

# Great Oak Farm

From Small Acorns Grow Mighty Oaks.

## Welcome to Great Oak Farm

We are a home-educating, family-owned 15-acre homestead where we grow our own vegetables, care for our livestock, and work the land together as a family.

We run dedicated Farm and Forest Home Education Days, offering a calm, welcoming space where children learn naturally through farm life and Forest School experiences. Our sessions are gently structured, child-led, and focused on curiosity, confidence, and connection with the outdoors. Community is at the heart of everything we do. We are passionate about creating a consistent and friendly environment where children and parents feel comfortable, supported, and able to build meaningful friendships with like-minded families. We believe time outdoors gives children freedom to explore, imagine, and grow. We value true free play, hands-on learning, and the simple joy of being outside. Muddy boots are always a sign of a day well spent. By blending everyday farm life with Forest School, we provide opportunities for practical learning, problem-solving, resilience, and confidence-building in a real and meaningful way.

## Boots On, Let's Dive In

At Great Oak Farm, learning begins the moment the boots go on.

Each day is full of opportunities to explore, create, build, grow, and discover. Children are encouraged to get involved, ask questions, and learn through hands-on experiences across the farm and woodland.

We follow the rhythm of the farm and the interests of the children, allowing curiosity to lead the way. Muddy hands, teamwork, imagination, and laughter are all part of the experience.

## Our Values

At Great Oak Farm, our values are rooted in kindness, respect, and curiosity. We believe in giving things a go, supporting one another, learning through real experiences, building confidence and independence, working as a team, and connecting deeply with nature and each other. Above all, we value the joy of learning together in a welcoming outdoor community. We weave together the principles of Waldorf, Forest School, and Charlotte Mason, creating a nurturing, nature-rich environment that nurtures imagination, hands-on exploration, time outdoors in all weathers, and the development of good habits, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning.



## A Typical Day

We begin the day together with a warm tea and time to settle in, say hello, and prepare for the day ahead. Each day is shaped by the season, weather, farm, and children's interests. Activities may include animal care, gardening and growing food, woodland exploration, Forest School sessions, creative projects, foraging, and free play. Children are encouraged to follow their curiosity throughout the day.

We pause for a shared lunch each day, giving everyone time to rest and recharge. Children bring a packed lunch, and we ask that you gently encourage your child to sit and eat for at least 15 minutes. Eating a good portion of their lunch helps children feel settled and ready for the afternoon. Younger children may need a little longer, and we support good table manners in a calm and unhurried way.

We encourage children to respect their food, recognising the care and effort that goes into growing and preparing it. Through our time on the farm, they begin to understand where food comes from, often starting as a seed, and to value it more deeply.

## Session Details

**Thursdays weekly - 10:00am to 2:00pm - Great Oak Farm, Brighton Road, Hurstpierpoint, BN6 9EF**

We close for January to allow the land and farm to rest. Term dates may not always align with local school terms. Please see our website for details. We welcome electively home educated children from newborn to 11 years old. All children attend with a parent creating a supportive, family-focused environment.



## Booking Information

To support consistency and community, places are booked in blocks rather than as drop-in sessions. This helps children settle, build friendships, and benefit fully from the experience.

Block booking also allows us to plan activities around the seasons, the farm, and the needs of the group.

Full booking details, availability, and payment options are available via [www.greatoakfarm.uk](http://www.greatoakfarm.uk)

We operate a waiting list. If sessions are full, families are welcome to register their interest and will be contacted when spaces become available. Places are limited and often fill quickly, so early registration is recommended.

### What to Bring

Please dress children in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that can get dirty.

We recommend:

A packed lunch

Waterproof coat and trousers

Sturdy footwear or wellies (always closed toes)

Warm layers in colder months

Sun protection and hat in warmer weather

Refillable water bottle

Spare clothes, including gloves in winter

Long trousers in all seasons to protect the legs from stings, bites and scratches.

We provide tea on arrival and soup for an afternoon snack. Families are encouraged to bring a snack for the morning.



### Allergies and Medical Information

Please inform us of any allergies, dietary requirements, or medical conditions before attending.

Where needed, we will work with families to make reasonable adjustments to ensure a safe and inclusive environment.

Families remain responsible for their child's medical needs during sessions. We operate a **nut free** environment.

### First Aid

A trained outdoor first aider is present at all sessions. We can provide first aid support if required and will communicate with parents promptly and calmly in the event of any incident. If medication may be required during a session, please speak with us in advance.

### Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of all children and families is our highest priority. All sessions are led by a facilitator holding an enhanced DBS check. Children attend with their parent, who remains responsible for them throughout the session.

## Health and Safety

We provide a safe, well-managed environment where children can explore and learn freely. The farm and woodland are regularly maintained, and any hazards are identified and managed promptly. Clear guidance is given throughout all sessions, and families are always welcome to share any concerns. While we do everything we can to keep everyone safe, the woodland setting and our livestock naturally come with some risks, and we gently remind children to stay aware of their surroundings as accidents can happen in outdoor environments. Our animals are livestock rather than petting farm animals, and they are cared for as part of a working farm, so children are encouraged to observe them respectfully and keep a safe distance. For everyone's safety, please do not enter any animal enclosure unless a member of the team is present. We aim to balance safety with meaningful, hands-on experiences that allow children to learn, grow, and build confidence in a natural setting.

Food, drinks, and sticks must not be taken into the animal enclosures.

## Behaviour and Expectations

We encourage kindness, respect, and care for others, animals, equipment, and the environment. Parents remain responsible for guiding their child's behaviour throughout the session. We support gentle guidance, positive role modelling, and open communication to help children develop confidence, respect, and self-awareness, and to make thoughtful, caring choices.

We ask that children do not bring toy weapons or items that may encourage rough or aggressive play, as these are not appropriate in a shared farm environment. We also ask that screens and children's mobile phones are not brought to the farm. We ask that no photos or videos of children or staff are shared on social media or online without prior consent. This helps us protect everyone's privacy and ensures that images are only used in ways that are agreed and appropriate. Please speak to a member of staff if you are unsure about what has been consented to.

As team members' children may also be present during sessions, we ask all families to help maintain a calm, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere, supporting a positive and balanced group environment for everyone.



## Code of Conduct

We ask all families to treat others with kindness and respect, always supervise their children, and care for the animals, equipment, and environment. Families are also expected to follow facilitator guidance and communicate respectfully with both the team and other families. These expectations help us maintain a welcoming, safe, and inclusive community for everyone.

### Parking Information

Upon arrival, please enter the active farmyard with care, as heavy machinery may be in operation. Parking is available on the left, midway down the farmyard, opposite the largest barn. Please park considerately and be mindful of tenants working in the surrounding buildings.

The farm gate will be open between 9:50am and 10:15am. If you arrive after this time, the gate will be closed for safety reasons. Please use the call button and wait for a member of staff to come and open the gate for you. The gate will remain closed for the duration of the session and will be opened again at the end of the day.

A flushing toilet is available in the farmyard, and we recommend using it before heading into the woodland area. We remain on site throughout the session, and the farm gate is kept closed at all times for the safety of the animals and children.

If you see a foot dip at a gateway, please use it as directed. Please ensure all gates are closed securely behind you after passing through.

## Thank you for reading our Parent Handbook.

We are delighted to welcome you to Great Oak Farm and to share our farm, woodland, and community with your family. We look forward to learning, exploring, and growing together, and to creating many happy memories outdoors. If you have any questions, please get in touch. We can't wait to see you on the farm.

Farm Manager: Terri Smithson- 07481102880

