



Homeschool First Policy Manual

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WHO WE ARE

Name

Homeschool First, Inc. of Lynchburg, VA

Mission Statement

At Homeschool First (HSF), we are committed to helping every member grow into a whole person. We cultivate connection through community events, expand knowledge through academic pursuits, and inspire purpose through service opportunities that allow us to contribute to those around us. We are dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community.

Purpose

Our foremost purpose is to serve one another in all things. In support of that mission, we offer classes for preschool through high school, field trips, volunteer opportunities, and social and educational events for our members.

MEMBERSHIP

Requirements

1. Submit a completed application.
 - a. All individuals included in a family membership must reside in the same household.
 - b. Each family membership must accurately list all parents/legal guardians and their children.
 - o If children will be brought to co-op classes, field trips, or events by an adult other than the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) listed on the account, then those adults must be listed at the bottom of the account profile/membership application.
 - o All children who will be present in the building must be listed, even if they are not attending classes.
2. Agree, as a family, to adhere to all bylaws, Code of Conduct, and Policies of HSF and sign all required forms. These forms are included as part of the membership application process.
3. Each family must pay the yearly dues, as well as any teacher/class fees and/or activity fees;
 - a. Yearly membership dues are currently \$125. There is a non-refundable administration fee of \$25 for new members. Membership will open to new members in December and May (on a date set by the board) until the maximum number of memberships for the group has been reached.
 - b. Membership dues should be paid by May 10th. This ensures your family retains a spot in HSF once membership opens to new members.
 - o Members cannot register for fall classes until their membership is paid.
 - o Members who have not paid by August 1st shall be removed from HSF membership.
 - c. Refund policy: Full year membership dues may be refunded, minus a 10% administration fee, until the Monday of the first week of classes. After that date, no refund will be available. Half year membership dues are nonrefundable.
 - d. Teachers are paid directly in accordance with their class descriptions on the HSF website. This situation is an implied contract between parents and teachers, and parents are responsible for paying their tuition in full each semester before registering for the next semester's classes. Families will not be allowed to register for the next session unless all teachers are paid in full or otherwise compensated.
4. Each family will volunteer to serve the group. (See next section for volunteer opportunities.)
5. Each family must plan to participate in the mandatory yearly membership meeting and vote in annual Board elections.

Volunteering

If your child(ren) will be attending Friday classes:

- Your family must volunteer for one hour on Fridays. A list of [volunteer positions](#) are available for sign up on the HSF website. For questions regarding volunteering on Fridays, contact the Facility Committee <hsffacilityteam@gmail.com>.

Every family must volunteer in at least one of the following ways:

- Be a member of a committee that coordinates one of the functions of the groups (Events, Facility, Field Trip, and Classes; see more below)
- Help with an event, or
- Teach a class

Please be willing to help out our teachers by volunteering in the classroom, when necessary, or helping with your children, if asked.

Serving each other is the heart of our group. Please look for ways to serve each other.

HSF Committees

There are four committees to help organize various activities, classes, and facility maintenance. Each of these committees will have a chairperson and several committee members. Every committee chair will deliver a report on the work of their committee at the annual member meeting and at each meeting of the Board of Directors. Each committee will assist the webmaster by maintaining the portion of the website applicable to their committee. If anyone is interested in joining a committee, contact information can be found in the descriptions.

Events

The Events Committee will organize co-op wide events, as well as regular social events such as monthly game nights for teens, preteens and children through subcommittees. Some events are open to the public while others are exclusively for HSF member families. If you are interested in joining the Events Committee, please reach out to the committee chair at hsfeventsteam@gmail.com.

Field Trips

The Field Trip Committee will organize a variety of field trips throughout the year, designed for different age groups and budgets to ensure broad appeal among members. If you are interested in joining the Field Trips Committee, please reach out to the committee chair at hsffieldtrips@gmail.com.

Facility

The Facility Committee is responsible for maintenance of the current facility and for locating a new facility should the need arise. Maintaining the facility involves having a team of volunteers to help clean and organize the facility. This committee will also assist the committee chair with emergency plans and procedures. If you are interested in joining the Facility Committee, please reach out to the committee chair at hsffacilityteam@gmail.com.

Classes

The Classes Committee will organize classes for preschool through high school. The team will be responsible for maintaining the classes portion of the website, scheduling, and communication with the teachers. The Classes Committee will be responsible for communicating details about the annual Open House with the teachers. If you are interested in joining the Classes Committee, please reach out to the committee chair at hsfclasseseam@gmail.com.

Annual Member Meeting & Voting

Members are expected to participate in the mandatory annual membership meeting. Meeting information will be emailed to families using the email address on record with HSF. Members that do not participate in the Annual Member Meeting will not be permitted to renew their membership until membership opens to new members.

All members are expected to vote during the general election that takes place in April.

POLICIES

Code of Conduct

The success of our co-op depends on a strong partnership between families, therefore both parents and children are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

Member Expectations

1. Children will not be permitted to bully, punch, kick or, in any way, intimidate another child.
2. Running, yelling, and other disruptive or unsafe behavior is not permitted.
3. We expect students to be respectful to other children, to all adults (parents, teachers, volunteers, and church workers), and to the building we are using.
4. Students will remain on the facility premises, at all times, unless in the company of a parent/guardian or as part of an organized group or class.
5. No stealing. No vandalism. No wanton destruction of property.
6. Every family is responsible for the safety and behavior of their children when we are gathered for classes, events, or field trips.
 - o Parents are responsible for monitoring and disciplining their own children.
 - o Parents must be present while their child is attending HSF activities unless they have notified leadership of the designated adult that is responsible for their child(ren). This can be done by visiting the check-in table for Friday classes or communicating with activity leads for HSF activities, field trips, etc..
7. Please speak respectfully to each other; no name calling, profanity, cursing, or vulgar speech.
8. No member may attend classes or events while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Dress Code

1. Clothing must provide sufficient coverage with no visible underwear.
2. No clothing or other personal items (jewelry, backpacks, etc.) displaying profanity, vulgar language, sexually explicit content, or images that promote violence, illegal activity, or discrimination will be permitted.

Acceptable Use Device Policy:

To maintain a respectful, safe, and age-appropriate environment for all members of our co-op community, we ask that families and students adhere to the following guidelines regarding device use at all HSF related events on and off of CHUMC premises:

1. **No personal devices are permitted in the Nursery or Preteen areas.** These spaces are device-free to encourage interaction and safety. Exceptions will be made for Parent's use of personal devices and devices needed for medical reasons.
2. **Devices may not be used during class time unless explicitly permitted by the teacher** for educational purposes.
3. **Headphones must be worn when using devices in any public or shared spaces**, including hallways, classrooms (when permitted), and common areas, to minimize disruption.
4. **All content accessed on devices must be appropriate for all ages.** This includes videos, games, music, websites, photos and digital communication.
5. **Parents and guardians are fully responsible** for ensuring their student(s) understand and follow this policy at all times while participating in co-op activities.

Facility Usage and Security:

1. Our group must leave the facility that is hosting us cleaner than we found it and in good repair.
2. Our children must stay on the facility property unless leaving with a parent or as part of an organized group or class.
3. We will have periodic volunteer work days, depending on our host facility. Families are expected to attend and contribute.

For policies regarding failure to comply with the Code of Conduct, refer to the Accountability and Conflict section.

Class and Teacher Policies

Classes and Student Policies

1. A student or family should not attend classes or activities if they have:
 - o A fever of 100.4°F or higher or have had a fever within the previous 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - o Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
2. Inclement weather cancellations will be called based on safety considerations, common sense and our host facility. Cancellations for weather will be posted on our social media channels and by email. For scheduled events, notification will be sent on or before the day of the event. For classes, cancellation notices will be sent by 7:30 a.m. on Friday.
3. If a class is cancelled due to illness or an unplanned emergency, the teacher must notify the Classes Team and the enrolled families by email as soon as possible. The Classes Team will post a list of all class cancellations for that day through HSF communication channels.
4. An additional Friday is scheduled at the end of each semester as a designated make-up day. If HSF closes due to inclement weather or an event related to our facility, Friday in person classes will utilize this make-up day. Exceptions may be made for classes that have already met the minimum required instructional hours for the semester.

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5. If a teacher misses a class, the designated make-up day may be used if it is not needed for a weather-related closure. Otherwise, the teacher may schedule an alternate make-up class, issue refunds to affected families, or arrange for an HSF member to substitute. Families will be notified via email if a substitute teacher will be teaching the class.
 6. Classes are 50 minutes long, allowing for a 10 minute break between classes. (An exception to this is if a high school class is scheduled for a double block, for a total of 110 minutes.)
 7. Semesters will be 14 weeks.
 8. Children must remain in class until dismissed or removed by their parent or responsible adult.
 - o Parents of preschoolers and early elementary students (ages 7 and under) must take their children to class and come to collect their children at the end of class.
 9. Children ages 7 and under need to be with a parent, designated adult, or responsible older sibling when not in class.
 - o Nursery- Parents must remain with their children (ages 0-7 years old) in the Nursery.
 - o Pre-Teen Room- Students ages 8 to 12 are allowed to hang out in this room without a parent under the supervision of the Room Monitor. Please remember that students must follow the Room Monitor instructions or the privilege may be taken away.
 - o Teen Room- Students ages 13+ are allowed to hang out in this room without a parent under the supervision of the hall monitor. Please remember that students must follow the Hall Monitor instructions or the privilege may be taken away.
 - o Age exceptions to the above can be made on a case by case basis.
 10. Classes must be dropped within 24 hours after the completion of the second class meeting. Withdrawals submitted after that time are the responsibility of the full class balance. **The first tuition payment is non-refundable for withdrawals submitted at or after 12:00 a.m. on the calendar day of the first scheduled class meeting, regardless of the class schedule.**
 11. Any class registration after the start of the semester will require teacher approval. This request must be given to the teacher in writing. If the student is approved, the teacher will notify the Classes Committee to have the student added to the class roster.
 12. Class registration is restricted by ages set by the teacher. If a family would like to request an exception, the request must be sent in writing to the teacher of the class. Teachers will have the final decision on an exception being made. If approved the child will be added to the class by the Classes Committee.
 13. Alteration of a child's birthdate needs to be done only in circumstances of error, and changes are to be made by an admin of the system. **Birthdate changes made by a family, with or without mal-intent, are grounds for removal from the group.**

Teacher Policies

1. Class Submissions: New Class Submittals are due by February 1st for Fall Classes and October 1st for Spring semester of the following year. If interested, please submit your class proposal via the [HSF webpage](#). Classes will be considered based upon known interest, ages served, and time considerations. Contact any member of the Classes Committee if you want to discuss an idea!
2. Anyone wanting to teach a class must submit curriculum details to the Classes Committee to be reviewed for:
 - o A complete class description, including world view of the curriculum, class policies, etc.
 - o Scheduling considerations for age and space.
 - o Desires of members based on need/request.
3. Submission of a Class Proposal or Teacher Application does not guarantee approval.
4. A teacher's member account (either family or teacher only account) must be in good standing for their class to be added to the schedule.

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5. Existing HSF teachers with an established history of successful teaching in the organization will receive first consideration.
 6. Members are always given priority when considering class submissions. However, class proposals will not be considered until the member's family has been with HSF for at least one semester.
 7. Non-family member teaching applicants will be subject to an interview process and background check before consideration.
 8. Classes submitted after the class schedule has been finalized for each semester will not be considered until the following semesters.
 9. Class policies are set by teachers and may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - o Attendance
 - o Grading
 - o Discipline (ie. time-out, parent meeting, etc.)
 - o World view
 - o In-class prayer
 - o Homework
 10. Cancellation/Substitute Policy:
 - o If a teacher is going to be absent, they will notify a member of the Classes Committee.
 - o The teacher will communicate with parents if there will be a substitute, a make-up class offered, or refund issued.
 - o Only members of HSF will be allowed to be utilized as a substitute.
 11. Teacher Age Policy: Any Teachers under the age of 21 must have a parent volunteer (over the age of 21) present at all times in Class. This policy includes substitute teachers. This volunteer can be a student's parent or any other parent member of Homeschool First.
 12. Teacher Responsibility:
 - o Teachers are not to lock or block classroom doors at any time.
 - o We, as teachers, have a responsibility to leave our rooms better than we found them each day that we use them! Part of that goal is making sure that your class is respectful of the turnover time between classes. That time is for both the departing and incoming teacher. It is not extra cleaning time! It is the teacher's job to make sure that they allow for enough cleaning time at the end of each of their sessions. If your class produces a good amount of garbage then please bring the bag up to be disposed of.
 - o Art Teachers: Please be conscientious of the floors in the art room. You are welcome to store whatever cleaning supplies you are comfortable working with in the Art Room for you or your students to use. The Facility Committee is not responsible for cleaning these spaces. They take care of the common areas.
 - o Teachers are responsible for their own supplies. Please label any supplies left in classrooms. Students should use only the supplies provided by their current teacher unless permission has been given otherwise.
 13. Late Policy:
 - o It is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that classes begin on time. Teachers should plan to arrive on site 10-15 minutes before classes begin. If they have their own children to get situated before class, then that time might be greater.
 - o The ten minutes between classes is there to allow for set-up. Set-up should not extend well into the class period. Please prepare as much as possible before class time.
 - o If a teacher is going to be tardy for class, then they need to notify the Classes Committee as soon as they are aware of the situation. We will assign a responsible adult to keep the students safe and in the classroom until that teacher arrives.

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- Two tardies in one semester will result in that teacher's classes not being included in the following semester schedule. They may be reconsidered again in the future.
14. Teachers will fill out incident reports for any incidents that occur in their classrooms. Reports should be signed by family and a board member. A copy will be given to the family and stored in the HSF files. The HSF Incident Form can be found at the front table.
 15. Teachers are independent business owners and are not employed by Homeschool First. Teachers will have a signed independent contractor agreement on file with HSF. Teachers own their own classes and have the right to make their own policies for their class. Teachers have the right to accept or deny any student enrolled in their class. Any denial must be reported to the Classes Committee in writing and include a detailed explanation of the circumstances. The reason for the denial must be consistent with the organization's Bylaws and Policies. Teachers are bound to follow all applicable Homeschool First By-Laws, Policies and Code of Conduct.

Accountability and Conflict Resolution

Incident Reports

Incident reports will be filled out for any policy violations or injuries that occur during HSF activities. These reports will be given to the family involved to sign. A copy will be given to the family and stored in the HSF files. A copy of the HSF Incident Form can be found at the front table.

Conflict Management

Homeschool First recognizes that whenever people are working and learning in groups, conflicts will arise. These conflicts may occur between instructors, facility representatives, and/or members. Should a conflict arise, we ask that the following procedure be followed:

1. Wait 24 hours and see how you feel before acting.
2. Speak to the person directly in a private setting. For an issue with content or behavior management within a class, please speak with the teacher first.
3. If you cannot resolve the issue directly, speak to one of the board members (names can be found on the website) who will facilitate a meeting to resolve the issue following listed Disciplinary Guidelines (list will be provided at your request). The board will appoint three available board members to create a conflict resolution team for that specific issue. Please contact us by email (found on the website under "Contact Us").
4. If a resolution still cannot be achieved, then the aggrieved parties may seek an outside mediator, which will be at the parties' own expense.

Disciplinary Actions

If an offense occurs or if a member's actions significantly disrupt the normal operations of Homeschool First, the Board of Directors may initiate the disciplinary process on the family. If at least five (5) members of the Board of Directors determine that the family's continued participation may pose a risk to the safety, well-being, or orderly operation of Homeschool First, the family may be suspended from attending Homeschool First classes, events, and activities until the Board reaches a final decision about disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Process

1. If any disciplinary action is being considered, the family will be notified by email using the address on file. The family will be given a deadline to reply in writing to the email with any testimony or evidence they would like for the board to consider before making a final decision on disciplinary actions.
 - a. If removal from membership is being considered, the family will be invited to participate in a hearing before the Board of Directors.
 - i. The hearing will be held within fourteen (14) days of the email notification and shall require a quorum of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Board of Directors to be present.
 - ii. Following the hearing, the Board of Directors shall determine whether the family will maintain membership or whether their membership will be revoked. Revocation of membership shall require the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Board members present at the hearing.
 - iii. The family may choose not to attend the hearing. Failure to attend shall not delay the proceedings, and the Board may render a decision based on the information available. The family shall be bound by the Board's final decision.
2. The Board's final disciplinary decision shall require an affirmative vote of the board. The decision will be emailed to the family for signature.
3. A member family who has been issued a disciplinary action may appeal the Board's decision in accordance with the Homeschool First appeal procedures.

Appeal Process

Grounds for appeal:

- New information that may change the outcome of the decision.
- Evidence of a procedural error or the process was not followed when making the decision
- Clear and defined conflict of interest or bias

Appeals will be a document only review unless a member submits a special request for a face to face appeal meeting. Face to face can be a virtual meeting. The only exception to the automatic document only review process would be in the case of clear and defined conflict of interest or bias.

The member must submit a written appeal within 7 calendar days after the decision is communicated. The request must state:

- The decision being appealed
- The reason for the appeal
- Any supporting information

Appeal hearings will follow the same guidelines as a removal hearing described in the Disciplinary Process above.

Final Decision Timeline for Hearings

The Board of Directors will verbally share the disciplinary decision with the family representative(s) at the end of the hearing and will provide written documentation within 7 calendar days.

Final and Binding Decision: The appeal decision is final, with no further internal appeal process.

Emergency Procedures

Safety is our top priority. These emergency procedures are in place to help everyone respond quickly and calmly if an emergency occurs.

Evacuation Points and Rally Point

EVACUATION ROUTES AND RALLY POINT



Fire Alarm Procedures

- When the fire alarm sounds, everyone is to move through their designated exits to the rally point location outside in the parking lot, away from the building. See map above.
- Room doors are to be closed when a class leaves the building.
- Teachers are to maintain accountability of their students and report any missing students to leadership immediately. Parents maintain accountability of their child(ren) not in class.
- Designated volunteers will check with each teacher to see if anyone is missing.
- Designated volunteers will announce when the building is cleared for re-entry.

Tornado Drills Procedures

- If possible, seek shelter in the basement level of the building. Otherwise, sit in the hallway or small room with no windows.
- Sit along the wall, away from windows, facing the wall.
- Announcement to shelter for tornadoes will come from walkie talkie, cell phone, and/or runner.
- Teachers should maintain accountability of students throughout the duration of sheltering.
- Parents maintain accountability of their child(ren) when not in class.
- Announcement to end sheltering procedures will come from walkie talkie, cell phone, and/or by runner.

Earthquake Procedures

- **Shelter in place:** All students and personnel are to remain where they are when the earthquake is first felt and immediately find shelter under a table or desk and stay away from windows or heavy objects that could fall during such an event.
- **Evacuation:** Once the earthquake has subsided, there will be an announcement for everyone to evacuate the building. Please follow the evacuation routes designated for Fire Alarm Procedures
- **Assessment:** After everyone has evacuated the building, designated staff will do a general assessment of the building. Families may re-enter the building after this assessment is complete and the building is deemed safe to re-enter.

Lockdown Procedures

A Lockdown is initiated when there is an emergency situation in which people are not allowed to freely enter, leave, or move around in a building or area because of danger. If a lockdown is initiated, parents on site will be notified by a designated HSF volunteer and will be sent an email to the address on file with HSF.

Secure the Building Procedures

A Secure the Building is used when there is a non-environmental threat outside the building. Families are free to move about inside the building but exterior doors will be locked. If there is a need to secure the building, parents on site will be notified by a designated HSF volunteer and will be sent an email to the address on file with HSF.

Shelter in Place Procedures

A Shelter-in-Place is used when environmental conditions outside the building make it safer to remain indoors than to evacuate. If there is a need to shelter in place, parents on site will be notified by a designated HSF volunteer and will be sent an email to the address on file with HSF.

For additional details about the emergency policies, please reach out to the Facilities Team.

Fundraising

1. All fundraisers must be pre-approved by the board. Application for fundraising must include how the raised money will be spent, the type of fundraiser, and who will participate in the fundraiser. The board can approve fundraisers through email if requests are received and there is no imminent board meeting. Requests for fundraisers must be complete, and received by a board member at least 30 days in advance. Any board member can bring a fundraiser request to the board.
2. Homeschool First will not cover expenses beyond the budget of the committee associated with the fundraising. This means if the fundraiser does not sell enough to cover expenses the deficit will come from that committee's budget. The board can use their discretion when approving fundraisers for parties that do not have a budget (i.e. a class wishing to raise funds for a specific cause).
3. Recurring fundraisers must include all requested dates.
4. Reports are required to account for all expenses and amount raised. A written report of the fundraiser must be provided when the money is turned in, and a report will be provided to the board at the next board meeting by the board member that is associated with the fundraiser.
5. Money needs to be turned over to one of the depositing authorities with the written report within a week of fundraiser end.
6. A check will be issued at the time the money and report are turned in to any party that needs reimbursed. If the money raised is for a specific purchase or donation, a check will be issued for that purpose within 7 days of money being turned over to depositing authority.

