

Godly Influenced Fine Arts Training (G.I.F.T.) Family Handbook

Purpose

G.I.F.T. is a Christian co-op enrichment program that offers fine arts classes to homeschoolers of all ages (pre-school through adult).

Our mission is to come alongside homeschooling families, supporting the education they already provide, with a variety of enrichment classes.

Overview

G.I.F.T. meets on Thursdays for 24 weeks, from September-December (12 weeks) and February-April (12 weeks). Classes are offered from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Families have the freedom to set their own schedule and to determine the length of their day at G.I.F.T. Private classes will extend to 6:00 p.m. as needed.

A parent (or guardian) is required to be on site with children at all times. However, you and your student are free to come and go throughout the day. A nursery is available for use with children ages 2 and under. Parents are required to remain in the nursery with their child the entire time.

Management Structure

G.I.F.T. is managed by a volunteer board. All board members sign a Statement of Faith. Board positions require a passing vote of confidence by the current board members. There is no compensation for services.

Parental Involvement at G.I.F.T.

Parental involvement is foundational to the success of G.I.F.T. and is one of the requirements to join the co-op. Without a cooperative effort on the part of parents/guardians, their children and teachers, G.I.F.T. would not be possible.

Parents/Guardians are responsible to adhere to the code of conduct and all policies. In addition, parents/guardians are responsible for the following:

1. Onsite Presence

- While your children are in the building, a parent/guardian must be present the entire time.

2. Supervision of Children

- Parent/guardian needs to be aware of where their children are at all times.
- Children that are not in class must be supervised at all times by their parent/guardian.
- Parents are responsible for picking up their child/children from any 6 and under classroom.
- If a parent/guardian is teaching, volunteering in a class, or unable to supervise their child, they must arrange for another adult to be responsible for their child(ren).
There is a Temporary Guardian form that must be signed in these instances.

3. Service Requirement

- Parents/Guardians are required to fulfill two volunteer positions.
- Families must fill a minimum of two volunteer positions (2 hours during the G.I.F.T. day).

- All families with enrolled children must fulfill their volunteer requirements to maintain membership in G.I.F.T. (Teaching a class does fulfill 1 hour of this requirement.)

Steps Needed to Join G.I.F.T.

1. Review the information, policies, and family handbook found on the website.
2. Attend our annual open house to meet the leadership team, teachers, and families. This is the best way to determine if the G.I.F.T. community will be a good fit for your family. Tours are also available only while G.I.F.T. is in session (September-November and February-April),
3. All new families are required to go to the G.I.F.T. website and request membership in the group. You will receive a confirmation email once your information has been accepted. All returning families will use the same login information from previous years.
4. Pay the registration fee and complete all relevant online forms. These can be found on the website by clicking on Forms.
5. Complete your family profile on the G.I.F.T. website. Please ensure that any allergies or health issues as well as any developmental or behavioral issues are detailed in your family profile. These will be provided to teachers before their first day of class. You may also speak with teachers directly regarding any of these issues.
6. Once steps 3 through 5 are verified by the G.I.F.T. Registrar, your account will be opened for class registration. Please allow 48 hours.
7. Register for classes and volunteer positions.

8. Attend orientation at the beginning of September. This is one of the requirements to attend G.I.F.T.

Register for Classes

On our website, click on "Class Registration" and you will see the current class matrix. Click on any class name to see a description and pricing. On this same page, you may enroll your child(ren) in the desired class.

However, some classes may not be available for new students if the class is full. In this instance your child will be placed on a waitlist.

G.I.F.T. reserves the right to refuse admission or revoke membership at the discretion of the Board, at any time.

Families Personal Information

- It is our commitment to handle all personal and confidential information in a professional manner. Contact the registrar if you have specific requests regarding your family's personal information.
- All families, guardians and teachers will be background checked.
- Details on family profiles are only viewable by G.I.F.T. board members and teachers.

G.I.F.T. Fees

1. Registration Fee of \$160 per new family and \$150 per returning family
 - Due at the time of registration and is non-refundable
 - Please note that you cannot register for classes until your registration fee is paid.

- This fee is per family, not per child
- This fee can be paid via G.I.F.T. website or a check paid in person or by mail to P.O. Box 1055, Elgin, IL 60121

2. Yearly Semester Fee of \$90.00 per family

- \$45.00 due in September and \$45.00 due in February
- Non-refundable
- This fee can be paid via G.I.F.T. website or check.

3. Supply Fees

- Due at time of enrollment in a class. Please note that the full supply fee is due regardless of enrollment date. Each class you choose to register for will have its own supply fee. Yearly supply fees are determined by each individual teacher.
- These fees cover the cost of materials that the teacher will purchase for use in the class. Any additional supplies needed, but not included in the supply fee will be outlined in the course description. You will need to cover the cost of these additional supplies.
- Supply fees need to be paid within 2 weeks of registering. The supply fee works as a deposit and will hold your child's place in the class.
- These fees are non-refundable unless the class is cancelled before classes start.
- Checks for supply fees should be made out to each teacher directly.
- Each teacher will have a preferred method of communication stated if G.I.F.T. is not in session. Please contact the teacher direct for payments in this instance.

4. Class Tuition

- Due the first Thursday of G.I.F.T. classes from September through April (no classes in January).
- Each class you choose to register for will have its own monthly fee. Tuition is set by each individual teacher based on a 24-week school year. Monthly tuition payments are calculated by dividing the total class fee into 7 equal payments.
- Teachers are independent contractors and are not employed by G.I.F.T. You, as the family, are contracting a specific teacher to teach your child a specified class. As such, tuition must be made payable to the teachers.
- Teacher folders, to place tuition payments in, are available at the Board table. The Board table is located in the Hub.

5. NewTek Merchant Fees (G.I.F.T.website payments)

Families will be charged a processing fee when using this service. (Currently the fee is 3%).

Disputed Charges

Charges can be voided without incurring any fees if G.I.F.T. treasurer is notified by 10:00 PM on the day of the disputed charge.

Families will incur the following charges for disputes that are not able to be resolved by 10:00 PM, on the day of the charge. These charges are assessed to G.I.F.T by NewTek.

Chargeback Fee (disputed fee with NewTek) - \$30.00

Retrieval Fee (disputed fee with NewTek) - \$15.00

ACH Reject Fee (ex: rejected due to lack of funds) - \$25.00

G.I.F.T. does not store or use any cardholder data. All transactions are through the Homeschool Life website link and processed by Newtek.

Dropping a Class

1. Please notify the teacher directly and let them know when your child's last week of class will be.
2. The class must be dropped online using the G.I.F.T. website, under the "Manage Class Registrations" tab.

Steps to Follow in an Absence From G.I.F.T.

Please contact all of your children's teachers so they will be aware of your child's absence.

Please arrange coverage for your volunteer positions using the G.I.F.T. website forum. Please contact the volunteer coordinator.

G.I.F.T. Class Cancellation

- G.I.F.T. may cancel all or some scheduled classes due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Closure will be determined as soon as possible by the Board Members.

- Cancellation of classes will be posted on the G.I.F.T. Forum and Facebook page by 7:00 a.m. Direct contact with families and teachers may be made by email to the primary email provided during registration.
- Cancellation of G.I.F.T. due to snow days will not be refundable for up to 2 snow days per year.

Teachers

Teachers are independent contractors and all payments will be made payable directly to the teachers.

Teachers need to be 18 years of age to teach a class at G.I.F.T.

Teachers will notify the G.I.F.T. Teacher Liaison and families in their classes directly if unable to hold class.

- Please see each individual teacher for their policies for their class. This includes late enrollment, absence policies, tuition payments and any late fees.

Communication To Families

The Board utilizes various communication tools such as the website, emails, Facebook, written notifications, G.I.F.T. forum postings and in person.

The board may not always be able to effectively communicate to families who do not have an email address or a phone number listed with G.I.F.T.

- It is your responsibility to keep your profile up-to-date in order to receive communications.

Private Lesson Policies

- Parents must sit in on private lessons, as volunteer assistants are not present for these lessons. It is not the responsibility of the GIFT board, or the private lesson teacher to provide supervision for a child in this setting.
- Private lesson teachers have their own policies in regards to missed lessons and cancellations. Please follow up with individual teachers.

G.I.F.T.'s Financial Policies

- If you are unable to attend on a tuition payment day, please contact the teacher for other arrangements. Teachers may have late fees in their individual policy.
- Please make each check payable directly to the teacher. Post-dated checks cannot be accepted.

Families will reimburse G.I.F.T. for any bank fees incurred as a direct result of a returned check for registration and semester fees.

- G.I.F.T. and teachers reserve the right to request alternate forms of payments after a returned check.
- Semester fees that are over 7 days late will be assessed a \$10 late fee, payable to G.I.F.T. Unpaid semester fees may result in a disruption in the ability to attend classes.
- The \$160 registration fee will be assessed in full for all new families, regardless of date of enrollment. However, the semester fee may be prorated depending on when enrollment occurs.

- Cancellation of G.I.F.T. due to snow days will not be refundable for up to 2 snow days per year.
- There are no adjustments for family absences and there are no tuition refunds.

Safety and Security Policies and Procedures

The safety of G.I.F.T. families is of the utmost importance to our organization. As such, the policies and procedures have been put in place to best ensure the safety and security of our families. Please refer to the Safety and Security Policies and Procedures form you filled out at registration.

For the safety of our allergic students, NO foods containing tree nuts, peanuts, or their oils or milks are permitted.

G.I.F.T.'s Code of Conduct

All parents and students are required to electronically review and sign a Code of Conduct form before registering for classes. If you would like, please print a copy for your records.

- We encourage students, parents and teachers to first communicate with each other regarding concerns or behavior issues. More details about the handling of conflict between students and teachers is located in the G.I.F.T. Code of Conduct.

- The Board is here to assist the teachers and families with resolving conflicts in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- Dress code: We ask that all attendees at GIFT be modest, neat, and appropriate in how they present themselves. This provides our community with lots of choice and opportunities to wear stylish and comfortable clothing while maintaining a standard of respect for self and others in our environment. The purpose of a dress code is to provide our community with guidelines that will be life-giving to all who attend and develop the character trait of self-discipline. Parents are the best partners in the dress code process. We ask that you have conversations with your child before they head out the door to GIFT. If there is a question of whether something meets the dress code or not, err on the side of choosing to not wear it to CO-OP and save the outfit or clothing for a non-GIFT time.”

Expectations for Property Usage at the Church on the Rock

G.I.F.T. rents the property from the Church on the Rock. The church has made the following requests as a condition of our rental agreement. We ask our families to follow these requests:

- The common area, located on the lower level, can be used by all families for work, games, and conversation. This area should remain free of any running, roughhousing or other activity that can pose safety concerns or could be distracting to the rest of the community using the space.
- All food and drinks need to stay in the common area.
Only water may be brought in the other areas of the building, unless approved by a board member.
- Adult presence is required in the kitchen when in use. Children are NOT allowed in the kitchen unsupervised.

- The nursery is available for children ages 2 and under. A parent/guardian must be present in the nursery with their child and must clean up after use.
- Do not climb trees, break tree branches, or otherwise harm any landscaping
- The church grounds and pavilion can be used by G.I.F.T. families with an adult present at all times.
- Please do not use grill or fire pit in the pavilion.
- Bathrooms usage at COTR; **Lower level bathroom** usage is for children. Adults are not to use this bathroom unless with their child/children. **First floor bathroom** usage is for adults. Children are not to use this bathroom unless with their parent.
- The elevator is available for special needs only. It is not to be used instead of the stairs.

End of day clean up responsibilities are listed in the clean up manual located in the Hub.