



**NORTH STAR**  
COOPERATIVE MICROSCHOOL

# **Member Handbook**

2025-2026



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Contact



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[Northstarmicro.org](http://Northstarmicro.org)



[Northstar\\_microschool](https://www.instagram.com/Northstar_microschool)

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**Welcome to North Star Cooperative Microschool!**  
**Our story is one of freedom, flexibility and togetherness**

**North Star Cooperative Microschool is located on 76 acres of Biodynamic farmland, forests, creeks and wetlands.** Our program values each child's unique interests and contributions by providing a flexible, multi-choice educational experience built on **family collaboration and strong community bonds**. Through immersive, place-based learning and cooperatively hired tutors, educators and mentors, we empower **children of all ages** to become thoughtful land stewards and engaged members of the Southern Willamette Valley.

## **Vision**

We believe education lies in nurturing adaptability, critical thinking, creativity, and uniquely human skills. Our vision is to provide **opportunities for children to discover their own inner compass that guides them to their unique skills, interests, and passions.**





# About Us

North Star Cooperative believes education is most influential when based in connection and purpose. North Star is a cooperative microschool where children grow through meaningful, personalized learning, in a small family-centered environment.

## What is a Microschool?

### **Personalized Learning**

Smaller class sizes and collaborative planning allow for more tailored learning experiences. A ratio of no more than 8 students to each guide.

### **Increased Flexibility**

A microschool offers a more flexible approach to education, allowing students to spend time with a diversity of programs offered in our community. Choose to attend 1- 4 days a week.

### **Socialization and Community**

Microschools provide opportunities for social interaction among families, including our seasonal potlucks and parent led field trips.

### **Shared Resources:**

Families can share resources like curriculum materials, time and expertise.

### **Collaboration**

Families can share the work of homeschooling, giving more time and energy to individual parents.



# General information



## Location

76 Acres in Cottage Grove, OR

## Calendar

Our year is divided into Autumn and Spring semesters with an extended winter break to give families time for winter/holiday travel and to give us all that deep winter rest during the darkest days of the year.

AUTUMN SEMESTER: September 8th- December 18th

SPRING SEMESTER: January 12st- June 4th

## Hours

Monday thru Thursday 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Extended care 8:00-9:30 and 3:30-4:30 pm

(an additional tuition of \$15 per day for extended hours)

The safety of all children is critical for drop off and pick up time. You are welcome to park in the driveway. Please ensure you enter and leave the permits slowly.







# Curriculum

Our curriculum is a blended approach of experiential and place-based learning, designed to support children in courageously asking questions, critically thinking, engaging, and discovering their sense of self and infinite potential. We prioritize HOW we learn and WHY its important.

## Applied Academics

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Welcome to our learning environment where Math, Literacy, and Social Studies come to life! Our experienced educators plan engaging daily lessons that connect to monthly themes and hands-on projects.

We believe in the power of living books, which are read aloud multiple times a day to foster a sense curiosity and a love for literacy.



## Land Stewardship

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Our 76-acre biodynamic landscape allows education and land stewardship to go hand in hand. Here, we explore rich ecosystems of forests, creeks, wetlands, and farmland, as we ask questions and discover the importance of tending to our place in the world.





## Holistic Skills

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Discover the joy of creativity through Farm to table arts, hand crafts, woodworking, natural building, gardening, plant identification and uses, and business entrepreneurship, all thoughtfully woven into our daily rhythm.



## Arts & Movement

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Each session starts with guided breathing and stretching to prepare our bodies and minds. Then, we challenge ourselves with various skill practices and movement activities, encouraging students to step out of comfort zones and explore exciting new skills like freestyle football juggling, circus arts, climbing, and hiking. We wrap up with a cooperative game!



## Spanish Immersion

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Through playful exploration, oral activities, hands on experiences and explicit instruction, children will be taught by an experienced bilingual guide, building a strong foundation of language skills that will benefit them for years to come.



All communication to parents will be in English, No Spanish experience required.





## Daily Rhythm

Approximately two-thirds of our day is spent outdoors, with our custom-built North Star Drawing House serving as a warm, intentional space for research, design, and crafts. Well-being is our top priority; **daily mindfulness routines, playful exercises, and a focus on children's interests ensure they feel physically, mentally, and emotionally supported and ready to reach their full potential.**

We recognize that in today's world, deep connection to place must be balanced with fluency in the digital tools that shape our future. At North Star, students use technology with purpose—to document learning, communicate ideas, research real-world questions, and collaborate with others near and far. Technology is not a replacement for learning, but a tool that enhances it, connecting students' lived experiences on the land with a broader global context. Technology is thoughtfully woven in as a bridge between experience and expression.

### **9:30 - 10:00 am Morning Rhythm**

Student arrival, greetings, and gear unpacking (backpacks, yoga mat, snacks, water bottles)  
Check in's and overview of the day

### **10:00-11:00 am Movement Practice**

Students will develop healthy movement habits like meditation and yoga. Fun skills will follow including freestyle football juggling, circus arts, climbing and hiking. Practicing fundamental movement skills that require coordination, balance and flexibility encourage children to discover their bodies capabilities.

### **(Snack)**

Students bring snacks from home to eat whenever they feel the need to.

### **11:00-12:00 pm Land Stewardship**

Gardening, nature investigations, animal care, and seasonal land projects. An explicit Literacy or Numeracy lesson will be done during this time.

### **12:00-2:00 pm Farm-to-Table Lunch and Nutritional Studies:**

An organic, vegetarian lunch is provided each day. An explicit Social Studies or Numeracy lesson will be presented after lunch, which can include a cooking class.

### **2:00-3:00 pm Group Project Work**

This is a focused time for narration, recitations, group read-a-louds, hand crafts, group project planning and research. On Thursdays, we will have music lessons!

### **3:00-3:30pm Closing Rhythm**

Students will pack up their gear and projects, clean up, and have free time to play before pick up.



# Monthly Themes

## **SEPTEMBER:**

Know thyself & Each Other + Winter  
Gardening

## **OCTOBER:**

Natural Building & Forest Ecology

## **NOVEMBER:**

Food Preservation & Music  
Appreciation

## **DECEMBER/JANUARY:**

Poetry and Art Appreciation

## **FEBRUARY:**

Around The World On A Plate

## **MARCH:**

Sustainable Fashion + Wool Works

## **APRIL:**

Wetlands + Watersheds


## **MAY:**

Pollinator Pathways + Botanical Study

## **JUNE:**

End Of Year Celebration & Community  
Service Project





# Health & Safety



## First Aid & CPR

Educators responsible for your child's safety and care will be trained in Standard First Aid & CPR.

## Safety Checks

All educators and classroom volunteers will be required to provide North Star with background screenings.

## Pick-up Policy

Children will only be permitted to leave with an authorized person for pick-up as indicated on the registration forms. If there are any changes to individuals picking up your child, we need to be informed by email, text or phone call before they arrive.

## Emergency

In the case of an accident or injury, the parent will be contacted immediately. For any serious situations where medical attention is required, 911 will be called.

## Code of Conduct

We strive to nurture a community rooted in kindness, curiosity, and cooperation.

Children Are Expected To:

- Treat peers, adults, animals, and the environment with respect and care
- Use kind words and peaceful hands
- Participate in activities while honoring personal boundaries of others
- Ask for help when feeling overwhelmed or unsure

Adults Are Expected To:

- Model respectful communication, empathy, and patience
- Support cooperative values by fostering inclusion, curiosity, and calm leadership
- Uphold a safe and supportive environment for all children, even when volunteering or visiting
- Speak to children (not about them) in ways that uphold dignity, even when correcting behavior
- Violence, bullying, discrimination, or shaming—by any member of the community—will not be tolerated.







# Lunch

## MONDAY

Millet, Beans, Steamed Seasonal Veggies, Hard Boiled Egg  
optional cheese or ranch (made with avocado oil)

## TUESDAY


Stone Soup, Shredded Lettuce, Soft Cucumber &  
Radish Rounds, Whole Grain Biscuits and Butter

## WEDNESDAY

Cooked Brown Rice, Yams, Potatoes & Carrots,  
Optional Hard Boiled Egg with Ranch or Cheese  
and Fresh Seasonal Fruit on the side

## THURSDAY

Black Bean Patties, Sautéed Seasonal Veggies,  
Fruit & Oat Muffin: (lightly sweetened with fruit,  
honey, or maple syrup) and Greek Yogurt



**Everyday we offer a hot vegetarian lunch (V). If your student needs a (DF) dairy free, and/or (GF) - gluten free lunch please let us know so we can provide you with a appropriate menu option! Our meals are focused on providing Fiber, Fat, Protein (FFP).**

The menu is designed to appeal to a wide range of palates. Repeated exposure (through a weekly menu rotation), and dining with peers who are all enjoying the same food together, encourages children to eat this wholesome, nutritious food!



# Family Participation

## What does it mean to be a Member of North Star Cooperative?

### Seasonal Celebrations

To keep families informed and involved, a newsletter is sent out on the 1st of every month that includes updates on students' projects, upcoming program events, and highlights the seasonal rhythms of the farm.

Throughout the year we gather for seasonal potlucks, each event families bring a dish to share. The potlucks are a time to reconnect, reflect, and revel in the learning and growth that happens. Students also get the chance to showcase what they've been working on at the farm!

### Educational Support at Home

- Take an active and inquisitive role in your child's learning, supporting their interests and questions.
- Continue independent studies at home, providing opportunities for your child to dive deeper into subjects they are curious about and participating in at North Star.

### Daily Student Preparedness

Ensure your child arrives each day:

- Properly dressed for the weather
- With healthy snacks, a water bottle, and any necessary supplies
- Well-rested and ready to engage





# Volunteer Roles

As a core tenet of our cooperative model, **parent involvement is vital to the success and richness of the North Star program. We encourage families to contribute a minimum of 6 hours per month.** Below are the detailed roles parents can choose from, allowing you to leverage your skills and passions to directly enrich our children's learning experience.

**A Sign-up list will be sent out with each family's tuition payment on the first of every month.** Please select the role you think your family can best provide that month. Each month you will be able to select a different role, or the same role depending upon your desire. Any purchases made for the needs of North Star, must be pre-approved by our Program Coordinator and will be reimbursed each month.

## Classroom & Grounds Coordinator

To ensure that our learning environments and immediate outdoor spaces remain clean, organized, and conducive to a healthy and productive learning experience. This role directly supports the sustainability of our beautiful facilities at Branch Road Farm.

## Community Engagement Coordinator

To foster connections between North Star Cooperative Microschool and the wider community by identifying, recruiting, and coordinating volunteer mentors who can enrich our program and seasonal themes with their unique skills, stories, and expertise.

## Project Supply Coordinator

To ensure that educators and students have all necessary materials and resources for ongoing projects, academic work, and independent research. This role supports the seamless flow of our flexible, project-driven curriculum.

**Please refer to the volunteer role form for more detailed descriptions and examples of each position.**

## Field Trip Coordinator

To plan and organize enriching monthly field trips that directly align with the current North Star themes, subjects, or projects. This role extends learning beyond the farm, connecting students with the wider Southern Willamette Valley community and natural ecosystems.

## Nutrition Coordinator

To ensure students receive nutritious, delicious, and on-site prepared lunches that align with the farm-to-table ethos of North Star Cooperative, while also offering opportunities for students to engage in food preparation and nutritional studies.

## North Star Parent Mentor

To provide direct, in-person support within the learning environment, assisting Mentors, guiding students, and contributing to group projects or offering specialized skill-based instruction. This role is for parents who wish to be actively present and engage during school hours.



# Enrollment

## Orientation

### Children must be...

- Independent with personal care (e.g., toileting, washing hands, eating )
- Able to dress and undress (e.g., transitioning from outdoor gear to indoor clothing)
- Able to spend at least 2/3 of the day outside in four seasons.
- Capable of walking long distances (with breaks) carrying a small backpack that holds their personal items.



## Clothing

**Because we have a diverse age program, we host a free swap closet for families looking to hand down gently used gear their student no longer fits into.**

1. Waterproof Jacket: For rainy weather and outdoor farm work.
2. Thermal Wear: For colder weather (e.g., base layers, leggings).
3. Sun Protection Hat: Wide-brimmed hat to protect from the sun.
4. Gloves: For farm work, gardening, and cooler weather.
5. Socks: Wool or moisture-wicking socks to keep feet dry and warm.
6. Waterproof Boots: For walking through mud, creeks, wet grass, and outdoor farm work.
7. Extra Pair of Socks: Keep feet comfortable during outdoor activities.
8. Spare Clothes: Extra set of clothes (pants, shirt) for muddy or wet conditions.
9. Rain Pants (optional): For rainy, muddy days on the farm.

## Personal Items

1. Water Bottle: Reusable, labeled water bottle to stay hydrated throughout the day.
2. Small Backpack: To carry personal gear (extra layers, snacks, water bottle)
3. Soccer Ball
4. Yoga Mat: for outdoor wellness practice
5. Small First Aid Kit: families preferred methods for minor wound care.
6. (2) Wide Ruled Notebooks
7. (2) Three Hole Folders (with pockets)
8. Extra Large Utility Tote Bag with Metal Wire Frame & Reinforced Bottom board: for carrying and organizing projects, supplies, and materials to and from school
9. Nature Journal of child's choice (something special to write/draw in).





# Tuition

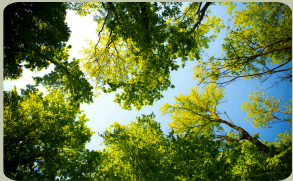
Our cooperative approach is effectiveness in fostering strong community ties and healthy relationships among our families. With the involvement of families, The North Star becomes a more dynamic, and enriching environment where learners thrive. Through community action, collaborative efforts offer valuable lessons on the power of teamwork and cooperation.

This model helps keep tuition lower than it would be otherwise. When families work together to do service for the school, it provides a more harmonious and thriving community. Each family contributes at least 6 hours of labor each month to care for our school, create community events, and manage school initiatives that otherwise we would have to pay for. Our aim is to ensure that our skilled and diverse community can actively participate in school activities and projects throughout the year. From our community events to class visits, our collaborative model exemplifies the continuous exchange of talents, interests, and expertise.



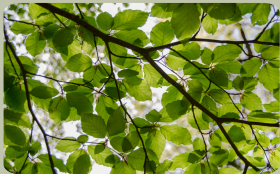
## 4 Days A Week

\$435 month



## 3 Days A Week

\$340 month



## 2 Days A Week

\$240 month



## 1 Day A Week

\$120 month

**Siblings receive a 15% Discount**

**Subscriptions on our website are automated monthly payments due on the 1st, from September through May.**

**Join our vibrant learning community!**

## Why not scholarships?

**We see that scholarship systems disincentivize people with fewer economic means from pursuing education in four ways:**

- Dependence on scholarships places undue uncertainty onto an application process.
- Scholarship-based systems create sticker shock while leaving the final price for any prospective student a mystery. This complicates decisions to apply.
- Scholarship-based systems devalue people with less economic power by asking them to prove themselves worthy. These people must work harder to apply.
- Scholarship-based systems can prejudice organizations against scholarship-seekers, because it requires greater administrative effort to process and review applications for scholarships.





## Registration

The member families recognize and affirm that homeschooling is a parent- directed educational choice. North Star Cooperative Microschool is established to provide a supportive community, facilitate collaborative educational endeavors, and share resources among its Member families. It is explicitly understood by enrolling your child that North Star is a supplemental and collaborative resource, and does not assume or relieve families of their primary and ultimate legal responsibility for education of their children.

## Visit [Northstarmicro.org](http://Northstarmicro.org) to Register

Step 1: Complete the sign up form to schedule a time to get to know our guides and tour the farm.

Step 2: Attend a seasonal family gathering to get to know our North Star Families.

Step 3: Create a user login at [northstarmicro.org](http://northstarmicro.org) and subscribe to a payment plan that best suits your families needs. You will need to fill out all the necessary enrollment forms before beginning the program.

**Registration is open ALL YEAR LONG!**

**Spaces are limited due to our low child to mentor ratio. When our program is full, we offer a waitlist.**