitepinewilderness.org

## What about the weather?

White Pine's classes are completely nature-based and take place outside in all weather conditions, except severe weather (see our Health & Safety Protocols in the

Family Guidebook). If intolerable conditions occur during class, classes will make a shelter with tarps or gather under covered areas if available at the location. Part of a full outdoor education experience is learning how to adapt to uncomfortable situations. This teaches resiliency and shows our children that we can find joy even in stormy circumstances. Preparing for inclement weather helps children to learn the importance of planning ahead, identifying appropriate gear, and developing a back-up plan (change of clothes).

We believe that "there's no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear!" In other words, with the appropriate clothing and accessories, students will have little issue with the weather. Children should be able to tolerate a variety of clothing densities and materials to be outside in every season. They should be capable of practicing resilience to all types of weather.

# OUR CONNECTION TO TRADITION

The direction we take is one of a traditionally ancestral approach to nature connection. We teach skills, honor history and tell stories from Indigenous cultures the world over. Some of these lessons have a specific lineage, while some do not. Each story, tradition or skill has different protocols and prohibitions depending on the degree of our connection to the story.

Our teachers utilize an experience and research-driven model that brings together three lineages of: Experimental Archaeology, Shikari practice, and the 8 Shields Nature Connection model to guide children in finding their place, both in community and in the natural world. Read more about our custom curriculum at www.whitepinewilderness.org/about.

## Experimental Technology

The Society of Primitive Technology was conceived in 1989 by Dr. Errett Callahan to (1) promote the practice and teaching of primitive skills, (2) foster communication between teachers and practitioners, and (3) set standards for authenticity, ethics, and quality.

Though the Board disbanded in 2013 and Dr. Callahan has recently passed away, we honor our Elders and our Lineage through the practice of Experimental Technology. We do this by not just teaching the skills but by linking them whenever possible to the traditional cultures from which they came. Read more here: http://www.hollowtop.com/spt_html/spt.html

## Shikari

The Shikari Lineage of Trackers from the jungles of India is closely linked to our school. The stories and skills of the Shikari were passed down directly to White Pine's founder Matt Shull from his Grandfather Ernie Shull, who spent 20 years as a Shikari in India. Ernie and his wife Louis were both lifelong educators and Ambassadors of the natural world. It is through our Shikari educational model that we nurture growth and sustainability in our Fire Keepers, Village Keepers and Career Instructors.

## 8 Shields

The 8 Shields Lineage began at The Tracker School founded by Tom Brown Jr. and was further developed by Jon Young at Wilderness Awareness School. White Pine is grateful for decades of mentoring from these Elders. We find great meaning in this nature connection model and have been able to develop an expression that fits our programs, staff, and families.

The Peacemaker story from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy came to the 8 Shields Lineage through the work of Chief Jake Swamp. The story of the Peacemaker is a beautiful saga of how five nations came to form a peace that lasted for generations. This story influenced the United States through the forming of its constitution, the symbology of its national bird with arrows in the talons as well as the decision to headquarter the United Nations on the Haudenosaunee's homeland. Because of the cultural significance of these stories, we take great care to follow all of the protocols and prohibitions in which Chief Jake Swamp mentored us.

## Elders

At times we are honored to host Elders from Native American, African, Asian, and European traditions. We believe that the Inner Tracking framework (Connection to; Place, Community, Self, Ancestry and Indigenous To Place) that we have established allows us to present culture in a way that is respectful, accurate and impactful.

## Regenerative Community Design

Under the guidance of Elders and in the spirit of experimentation, White Pine is moving forward into relatively uncharted territory. We would like to welcome you into our Regenerative Community Design. Please inquire about additional info regarding any of our existing programs and pass the word along so we can strengthen our Vision for the Future Generations.

## Our Yearly Cycle

White Pine uses a highly field tested, custom curriculum model called "The Shikari Wilderness System", which cycles through all of our guilds/skills in a year's time. This cycle is not a new invention – it's been used for thousands of years in many traditional cultures, not to mention its existence prior to man in the natural world. The cycle of a day, a year, and a life is something we're all connected to whether we are aware of it

or not. We celebrate these energetic changes in the year by focusing our guilds/skills within these natural cycles. Many skills we practice year-round, but the time of year that each Pathway is featured is a time to dive deep and advance our practice.

For example, the East Shield features our Healers Pathway, which is celebrated in the spring.  It's like the dawn/sunrise with birth and sprouting. That time of year holds unique space for knowledge, connection and compassion. And our guilds follow what nature is up to at that time of year – herbalism, foraging, caretaking and homesteading. Not to say we won't forage or learn about plants other times of the year. But the spring is when we really ground into those skills and learn how to connect with nature and make them a more routine part of ourselves.

Check out our image below to see when we'll be focusing on specific skills throughout the year. Take a few minutes to imagine the cycles of a day, a year, and a life, and how they relate to the skills at that time.

We find that following these cycles helps us fulfill our mission of deepening connection, not only with nature, but also with community, ancestry, the first nations, and ourselves.

For Fire Keepers and Instructors

All Directions on the Compass

Assertiveness, Receptivity, Collaboration

Safety, Mentor, Solo, Shikari

SHIKARI WILDERNESS SYSTEM

WHITE PINE WILDERNESS ACADEMY

# VOLUNTEERING

## Fire Keepers

You may notice teens taking the lead and engaging with students during your child's class. These are our trained Fire Keepers. White Pine students (ages 13+) who desire to take a leadership role can apply to be in the Fire Keeper program. Fire Keepers are expected to assist Lead Instructors in an apprenticeship capacity and manage students. Fire Keepers are still students and must sign in and out with the same procedures as all other youth. If you see a Fire Keeper, please thank them for their leadership with your child and cheer them on! They are invaluable to our community. If your teen is interested in learning to mentor as a Fire Keeper, read more at www.whitepinewilderness.org/firekeepers

## Parent/Family Village Keepers

You may also notice some students' family members staying all day during class. Family volunteers are welcome and encouraged at White Pine in the role of Village Keeper. Village Keepers will assist a Lead Instructor with a group of 10 students for the day. Please arrive no later than the start of drop-off and plan on staying to the end of pick-up. All individuals regardless of relationship to students will need to pass a background check prior to volunteering. Come spend class with your kid, get dirty, and have tons of fun! Please contact Dustin, our Community Coordinator, at dustin@whitepinewilderness.org if you are interested in this opportunity. Read more about our Village Keeper program at www.whitepinewilderness.org/volunteer

# LOCATION

## Rocky Ripple

841 W. 53rd Street, Indianapolis, IN 46208

Please enter by turning North on Sunny Meade Lane from 52nd Street. Please exit by turning right on 53rd.

Parents do not need to exit their vehicles for morning drop off or afternoon pickup. If you have any questions for staff, need to check the Lost and Found, would like to purchase some merch, or would like to check out our lending library, please park in our 53rd Street parking lot.

# RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

As with any program, White Pine Wilderness Academy implements rules of respect and safety. In terms of behavior, we do not tolerate bullying, shaming, name-calling, or any unwelcome physical touch.

## Our Five Agreements

White Pine Wilderness Academy is a secular school with students and staff from many cultural and religious backgrounds. There is no belief system that is required to attend. All campers and staff are expected to understand and follow our Five Agreements:

1. Respect the Circle
2. Respect Others
3. Respect Yourself
4. Respect Life
5. Be a Caretaker

All staff regularly remind, reinforce, and redirect student behavior as part of normal baseline instruction at White Pine.

Rules related to safety are described in more detail in our Risk Management section.

We understand children are still developing self-regulation skills and we will do our best to support them during this time; however, if a child's behavior continually compromises their safety and/or wellbeing and those of others, White Pine reserves the right to disenroll the child from camp. Disenrollment due to unsafe behavior will be a last resort, and we will do our best to work with the child's caregivers to develop solutions.

We also set strict expectations for our teachers and hold ourselves accountable to the same respect and safety rules. Teachers are expected to use growth mindset language (e.g., say "you worked really hard on that!" instead of, "good job!") and to prioritize consent (e.g., "may I help you over the log by lifting you up?"). In addition, teachers are expected to model the same respectful behavior as they require from their students.

## Positive Discipline and Natural Consequences

Even in the best of circumstances, sometimes behavior will require intervention. If the child is exhibiting behaviors that are dangerous or hurtful to others, or breaking our Five Agreements, the child is pulled aside to a safe place and placed under the supervision of a North or West Team member, while the victim and rest of the group is cared for by the South Team.

Consequences for the student who broke an agreement can range widely depending on the agreement broken and the severity of the harm done. Most behavioral problems will result in a revocation of privilege and/or isolation from the group for a period of time. This is necessary for the student who broke an agreement to accept and understand the consequences of adverse behavior. They will be welcomed back into the group by the victim, when they are ready.

If unsafe or hurtful behavior, like bullying, persists despite multiple attempts to resolve the issue, teachers will notify parents and the student may be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. Teachers will try to develop solutions with the parents.

In extreme cases, if behavior cannot be corrected, it may be decided that forest school may not be the best fit for the child at this time, and campers may not be permitted to return to White Pine.

# CLASS STRUCTURE

## Class Size

Maximum typical class sizes listed below. Each class includes 2-4 Lead Instructors (1 Lead Instructor for After-School classes), 1-2 Fire Keepers, and possible Village Keepers. Our mentoring model maintains a 1:5 instructor to student ratio throughout all of our programming.

» Woolly Bears: 32 students

» Tree Frogs: 36 students

» Flying Squirrels Forest School: 40 students

» Monday Scouts and Teens Forest School: 40 students

» Friday Scouts and Teens Forest School: 40 students

» Flying Squirrels and Scouts After-School Shikari Sessions: 10 students

» Teens After-School Shikari Sessions: 15 students

## Class Schedules

» Woolly Bears: 1 day per week, 9:00am-2:00pm

» Tree Frogs: 1 day per week, 9:00am-3:00pm

» Flying Squirrels, Scouts and Teens Forest School: 1 or 2 days per week, 9:00am-4:00pm

» Flying Squirrels, Scouts and Teens After-School Shikari Sessions: 1 day per week, 4:00pm-7:00pm

## Daily Rhythm

Each day at White Pine is different, depending on the weather, changes in natural cycles, and opportunities presented by teachable moments. The basic rhythm of our days for ages 5+ follows this relatively consistent pattern:

- Drop-off, greeting, & free play
- Opening Circle with Gratitude, Movement, Songs, Stories, and perhaps a game or two
- Focus time for projects in the Unit's Guilds
- Group Lunch (snack for After-School classes)
- Walkabout field excursion to the Wapahani River's riparian corridor, Butler University campus woods, or along the Central Canal
- Closing Circle to debrief the day & look forward to the next time we're together

The Woolly Bears program follows a similar, but slightly different rhythm, also following the weather and opportunities presented by teachable moments:

- Drop-off & greeting with free play
- Circle Time with Gratitude, Song, Movement and Story
- Village Time, wandering to stations around campus focusing on the Unit's Guilds
- Lunch Time with small groups
- Walkabout field excursion to the Wapahani River's riparian corridor, Butler University campus woods, or neighorhood woods. Snack is typically eaten during walkabout or when they return to campus.
- Closing Circle with games and books
- Pickup & say goodbye

## Late to Class / Early Pickup / Absences

Walkabouts are a daily occurrence for both our Forest School and After-School classes. During this time, our staff need to keep focused on their patrols for safety reasons.

We are not able to accommodate dropoffs or pickups during our walkabout times:

- Forest School - No early pickup after 12:00pm Noon.
- After-School - No dropoffs after 4:45pm. No early pickup before 6:45pm.

If you are unable to follow these times, it may be a better choice for your child to miss class that day. Please let us know if you have any questions.

If your child will be late to arrive or will be absent for class, please send a message to your teachers through the BAND app. Refunds are not issued for absences.

## Substitutes

Occasionally, teachers may call out sick or have pre-approved time off. In these instances, we call upon our other teaching staff or qualified volunteers to step in. When this happens, parents will be notified via our parent communication tool, BAND, of the change in class leadership for the day.

# ENROLLMENT

## Schedules

Forest School enrollment is by application only. The Forest School year runs from August 2026 through May 2027. You can join the current school year at any time if there is space available. If your child ages up during the school year, they can switch classes if there is space available.

Flying Squirrels After-School enrollment is also by application only. The After-School year runs from August 2026 through May 2027. Spaces are limited and applications are approved only after a tour.

Scouts and Teens After-School Shikari Sessions are offered in 4-week blocks. Families are billed only for the sessions they select.

## Enrollment Process

For Forest School and After-School Shikari Sessions, choose your desired class on our website, click "Enrollment Application", and start the registration process through Campsite, our registration platform. Please submit all paperwork and pay required fees. You will receive an email from us when your child's space is reserved.

## Waitlist

Enrollments that exceed the class capacity are automatically waitlisted. As spots become available in the class, parents with students on the waitlist may be contacted for the opportunity to enroll.

## Communication

White Pine utilizes two different modes of communication with our families.

1. BAND, a secure website/mobile app. BAND has easy sign-in/out and is the main mode of daily communication for White Pine. When you enroll, we will help you create a profile and get you linked with our school BAND channel. Here you can message your child's teacher about any thoughts or concerns. Your child's teacher will share photos and class updates on BAND so you can see all the adventures the kids go on during class!
2. Email. White Pine also uses email to send invoice reminders, newsletters, event invitations, and more. Please make sure you mark our main email address (academy@whitepinewilderness.org) as "not spam" to receive all these necessary communications.

By registering with White Pine, you are agreeing to partner with your child's teachers and White Pine administrators in case challenges arise. Caregivers are important partners in working with us to build their child's social-emotional skills.

## Accommodations

White Pine aims to offer programs that meet the emotional, developmental, and physical needs of students. Forest school is a good fit for many children but it is not right for all children and is not the answer to every child's needs. While our team is committed to providing high-quality educational experiences to children of all abilities, we may not have the specialties to offer the support at the level required for all students. Please let us know during the enrollment process if your child may need emotional, cognitive, and/or physical accommodations that may require specific support.

We work with families on a case-by-case basis to determine if we have the resources to provide the level of care that ensures a high-quality experience for each child.

We believe that nature is critical for the developmental needs of all children, but forest school is not a one-size-fits-all program. As we continue to grow as a program, we are prioritizing training and developmental opportunities specific to addressing the needs of differently abled children in a forest school setting.

# TUITION

Our School Year runs from August -May. A $50 non-refundable deposit is due upon enrollment in Forest School. Tuition is then automatically withdrawn MONTHLY from the credit card on file on the first Monday of the month. Monthly tuition withdraws will start on August 3, 2026 and the last one will be May 3, 2027. You will receive a monthly email reminder about this automatic withdrawal.

For Scouts and Teens After-School, a $20 non-refundable deposit is due upon enrollment. Tuition is then automatically withdrawn from the credit card on file on the Monday before the unit begins.

For Flying Squirrels After-School, a $20 non-refundable deposit is due upon enrollment. Tuition is then automatically withdrawn MONTHLY from the credit card on file on the first Monday of the month. Monthly tuition withdraws will start on August 3, 2026 and the last one will be May 3, 2027. You will receive a monthly email reminder about this automatic withdrawal.

## Forest School

- Woolly Bears: $220/month for one day a week
- Tree Frogs: $260/month for one day a week
- Flying Squirrels: $300/month for one day a week
- Scouts: $300/month for one day a week
- Teens: $300/month for one day a week

## After-School Shikari Sessions

- Flying Squirrels: $160 for one 4-week session
- Scouts: $160 for one 4-week session
- Teens: $160 for one 4-week session

## Payment

All tuition is paid through Campsite. Forest School monthly amount due will be automatically withdrawn from the credit card or bank account on file with your account. You will receive an email reminder about the automatic withdrawal.

Scouts and Teens After-School Shikari Sessions will be paid in full before the session begins. Flying Squirrel After-School monthly amount due will be automatically withdrawn from the credit card or bank account on file with your account. You will receive an email reminder about the automatic withdrawal.

## Late Charges

Forest School tuition payment is due in full by the last day of each month for the following month. If payment is not received by the due date, a $25 late fee will be will be charged for each invoice not received.

## Tuition Assistance

Any family can apply for tuition assistance. Please visit www.whitepinewilderness.org/ethanrunnelsmemorialscholarship for more details.

# CANCELLATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

## Class Cancellations

White Pine is a year-round school. We have worked hard to create reasonable and steadfast weather safety policies to keep our students and teachers safe. Weather cancellations are rare, but will be announced via BAND by 7pm on the night before class. Weather-related cancellations are out of our control, and we are not able to provide refunds or credits due to cancellations.

## Credits or Refunds

We cannot give refunds or credits for sick days or those that are voluntarily missed (e.g., vacation, missed class). If you feel you have a unique situation, please email Amee at amee@whitepinewilderness.org.

## Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawal from White Pine requires 30 days advance written (email) notice. If you need to withdraw your child from our program, please do so before the next billing

cycle (so you are not charged!) by emailing written notice to Amee at amee@whitepinewilderness.org. This gives us time to fill your child's space for the following month.

# FOREST SCHOOL CALENDAR AND HOLIDAYS

View a printable PDF of our school calendar at www.whitepinewilderness.org/calendars

## Forest School Calendar

We operate on a "4 weeks on, 1 week off" schedule, following our 8 Shields model.

Fall Semester

- South Shield: August 10- September 4
- Fall Break 1: September 7-11
- Southwest Shield: September 14 – October 9
- Fall Break 2: October 12-16
- West Shield: October 19 – November 13
- Fall Break 3: November 23-27
- Northwest Shield: November 16-20, November 30 - December 18
- Winter Break: December 21 - January 1

Spring Semester

- North Shield: January 4 - 29
- Spring Break 1: February 1-5
- Northeast Shield: February 8 - March 5
- Spring Break 2: March 8-12
- East Shield: March 15 – April 9
- Spring Break 3: April 12-16
- Southeast Shield: April 19 - May 14

## Forest School Breaks

There will be no classes on these dates:

- Fall Break 1: September 7-11
- Fall Break 2: October 12-16
- Fall Break 3: November 23-27
- Winter Break: December 21- January 1
- Spring Break 1: February 1-5
- Spring Break 2: March 8-12
- Spring Break 3: April 12-16

# WHAT TO BRING

## Gear

Students must come properly equipped for the anticipated weather conditions of the day. This includes insulating layers, durable rain gear and waterproof boots for rainy days. Students not properly equipped may not be permitted to attend at the discretion of White Pine staff.

Here is a list of suggested gear for your child's time at White Pine. Please know that all of the information below is a guideline for gear. Our years of work with children and being outdoors have provided some insight as to what works well. However, we can will work with whatever you're able to provide.

Everyday Requirements

» Durable backpack, with multiple pockets and a place for a waterbottle

» 1 filled water bottle LABELED with your kid's name (This is one of the most frequently left-behind items, and we want it to return home with your kid!)

» Planetbox Rover stainless steel lunchbox (or similar durable lunchbox) LABELED with your kid's name

» Packed lunch (no refrigeration, boiling water, or microwave requirements)

» 2 healthy snacks (no refrigeration, boiling water, or microwave requirements)

» Change of clothes - 2 sets

» Plastic bags to transport soiled clothes

Warm Weather Suggestions

» Sport Sandals with an ankle strap, that allows feet to breathe and get wet

» Hunter or Bogs Boots (Much higher quality than standard rain boots, and great for muddy days)

» Sun hat (NOTE to Woolly Bears and Tree Frogs families: please get a hat that can be secured under the chin and also does not slide down over the eyes, a frequent problem with hats. Without the attachment under the chin, the hat has a tendency to slide off or get pulled off by a tree branch or brush, and sometimes get lost in our explorations.)

» Rain pants to keep legs dry on rainy, muddy days (NOTE to Woolly Bears and Tree Frogs families: Suggested brands are Tuffo Muddy Buddy Coveralls, Oakiwear body suits, or Polarn O. Pyret waterproof suspenders. These tend to stay put more easily, keep out more rain, and allow for longer, more comfortable play.)

» Waterproof light jacket with a hood

» Sunscreen or Bug Spray (White Pine staff will not reapply these products to campers)

Cold Weather Suggestions

» Carhartt Bib Coveralls, lined or unlined. These allow kids to stay warm while keeping their arms free for activities. Because sparks can fly while practicing fire-starting, bibs made from non-synthetic material, like Carhartt, are safer and last longer. The sparks can cause tiny holes in synthetic material, which turn into bigger holes during play.

» Carhartt coat. Windproof, water-resistant. Again, non-synthetic will last longer while practicing fire-starting.

» Insulated waterproof boots, such as Kamik, Boggs or Vivobarefoot.

» Merino wool or synthetic polyester base layers

» Waterproof gloves, such as Polarn O Pyret, that are long enough to be secured over the jacket to prevent snow from collecting at the wrist

» Merino wool socks, such as Smartwool (anything itch-free)

» Balaclava, neck gaiter or ski mask

» Warm hat that covers the ears

How to Layer for Cold Weather

» Base Layer: worn next to the skin, keeping the body warm and dry, wicking away any moisture. Merino wool or polyester are the recommended fabrics. Cotton is never recommended as a base layer as this fabric actually traps the moisture next to the child's skin making them cold. Don't forget the feet when thinking about base layers! We recommend having a few pairs of merino wool socks. The same applies to the head; a thin merino wool beanie is perfect as the first layer on the head and can easily be layered over with a jacket hood.

» Mid Layer: the mid layer acts as extra insulation between the base and the outer layer. Think fleece zip up jacket or sweater or lightweight puffer jacket here. In terms of the mid layer bottoms, choices include loose knit Merino wool leggings or mid weight fleece pull-ons.

» Outer Layer: this is the layer that keeps the weather out and the warmth in! Think insulated, waterproof snowsuits or snow coats and snow pants. In rainy weather, rain gear will be considered an outer layer.

## Snacks and Lunch

Please pack hearty snacks and lunch for your child. If your child has a severe allergy, please make note in your registration form.

## Labeling Items

Please send ALL items labeled with your child's name. We want all of your child's belongings to return safely each day.

# HEALTH AND SANITATION POLICY

## Illness

To reduce incidents of illness, please keep your child at home if a fever is present (100.4°F or higher), has a persistent cough, has vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24-hours or if the child has open sores associated with Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease. Children must be fever free for 24-hours before coming to camp. We trust your judgment on keeping your child home should they be exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, including headache, lethargy, and body aches.

## Water

Please have your child bring a filled, reusable water bottle in their backpack each day. We have filtered water available to refill as needed.

## Sunscreen or Bug Spray

If sunscreen or bug spray is sent with your child, White Pine staff will not reapply throughout the day.

## Handwashing

We will regularly encourage group handwashing sessions before eating snacks and lunch. Staff will also encourage handwashing after using the restroom.

## Toilets

All participants must be able to independently use the toilet during class. Staff may assist younger children if needed.

Our campus has indoor restrooms that are available to our students when close-by. If out in the field, we also offer children the chance to urinate outside near a designated tree/bush at least 100 ft from water and in an adequately private area.

## Comfort

We will be outside in all weather, so please ensure your child is prepared. Please let us know if you need assistance with acquiring appropriate gear for your child.

Teachers will be mindful of temperature and precipitation, as well as of the physical and emotional state of the children. A tarp may be used in the event of hail or heavy downpours in the field.

# RISK MANAGEMENT

Our outdoor sites are evaluated often for possible hazards including but not limited to: heavy, dead, overhanging branches; damaged trees; high or dangerous water; and, evidence of human disturbance (trash, vandalism, etc.). Elements of the site that are deemed hazardous will be mitigated through removal, avoidance, or cancellation of class if needed.

## Student Medications

Emergency medication such as epinephrine injectors and rescue inhalers must be kept by the student they are prescribed to and must be able to use them on their own. For other medications, arrangements will need to be made with the White Pine Leadership team and Instructors on a student-by-student basis.

## Climbing

Children are permitted to climb on tree branches the same size or bigger than the width of their arm. They must be able to reach that height by themselves (teachers will not lift them up to a place that they cannot reach themselves). Climbing is limited to 20 feet above the ground.

## Exploring

Site boundaries are clearly communicated to the students before and during each class. This means that children are always directly in sight of a teacher. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that children do not accidentally stray from the group. Students who deliberately run from or leave the group after a maximum of two "warnings" will be asked to withdraw for safety reasons (a "warning" consists of sitting down with the student and working to understand the root of the flight behavior). Teachers will work with the student to develop ways to mitigate the flight behavior, including incorporating caregivers into the discussion.

## Harmful Insects and Toxic Plants

Ticks: Unfortunately, like much of the Midwest, there are ticks (including deer ticks which can potentially carry Lyme disease) in Indianapolis. We strongly suggest that families become familiar with guidelines recommended by public health authorities for prevention, monitoring, and when to seek medical attentions not only for ticks but other biting insects: https://www.in.gov/health/idepd/zoonotic-and-vectorborne epidemiology-entomology/zoonotic-diseases/lyme-disease/

Poison Ivy: Instructors and students train in our herbalism and foraging guilds, forming close relationships with all of our local toxic and nontoxic plants. We regularly warn our campers about exposure to poison ivy, an abundant, native plant in Indiana. We

inspect our teaching areas for hazardous plants, including poison ivy, regularly and warn our campers about exposure. Purdue Extension also provides information on poison ivy: https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ho/ho-218-w.pdf

## Wild Edibles

Teachers will explore many different wild edibles with children (dandelions, blackberries, and chickweed, for example). As part of this exploration, children are taught to never eat anything from nature without properly identifying it, or without permission from an adult.

## Fire

Fire is an integral part of the White Pine curriculum. Safety around fire includes several rules. With few exceptions, fuel or other items placed in the fire stay in the fire. Thick pants such as Carhartt jeans or bibs and closed toed shoes can reduce risk around fire, but are not required.

## Tools and Knives

Tool usage is also integral to the White Pine curriculum. All students wishing to utilize a tool must receive specific instruction and approval before usage is permitted. Knives used for carving are only allowed once a safety test has been mastered. Students misusing tools and knives will receive coaching or lose privileges depending on the severity of the safety breach.

## The Wapahani (White) River

Visits to the Wapahani River can be a daily part of the White Pine day. We take water safety very seriously and our staff go through extensive training. Our policy is one patrol (10 students, 1 instructor and 1 assistant) per class at the river at a time; there are no large groups or whole class trips to the river. Students are not permitted in or near the river when it is above normal flow due to health and safety concerns. Due to the hydrology of this urban river, entry into the river is only permitted during low flows. When students are allowed in the river, White Pine policy is to allow students to wade or sit with footwear, in water no deeper than the student's knees. Splashing and water fighting are also not permitted because of the risk of water entering a student's eyes, mouth, and nose. Life Jackets are required for all students boarding watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards. Instructors and leadership make very conservative judgment calls on allowing any river activity.

## Safe Places and Pick-ups

White Pine has several volunteers, elders, and instructors that live within several blocks of the White Pine Rocky Ripple Campus. In the unlikely event of a hostile Human Factor or unanticipated Severe Weather, White Pine staff are trained and

instructed to move their students to one of these off-campus safe places to seek shelter until the threat has dissipated.

## Field Point Archery

All White Pine staff teaching or supervising archery activities with field points and bows exceeding 25 pounds of pull are Certified Level 1 Archery Coaches from USA Archery.

## Foam Arrow Wars

Foam Arrow Wars is an archery tag game where students utilize low-poundage bows (less than 25 pounds of pull) and foam-tipped arrows. All participants must wear full face mask protection when playing Foam Arrow Wars. Headshots and close-range shots are not permitted. Students and staff regularly inspect equipment for damage.

## Severe Weather

When severe weather is forecasted, excursions beyond the immediate vicinity of the White Pine campus are curtailed. White Pine staff make conservative judgment calls on permitting excursion activities with the threat of severe weather.

## Student's Wellbeing

White Pine Wilderness Academy reserves the right to cancel Forest School or After-School Shikari Sessions at the discretion of the teachers should they determine that the wellbeing of their students is compromised for any reason.

# INCLEMENT WEATHER

## Class Cancellations

White Pine is a year-round school. We have worked hard to create reasonable and steadfast weather safety policies to keep our students and teachers safe. Weather cancellations are rare, but will be announced via BAND by 7pm on the night before class. Weather-related cancellations are out of our control, and we are not able to provide refunds or credits due to cancellations.

## Extreme Heat

If dangerous heat indexes or air quality warnings are issued, we may cancel class for the day.

Please note that pickups may be required earlier based on teacher evaluations of each student's wellbeing. Notifications for early pickup will be done through a phone call, text, email or through BAND.

# EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

All White Pine staff must maintain a current CPR and First Aid training, or more advanced training such as Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder. Regular training and refreshers on the White Pine EAP (Emergency Action Plan) will be conducted during Staff Meetings. All Staff are responsible for knowing and following emergency procedures.

## Emergency Action Plan

Our EAP follows a progressive coded system that rates the severity of the incident. Responses range from treat and release, back-up assistance or emergency response. Parents/guardians will be notified any time it is determined that assistance is needed. Full Copies of the EAP are available to parents upon request.

## Scenarios

All Lead Instructors are trained to respond to the following possible EAP scenarios: First Aid, Storms, Missing Camper, Aggressive Camper, Human Factors, and River Rescue.

## Communication

All White Pine instructors and leadership staff carry a fully charged cell phone when leading groups away from the immediate vicinity of the White Pine campus. We utilize the Zello app which has no range limits for effective team communications.

## Accidents/Injuries

EAP protocol is followed in any accident or injury incident.

## Tornado
Staff have been trained in severe weather and tornado drill protocols. We use our cinder block permanent structure as shelter in the event of a severe weather warning.

## EpiPen/Inhaler
If a student utilizes these medications then they will remain with the student throughout the school day.

## First Aid Kits
There are substantial First Aid supplies located on our campus. All instructors carry Field First Aid Kits when leaving the campus for other outdoor spaces during excursions.

# OTHER POLICIES

## Background Checks
Any individual who applies to work or volunteer within any White Pine Wilderness Academy youth program must undergo a criminal background check. If an individual's background check reflects certain criminal record information for a current or prospective employee, White Pine may deny or terminate an employee's or volunteer's involvement. Prospective employees are required to complete background check authorization forms and show proper identification prior to their start date. White Pine reserves the right to recheck background information for an employee/volunteer at any time during the employee/volunteer's time with White Pine.

A person's background check information is kept strictly confidential. In the event that an employee has criminal record information reflected on his or her background check, the employee will be informed of the finding and provided with a copy of the report.

## Drug and Alcohol Policy
White Pine Wilderness Academy prohibits the use, influence, possession, sale, purchase, or distribution of any controlled substance or illegal drug by any employee during work hours. Use of or being under the influence of alcohol is prohibited when staff and volunteers are in direct supervision of youth. The illegal use of prescription

drugs is also prohibited. Use of tobacco is not permitted inside any White Pine vehicle, building, or facility.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

White Pine Wilderness Academy is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer, committed to providing a discrimination and harassment-free workplace. It is White Pine Wilderness Academy's policy and practice to ensure that all terms of employment, including application for employment, hiring, promotion and/or advancement opportunities, compensation, training, termination, and any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment are provided without regard to race, color, national origin, citizenship, age, religion, gender and gender identity (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, protected genetic information, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

As an Equal Opportunity employer, we prohibit discrimination against or harassment of employees based upon any protected class, including race, color, national origin, citizenship, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, protected genetic information, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Discrimination or harassment, in any form, on the basis of an employee's protected class status, is against the law and violates the policies of White Pine.

If you experience or witness harassment or discrimination in the workplace or otherwise become aware of it, report it immediately (orally or in writing) to a member of the North Team.

It is unlawful and against our policy to retaliate against individuals who complain of

harassment or discrimination or to retaliate against those who cooperate with, or participate or assist in, an investigation of harassment or discrimination. You can raise concerns and make reports of harassment or discrimination without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

All reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be investigated. If White Pine Wilderness Academy determines that prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred, appropriate corrective and/or disciplinary action will be taken. Any employee who has participated in prohibited discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy

Besides being illegal, child abuse and neglect interfere with healthy child development and later achievement in life. State requirements may differ, but states in which reporting suspected abuse is mandatory usually include child care personnel. Child care staff and parents should be aware of reporting requirements and procedures for handling reports of child abuse and neglect. Information on where to call and how to report abuse and neglect should be posted so it is readily available to parents and staff. All observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be

immediately reported to the Child Protective Services hotline: 1-800-800-5556, no matter where the abuse might have occurred.

Any member of the White Pine Team will call to report suspected abuse or neglect. All staff involved in the reported incident will follow the direction of Child Protective Services regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, staff will follow the guidance of Child Protective Services regarding notification of the child's parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected child abuse will not be discharged for making a report, unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.

Signs of suspected child abuse or neglect will be recorded in accordance with the White Pine EAP.

If a staff member is suspected of abuse, parents or legal guardians of suspected abused children will be notified by the North Team immediately after contact with Child Protective Services is made.

Parents or legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the North Team so that they may share any concerns they have.

Staff who are accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave without pay, pending investigation of the accusation. Such staff may also be removed from the group and given a job that does not require interaction with children. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the Child Protective Services investigation is complete.

Staff found guilty of child abuse will be immediately dismissed. When this policy applies: whenever any staff member has reason to suspect that any child on the premises of this child care facility may have been abused or neglected by anyone.