

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 Tuesdays for 28 weeks, from September through the beginning of May. Classes are offered from 9:00 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.

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 5 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 acting in accordance with formal by-laws. These by-laws are available for review at the Board Table on Tuesdays, along with all board meeting minutes and the annual budget.

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.

What is the importance of 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.

What is Parental Involvement at G.I.F.T.?

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.
- 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 at least two volunteer positions (2 hours during the G.I.F.T. day or 1 hour during the G.I.F.T. day and 1 committee).
- All families with enrolled children must fulfill their volunteer requirements to maintain membership in G.I.F.T. (Teaching a class does not fulfill this

requirement.)

How Does a Family Join G.I.F.T.?

1. Review the information, policies, and family handbook found on the website.
2. Schedule a tour or 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.
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 first clicking on Policies and then 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.

How do I 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.

G.I.F.T. has open enrollment throughout the year. However, some classes may not be available for new students if the class is full. G.I.F.T. reserves the right to refuse admission or revoke membership at the discretion of the Board, at any time.

How does G.I.F.T. handle my 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.

What are the fees?

1. Registration Fee of \$60 per new family and \$50 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 PayPal or a check paid in person or by mail to P.O. Box 1055, Elgin, IL 60121
- This fee helps to cover the operating costs of G.I.F.T.

2. Semester Fee of \$120 per family

- \$60 due in September and \$60 due in January
- Non-refundable
- This fee can be paid via PayPal or check.
- This fee helps to cover the operating costs of G.I.F.T.

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 the teacher.
- Checks for supply fees should be made out to each teacher directly. If G.I.F.T. is no longer in session, you will need to contact the teacher directly to see how they would like to receive payment.
- These fees are non-refundable unless the class is cancelled before classes start.
- 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.

4. Class Tuition

- Due the first Tuesday of G.I.F.T. classes from September through April
- Each class you choose to register for will have its own monthly fee. Tuition is set by each individual teacher based on a 28-week school year. Monthly tuition payments are calculated by dividing the total class fee into 8 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.

How do I drop a class?

To drop a class, please notify the teacher directly and let them know when your child's last week of class will be. In addition, the class must be dropped online using the G.I.F.T. website, under the "Manage Class Registrations" tab.

What should I do if we will be absent 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.

What happens if G.I.F.T. decides to cancel classes?

- 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. Except for cases of school closures for extreme cold, we follow the U46 District closings.
- Cancellation of classes will be posted on the G.I.F.T. website 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.

What are the teacher attendance expectations?

- Teachers will notify the G.I.F.T. Teacher Liaison and families in their classes directly if unable to hold class. Board members will assist if necessary.
- Tuition is planned to allow for one teacher absence per semester without adjustment.

How is information communicated to families?

- The Board utilizes various communication tools such as the website, emails, Facebook, written notifications, 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 answering machine.
- It is your responsibility to keep your profile up-to-date in order to receive communications.

What are the 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. Therefore, it is the **full responsibility** of the parents to either be present in the lesson or inform the teacher that they are choosing not to do so, at their own discretion.
- Private lesson teachers have their own policies in regards to missed lessons and cancellations. Please follow up with individual teachers.

- Both teacher and student are required to inform each other of any absence by 7:00 a.m. on the day of the lesson.

What are G.I.F.T.'s financial policies?

- If you are unable to attend on a tuition payment day, payments should be paid in advance or contact the teacher for other arrangements.
- 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. If a check is returned for two consecutive months, a cashier's check or cash will be required for the next three payments.
- If tuition payments are over 7 days late, teachers reserve the right to a late fee of \$10 which should be made payable to the teacher. Each individual class will be assessed a separate \$10 late fee.
- 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.
- Families that enroll in a class in the middle of the month will have their tuition prorated for that month.
- The \$60 registration fee will be assessed in full for all new families, regardless of date of enrollment. However, the semester fee will 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.
- Teachers are allowed one absence each semester without adjustment to tuition.

- There are no adjustments for family absences and there are no tuition refunds.

What are G.I.F.T.'s 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.

What is 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 communication form may be used if you seek further discussion.
- The Board is here to assist the teachers and families with resolving conflicts in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

What are the expectations for property usage at the Church of the Brethren facility?

G.I.F.T. rents the property from the Church of the Brethren. 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, rough-housing 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 on the tiled portion of the common area. Only water may be brought in the carpeted area, 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 5 and under. A parent/guardian must be present in the nursery with their child and should clean up after use.
- Do not climb trees, break tree branches, or otherwise harm any landscaping. Please keep children away from the memorial garden/patio located to the east of the building. No sports play is allowed outside.
- The church yard cannot be used by families for play or picnics.
- Please have students remain on the ground floor between classes.
- The staircases behind the kitchen and stage are not to be used.
- The elevator is available for special needs only. It is not to be used instead of the stairs.

Additional expectations are detailed in the Space Usage Guidelines for Highland Avenue Church of the Brethren.

