

# Northey Street City Farm Earth Kids Program

## Parents handbook

We are delighted that you have chosen to enrol your child / children into the Northey Street City Farm (NSCF) Earth Kids Program. In this handbook you can find all the information you will need to know about the program. For any further queries, please contact the Youth Education Coordinator at [education@nscf.org.au](mailto:education@nscf.org.au), or call the office on 3857 8775.

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### About NSCF

Northey Street City Farm (NSCF) is a non-profit community organisation situated on the banks of Brisbane's Breakfast Creek in Windsor. The farm has been developed for people to enjoy and participate in using the principles of permaculture. It is also intended to be a demonstration site where people of all ages can learn through practical, hands on experience.

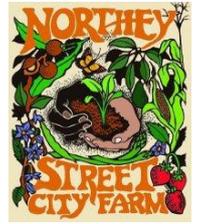
Our vision is "All living sustainably" and our purpose is to be an inspirational working model of a community-based urban permaculture farm which promotes and educates for sustainability.

### The NSCF Site

More than 1500 exotic and native fruit trees, shrubs and ground covers have been planted on our two and a half hectare site since its inception in April 1994. The farm includes kitchen gardens, market gardens, orchards, bush tucker area, wood lot and a revegetation zone along the creek. We also have chickens, European and native bees, worm farms and composting areas. On the Earth Kids program the children will get to discover all these parts of the farm.

## About the Earth Kids Program

The overarching goal of the Earth Kids program is about supporting kids to become 'nature smart' – to have the knowledge, understandings and skills to engage in creating a more sustainable world – in a fun and interactive way. It is an experiential program of outdoor discovery in which kids will learn about the animals and plants at the Farm through observation and supported questioning, explore Indigenous knowledge, experiment with Earth Arts and bushcraft skills, and put permaculture into practice.



Each Earth Kids program differs according to the seasons and to include a diversity of activities. Some of the activities will be:

Gardening – planting, harvesting, composting, bush tucker and learning about seasonal changes;

Bushcraft – building shelters, making string, making fires, knife skills;

Earth Arts – creativity using natural materials;

Indigenous understanding – storytelling and cultural sharing;

Earth connection – daily 'magic spots', mapping, wandering and other activities to support understanding of the web of life and the elements that all life is made of.

Children are expected to participate in the activities, though there is always an option for them to take time out in the quiet area to read, write, draw or lie down. Several afternoon sessions will have a few different activity options for the kids to choose from. A program will be sent to you a fortnight before the program begins.

The teaching approach that we use is based in the premise that nature is our best teacher, and is inspired by the 'coyote mentoring' approach as documented by Jon Young, Ellen Haas and Evan McGowan in the book 'Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature'<sup>1</sup>. See <http://coyotesguide.com/>.

Through the Earth Kids program, we will be introducing some of the core routines of nature connection as described in the Coyote's Guide. Some of these core routines include sit spots (or 'magic spots' as we call them), story of the day, bird language, expanding our senses, exploring field guides and mapping.

## Our Earth Kids Team

Our Earth Kids team consists of a group of people who are experienced in working with children here at the farm and have undertaken training in nature awareness, permaculture and/or bushcraft. We will also have some special guests visit to offer different experiences, such as Indigenous culture and specialist bushcraft activities. Staff members have experience in working with children visiting the farm for school excursions, and running activities like composting, worm farming, planting, propagation and Earth Arts with these groups.

## Bookings and cancellations

Bookings for the Earth Kids program are made via Eventbrite, and there are links for this on the NSCF website <http://www.nscf.org.au/earth-kids-holiday-program/>. We have a sliding scale payment system to make the program accessible to all.

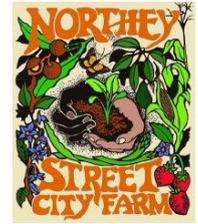
*Cancellations:* We understand that sometimes circumstances change and participants may not be able to attend a course or workshop that has been paid for. If a booking is cancelled less than one week prior to course commencement, program fees are non-refundable. Exceptions may be made in cases of serious illness, or emergencies. Once the program has commenced, course payments are not refundable. However, if participants need to withdraw from the course due to illness or emergency, exceptions may be made.

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<sup>1</sup> Young, J., Haas, E., & McGowan, E. (2010). *Coyote's guide to connecting with nature, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. Shelton, Wash: OWLLink Media.

## Scholarship places

We have 4 scholarship places of \$165 (GST inclusive) per child in every program for children whose parents are Health Care Card holders. We are providing these places on a first come, first served basis. Once interested parents have been sent the parents handbook and enrolment form, they will have two weeks to enrol and make the payment to hold the place for their child. They will also need to show their Health Care Card. After a fortnight each place will be opened up to the next person on the list. Children who have not attended the program before will be prioritised over those that have.



## Clothing and sun safety

We ask that children wear comfortable clothing which will enable them to participate in activities. Clothing should be sun safe (e.g. no strappy tops). We recommend the wearing of legionnaire or broad brimmed style hats and these should be worn at all times the children are not undercover. Covered footwear must be worn - sneakers are the best option. Children should bring good wet weather gear each day as we will be outside when it is not raining too heavily. All belongings must be clearly named.

NSCF supplies SPF 30 broad-spectrum sunscreen for all children attending the Earth Kids program. Children will be reminded to apply sunscreen appropriately and regularly.

## Personal effects

We supply all the requirements for a range of appropriate activities for children, limiting the need for personal belongings to be brought from home. Our Earth Kids program is committed to providing time away from screens. We discourage children from bringing any electronic toys, such as iPads and iPods. We cannot guarantee the safety of these expensive items.

## Food

It is requested that food bought from home does not contain nuts in case some children attending have severe allergies. In the event that a child brings food containing nuts to the farm, staff will collect, store and return the food to the family at the end of the day.

Using the permaculture principle of 'produce no waste', we ask that parents provide low/ no waste lunches for their children. Children will compost food waste, and in doing so, learn about the nutrient cycle and the role of compost in improving soil and growing plants.

NSCF will provide fruit for morning tea. Water is available to children at all times. No microwaves are on site so children need to have cold lunches.

## Enrolment and orientation

Parents/Guardians are required to complete an Enrolment pack before any child is able to attend the NSCF Earth Kids program. A meeting with staff is available to you upon the enrolment of your child.

The children are given an orientation to the site on the first day, including the emergency procedures.

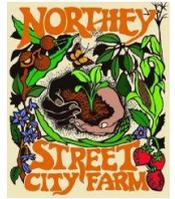
## Inclusion

At NSCF we recognise that each child and family are unique in their own right and strive to include young people and families from all walks of life, celebrating different abilities, cultures and interests. Each family are required to provide relevant information about their child/ren by filling out the Earth Kids enrolment form in full. If your child has additional support needs, whether it is due to a medical need, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse background, or any other reason, you are required to organise a meeting with the Youth Education Coordinator to discuss how the program may be adapted to your child's needs. Please note that the main Earth Kids area is not wheelchair accessible.



## Parent Volunteering

Volunteers are a valued and integral part of NSCF. We have several volunteer places on the Earth Kids program, and parents and guardians are welcome to apply. Volunteers need to abide by the NSCF Code of Conduct and will be inducted into safety procedures. Parent volunteers who volunteer for the week can enrol two children at the discounted price of \$150. Unfortunately it is not possible for volunteers to be looking after younger children not in the Earth Kids program while volunteering. Volunteers will have an opportunity to learn about the content in the program, including approaches to nature connection, permaculture, Earth Arts and Indigenous culture. If you are interested in this, please email [education@nscf.org.au](mailto:education@nscf.org.au).



## Child Protection

NSCF regards its role in the protection of children in our care as of the utmost importance. NSCF has a range of policies and procedures to keep children and young people safe. Details of these policies are available on request, along with how you can report child safety concerns. All staff have been made aware of and trained in the NSCF Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy. There will be at least 2 staff members with the children at all times regardless of the number of children attending. All staff working with the children will have current blue cards (working with children check). At least one staff member will be present who holds a current approved first aid qualification, including emergency anaphylaxis and asthma management training. We will have a quiet tent for any kids who are feeling overwhelmed and / or needing time out to themselves.

## Site safety issues

NSCF endeavours to create a safe, secure environment where children feel welcome and at ease. Some important safety issues relating to the site include:

- \* There is no fencing at farm, - there are a couple of quiet roads and a creek bounding the farm. Children must be able to obey instructions not to cross the road on their own and to stay out of the water.
- \* There are European honeybee hives on site. If any child is known to be allergic to bee stings, it is essential that you notify us of this in the enrolment form.
- \* There are plenty of trees on site and we allow kids who are confident climbing trees to do so. Please let us know if you do not want your child climbing trees

## Arrivals and Departures

NSCF has strict procedures regarding the arrival and departure of children and particularly the persons who may collect children from the site.

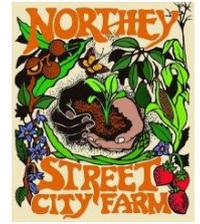
The Earth Kids Program runs from 9am to 3pm, with drop off from 8.30am to 9am and pick up from 3pm to 3.30pm. **No child will be admitted prior to 8.30am.** All children are to be signed in and out on the Attendance Register by the parent/guardian/staff member or other person whom the parent/guardian has nominated on the Enrolment Form.

If a child is sick or unable to attend for some reason, please be sure to notify us of this on the morning of that day by calling the Youth Education Coordinator mobile number, which will be provided to you before course commencement, or emailing [education@nscf.org.au](mailto:education@nscf.org.au).

When the authorised person has signed in the child, NSCF takes responsibility for the child until the child is signed out by the authorised person. Children must be accompanied to the signing in area (to the southside of Edgar Street) and signed in by their parent/guardian. NSCF will not take responsibility for children whose parents/guardians allow them to walk/ride unsupervised to the farm.

If a child booked in to NSCF has not arrived within 15 minutes of expected arrival, and we have not been notified of their absence, staff will contact the relevant emergency numbers on the child's enrolment form. If no contact is made via emergency numbers, advice will be sought from Police and/or Department of Child Safety.

If a person is to collect a child who has not previously been nominated on the Enrolment Form i.e. in the case of an emergency, the parent or guardian may give permission by email (as the first preference) or by telephone for an alternative person to collect the child. If the request is made via telephone, two staff members will hear the request and the request will be entered onto a File Note with two staff signatures. The parent/guardian must provide the name and description of any such person concerned and proof of their identity will be required on arrival.



Whilst every care will be taken to prevent a child being taken by an unauthorised person, there may be instances in which we cannot prevent this from happening. Our staff cannot expose themselves or the other children to an unacceptable risk of personal harm. If a child is taken the Police will be called immediately.

### Late collection and fees payable

Please contact the Youth Education Coordinator as soon as you are aware that there may be a problem with the on-time collection of your child. If at closing time children have not been collected, parents/guardians will be contacted on the most recent numbers and if necessary, the emergency numbers provided. If no contact is made via emergency numbers, advice will be sought from Police and/or Department of Child Safety. **For parents/guardians picking up children late, a fee of \$15 per block of 1-15minutes will be charged.**

### Runaway children

Children must stay in the NSCF grounds. If a child chooses to leave the NSCF grounds and designated areas, staff will assess the situation in relation to duty of care to the individual child and the remaining group of children. Runaway children's parents/guardians will be contacted immediately, as will police if deemed appropriate by the Youth Education Coordinator.

### Illness and Injury

Whilst NSCF actively strives to provide a safe environment and the avoidance of harm, there may be occasions when accidents or injuries occur. In the case of a minor illness or injury, a staff member will attend to the incident and an Incident Report will be completed. Where a more serious incident occurs, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted immediately.

Qualified staff will administer basic first aid only. When necessary to seek medical attention immediately, an ambulance will be called and contact will be made with the parent/guardian. Where possible a staff member will travel with the child in the ambulance.

Parents/Guardians, in consultation with the Youth Education Coordinator, are to ensure that each child with a diagnosed medical condition i.e. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc. has all the information required to address the condition. If your child requires an EpiPen or Ventolin they should bring one to be kept safely by staff in case required.

*Infectious diseases:* NSCF strives to remove immediate and/or serious risks to the health of children from possible cross-infections, by adopting appropriate procedures for dealing with infectious diseases\*. Accordingly, all people including children, staff and parents/guardians with infectious diseases will be excluded from the program. NSCF refers to the National Health and Medical Research Councils 'Recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions for schools, pre-schools and child care centres (December 2005)' to determine exclusion periods. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the Youth Education Coordinator of any infectious disease that their child or other immediate family members may be suffering. NSCF is responsible to report this to parents/guardians of other children in this service as appropriate, but having regard to the privacy of individuals concerned.

If a child becomes sick we will require you to pick them up.

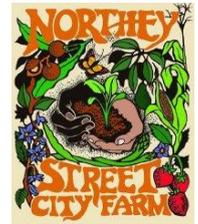
In the event of head lice, the parent/guardian will be called and encouraged to collect the child immediately. The child can only return to the service once the head lice have been treated.

\* When infectious disease is referred to in this document, it means communicable diseases and notifiable diseases (see Australian Government Department of Health at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) and National Health and Medical Research Council at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)).

## Medication

In the interests of health and wellbeing of the children, staff will be permitted to administer medication to a child only if it is: a) prescribed medication; b) in its original package with a pharmacist's label which clearly states the child's name, dosage, frequency of administration, date of dispensing and expiry date; and c) accompanied by a letter of authority from the parent/guardian.

All medication is to be given to the NSCF staff and no medication is to be stored in a child's school bag, or with the child's parent if they are volunteering on the program.



## Information handling

To protect children and better provide its services, NSCF seeks and deals with personal and sensitive information relating to families, children and others. NSCF respects the privacy of all individuals and seeks only information which it needs for these purposes and handles that information with confidentiality and sensitivity and in keeping with legal requirements including the Privacy Act.

## Suggestions, concerns and complaints

We welcome ideas and suggestions for future programs; please get in touch with the Youth Education Coordinator regarding this. NSCF will seek to resolve all genuine and reasonable complaints in the most appropriate way possible in consultation with the complainant. Discussions with the complainant are not to be conducted in the presence of the children, other staff or parents/guardians and heated discussions are to be avoided as far as possible. If it is not appropriate for the complaint to be made to the Youth Education Coordinator, the complainant may contact the Education and Support manager by emailing [educationandsupport.mgr@nscf.org.au](mailto:educationandsupport.mgr@nscf.org.au) or calling the office on 3857 8775.

## Contacting us

We have a landline or mobile phone on which parents/guardians can contact us at any time.

Tuesday to Thursday it is best to call the office on 3857 8775. On Mondays and Fridays you can call the Youth Education Coordinator on the mobile number that will be given to you before course commencement.

***We are really looking forward to meeting your child/children  
and inspiring them to connect with and care for the Earth!***