



Farmschool at Vrindavan Farm — Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Farmschool?

Farmschool is an immersive learning experience rooted in land, season, food, ecology, and community. Children spend their days outdoors engaging directly with the rhythms of the land through observation, movement, storytelling, cooking, sowing, harvesting, building, art, and seasonal work.

Rather than separating learning into subjects, we approach the land itself as the classroom.

Is Farmschool a camp?

No.

While Farmschool is joyful and adventurous, it is designed as a learning environment rather than entertainment programming. Activities emerge from seasonal cycles, real farm work, ecological observation, and long-form engagement with place.

Children are invited into life-based participation, not simply recreation.

Do parents need to attend Farmschool?

Yes — parent participation is an important part of Farmschool culture.

We believe the presence and energy of adults help shape the emotional and social environment alongside the children.

While parents do not need to attend every session, we invite at minimum two parents from the larger group to remain present during each Farmschool alongside the farm team. This helps create a grounded, attentive, and connected adult-child ecosystem.

My child has never been to a farm before. Is that okay?

Absolutely.

Many children arrive with little or no prior exposure to farms, mud, insects, rivers, animals, or outdoor experiences. Farmschool is designed to gently orient children into the space. We do not expect prior knowledge or experience — only curiosity and openness.

What does a typical day look like?

No two days are exactly alike because the farm itself changes constantly with weather, season, harvests, and ecological activity.

A day may include:

- Nature walks and observation
- Seed work and planting
- Harvesting and food preparation
- River exploration
- Art and handwork
- Stories and reflection
- Cooking over fire
- Free outdoor play
- Seasonal farm tasks
- Quiet rest and unstructured time

Children move between structured activities and spaciousness throughout the day.

Is there a curriculum?

Yes — though it may look different from conventional schooling.

Our curriculum is seasonal, experiential, and place-based. Learning emerges through direct relationship with:

- Soil

- Water
- Seasons
- Seeds
- Food systems
- Forest ecology
- Cycles of growth and decay
- Community participation
- Craft
- Manual work

Children develop observation, resilience, collaboration, ecological awareness, sensory engagement, creativity, and practical skills through lived experience.

What age groups attend Farmschool?

Open-enrollment groups typically include mixed ages within a broad range. We intentionally maintain a mixed-age environment because it encourages collaboration, leadership, empathy, and peer learning.

Older children naturally begin taking on leadership and mentoring roles, while younger children often learn through observation, imitation, and participation alongside them.

Activities are adapted according to age, energy, and developmental readiness.

Will my child be safe?

Safety is central to how we hold the space.

At the same time, Farmschool is not a risk-free environment — nor do we believe children benefit from over-controlled experiences. Children interact with natural terrain, tools, weather, insects, water, and physical activity under attentive guidance.

We focus on helping children develop awareness, judgment, confidence, and respect for the environment rather than removing all challenge from their experience.

Who will supervise the children?

Farmschool is facilitated by the Vrindavan Farm team and two or more parents from the Farmschool community.

Rather than operating through a strict instructor-student hierarchy, we hold the space through attentive participation, observation, and relationship-building. Children are guided throughout the day, while also being given room to explore, make decisions, collaborate, and build independence.

Facilitators remain actively present during activities involving tools, water, fire, climbing, cooking, or movement across the farm.

My child is young / doesn't eat easily. Will that be a problem?

Many young children take time to settle into new environments, rhythms, and food spaces — especially when outdoors, active, and away from familiar routines. This is completely normal.

We create calm, unhurried meal environments and gently encourage children to participate in the process of food itself — whether through harvesting, washing, cooking, serving, or simply observing. Often, being involved in the experience helps children become more open to eating.

That said, we do not force children to eat.

For children of 5 years and younger, or children who are still highly dependent on familiar routines around food, we strongly encourage a parent to remain present at Farmschool. A familiar adult often helps children regulate, settle, eat comfortably, and transition into the environment with greater ease.

Parents are welcome to participate fully, or simply remain nearby while allowing the child to engage independently at their own pace.

We also ask families to communicate any important food preferences, allergies, sensitivities, or concerns with us beforehand. If needed, you are welcome to send familiar home cooked meals. Please note, we discourage packaged foods.

What if my child is shy or takes time to warm up?

That is completely okay.

Many children need time before fully engaging in a new environment. We do not force participation. Children are allowed to observe, move at their own pace, and gradually build trust with the space, facilitators, and group.

Often, quieter forms of engagement become deeply meaningful over time.

What if my child has special needs?

We welcome children with different learning styles, sensitivities, and support needs. However, because Farmschool takes place in an open, dynamic farm environment — with mixed-age groups, outdoor movement, uneven terrain, water, tools, and shifting activities — we are not currently equipped to provide one-on-one therapeutic or specialized care independently.

For children who may require additional emotional, behavioral, physical, or learning support, we ask that a parent or dedicated caregiver accompany them throughout the session.

This allows the child to participate meaningfully and comfortably while ensuring they have the continuity, familiarity, and individualized support they may need within the Farmschool environment.

We encourage families to speak with us openly beforehand so we can understand your child better and determine together whether the experience is a good fit.

Is Farmschool very physically demanding?

Children are active throughout the day and spend most of their time outdoors. There may be walking, climbing, carrying, squatting, digging, river play, or farm tasks depending on the season.

That said, activities are paced thoughtfully and children are encouraged to listen to their bodies.

What are the stay and sleeping arrangements?

Farmschool stays are simple, comfortable, and rooted in the experience of being close to the land.

Children alongside the adults stay in our two-bedroom family home. Beds are prepared for each individual in community-oriented accommodations. The intention is not luxury, but warmth, rest, safety, and immersion in the rhythms of the environment.

Typically children are grouped by gender. Parents, siblings may create exceptions to this format. For younger children, children attending for the first time, or children who may need additional emotional support overnight, we strongly encourage a parent to stay on the farm as well.

What should children wear?

We will send out a season-specific packlist before each session. In general, we recommend:

- Clothes that can get muddy, stained, or wet (4-5 pairs)
- Comfortable, easy-to-remove footwear with grip (crocs are super)
- A swimsuit
- A water bottle
- Depending on the season - rainware / sweater / hat

The farm is a living landscape. Children should arrive prepared to fully engage with it.

What kind of food is served?

Meals are vegetarian, simple, seasonal, nourishing, and largely centered around food grown on the farm or sourced locally.

Children are often involved in aspects of harvesting, preparing, or understanding the food they eat.

Are devices allowed?

No personal devices are allowed during Farmschool.

One of the intentions of the space is to help children reconnect with sensory experience, attention, conversation, and the natural world without digital interruption.

How much free play is there?

We deeply value unstructured exploration because it allows children to build imagination, social negotiation, observation, confidence, and relationship with place.

Some of the most meaningful learning happens during unscripted moments. At times, we intentionally weave spaciousness into the day. At other times, we recognize that these moments arise naturally, and our role is simply to step back and allow them to unfold.

For example, an activity may begin with collecting mangoes. Yet in the midst of that experience, we may find children drawn toward climbing the tree itself. Rather than rushing them back to the original task, we often create space for that exploration to occur in its own natural rhythm.

Will parents receive updates during the program?

We understand that, especially in the beginning, parents may feel concerned about their child being away in a new environment. We are happy to share a few photographs or videos from the day's experiences. That said, our primary focus is on being fully present with the children rather than constantly documenting or communicating updates throughout the day.

Parents are welcome to participate in every Farmschool. However, for parents not physically present at Farmschool, we discourage ongoing communication with your child during the program, as it can interrupt their process of settling into the space, relationships, and rhythm of the day.

In the case of an emergency, we will contact you immediately. Likewise, if you have an urgent need to reach your child, you may reach us without hesitation.

Beyond that, we follow a simple philosophy: no news is good news.

What happens in case of an emergency?

Farmschool is hosted by on-site facilitator, **Gaytri Bhatia**, who is a trained Wilderness First Responder and emergency response trainer. Our approach begins with careful assessment—distinguishing between situations that require immediate intervention and those that allow for consultation.

In the case of a life-threatening emergency, necessary action will be taken immediately in the best interest of the child.

For non-emergency situations, we will communicate promptly with the parent. Any further course of action will be guided in consultation with the parent.

A detailed emergency protocol will also be shared.

What is the intention behind Farmschool?

At its heart, Farmschool is an invitation:

- To slow down
- To develop relationship with land
- To experience life at source
- To connect with nature
- To cultivate hands-on life skills
- To recognize connection to the whole
- To cultivate attentiveness
- To rediscover wonder, participation, and belonging

We are less interested in producing outcomes, and more interested in helping children form meaningful relationships with the living world around them.

What if my child comes home muddy?

Then they probably had a good day.

Who can we speak to if we have questions?

We are happy to discuss any questions in detail. You can contact the founder directly: Gaytri Bhatia 900 434 9733 | vrindavanfarm@gmail.com