

GRAVES COUNTY HOME EDUCATION CO-OP

Cooperative Policy

Welcome to Graves County Home Education Co-op (GCHE Co-op). We pray your participation will be rewarding. Please read this policy document thoroughly. You will be required to sign a statement of agreement to abide by these policies prior to the beginning of your first semester and at the beginning of each school year. If you have any questions regarding these policies, please contact an Advisory Team member for clarification.

For Him and the children,

GCHE Co-Op Advisory Team

VISION

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good steward of the manifold grace of God.”

1 Peter 4:10

MISSION STATEMENT

Jesus said to them, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind...And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:37-39

GCHE Co-op operates as a Christ-centered organization and functions from within the Christian worldview. As such, the teachers and curricula covered will always follow the Christian viewpoint. Our mission is to:

- 1) Provide a supplement to our families’ home teaching through a variety of educational and enrichment classes in a safe and loving environment.
- 2) Strengthen Christian home educating families by providing times of close fellowship and interaction.
- 3) Co-labor with each other under God’s direction to achieve excellence by serving each other through our strengths.
- 4) Display the positive principles of home education to our community.
 - *Christ-centered co-op* -- We believe the Bible is the infallible word of God and strive to glorify Jesus Christ.
 - *Safe and loving environment* - We value unconditional love for and grace toward one another.
 - *Fellowship* - We desire close interaction to encourage and strengthen one another.
 - *Co-laborers* - We value the uniqueness each member brings.

- *Excellence by serving* - God has given us an immense responsibility to teach our children in the way they should go. By drawing upon each other's gifts and talents, we hope to provide quality educational experiences, lasting friendships, and precious memories for our members.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the verbally inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, the final authority for faith and life. II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21

We believe that there is one God who exists eternally as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30

We believe that Jesus Christ is God's only Son. John 3:16

We believe that only Jesus Christ the Son lived a life without sin. All other people are sinners in need of salvation. Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26; Romans 3:23-24

We believe that Christ came to earth as a baby, born of a virgin, taking on the form of man without ceasing to be God, to be crucified in order to pay the penalty for our sins. Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 53:5,6; Ephesians 1:7

We believe that Christ died, was buried and then rose on the third day and ascended to Heaven. I Corinthians 15:3, 4; John 11:25; Luke 24:7

We believe that salvation is the gift of God given to men by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John 3:16-19; John 5:24; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8,9; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5

We believe God ordained and defined marriage as between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends for sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and woman who are married to each other while pledging their mutual faithfulness (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:3).

We believe in the sanctity of life (each child is a gift from God whose life begins at conception) and the protection of our children both before and after birth. Matthew 18:5,6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2

CHURCH USE

High Point Baptist Church has been most gracious in allowing us use of their facilities. In doing so, a great deal of trust has been placed in the parents and children of the GCHE Cooperative.

- Please use the facility wisely and express gratitude.
- Please adhere to all guidelines provided in the High Point Baptist Church Building Use Policy.
- Respect and honor all requests made by the church staff to the GCHE Co-op.
- Do not waste water or paper products provided.
- Keep the tone of our voices pleasant - no yelling as staff offices may be in meetings or counseling sessions.
- Do not disturb others working in the buildings.
- Notify a member of the Advisory Team of lost or broken items.
- Do not use supplies that are in the rooms.

- Return any moved items to their original places.

COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

In order for a homeschool co-op to function successfully, it is vital that families fulfill, to the best of their abilities, the commitment of participation and attendance. Since parents/guardians are critical to the teaching of classes and supervising children, attendance to co-op is a very important ingredient for effectiveness.

Therefore, co-op families are expected to be in attendance at least 7 of the 10 co-op days in a semester (75%). Of course, there are circumstances that may arise which cause us to miss a large amount of sessions, such as a birth of a new child, severe illness or accident, job related situations, etc. The co-op understands these situations and will assist in any way possible if families face these extenuating circumstances.

If absent in co-op, please make it a priority to ensure your responsibilities as a teacher, co-teacher or supervising adult have been covered by another parent/guardian. Be sure to let the director know in advance of your absence so that arrangements can be made to fill your responsibility.

The Advisory Team ask that all families work hard to keep good attendance and participation so the co-op can continue to serve as an encouraging tool for all families.

ELIGIBILITY, REGISTRATION & FEES

- 1) Families whose oldest child will be at least 5 years old and beginning kindergarten at the start of the fall semester are eligible for co-op participation.
- 2) Co-op registration forms will be available from the GCHE Facebook page or website after class fees have been announced and will be completed on a per semester and per family basis. All dependents participating in the GCHE co-op must be in the legal custody of the adult listed on the registration form.
- 3) Student registration is accepted according to the following guidelines:
 - Current co-op participants who are in good standing may register as soon as class schedules and fees for the upcoming semester are published. A fee of \$20 per family is due at that time.
 - New Families for the fall semester are to pay \$30, \$20 for the spring.
 - A co-op family in good standing has committed to the following---
 1. All co-op fees are paid in full.
 2. The family attends at least 75% of the co-op sessions in the previous semester.
 - Order of registration for classes will follow these guidelines:
 1. Parents who teach a co-op class or serve on the Advisory Team for that semester will be able to register first.
 2. Families who are current co-op participants in good standing will be able to register second.
 3. All returning families not included in the above groups can register next.

4. New families interested in joining the co-op will be able to register fourth as long as space permits.
- 4) The following signed forms must be submitted in order to complete registration and participate in the Co-Op.
 - Family Profile
 - Annual policy acknowledgement agreement – required before upcoming semester classes begin
 - Medical Release
 - Release of Liability
- 5) All fee payments shall be made to Graves County Home Education Co-op, and given to the Home Education Financial Treasurer. A \$5 late fee will be added to your total fee after the third co-op meeting.
- 6) Exceptions to the above timelines may be made for existing co-op families with family additions, either through birth or adoption, to the greatest extent possible.

CLASSES

- 1) Classes for fall and spring semesters will be finalized one month before the first day of co-op. Teachers will quantify and communicate class fees by this time.
- 2) A final class schedule will be available from the GCHE Advisory Team and distributed via e-mail or Facebook no later than two weeks prior to start of classes each semester.
- 3) In the interest of instructional quality as it is influenced to a great extent by teacher-student ratio, the desired maximum class size is 12 students. If, however, the teacher is comfortable with a larger class and is in agreement with the Director that a larger class is in the best interest of the students in that class and the co-op in general, the teacher may allow additional students to enroll in the class. Similarly, the teacher may determine the maximum class size to be less than 12 students.
- 4) If a parent believes that their child would be better suited in a different class than his/her age group, they may:
 - a) Move the child to a younger group if space is available, at the parent's discretion;
 - b) Request permission from the teacher to move the child to an older class if space is available. Because some classes are more adaptable for younger students than others, this permission must be obtained by the lead teacher of the requested class.

Assignment to alternate age group classes cannot be guaranteed, and a general promotion to an older age group will not be granted.
- 5) The below guidelines should be used to direct student fee calculation and disposition of teaching materials after the class has been completed.

a) The full cost of teacher's manuals and teacher-required supplies will be shared equally by students participating in the first class using those materials.

b) Teachers are not financially compensated for their time because it is parent-as-volunteer cooperative.

c) Student fees include the student's required materials, plus their shared portion of teacher's manuals/materials.

6) Classes or care for pre-kindergarten children will be provided as required for families enrolled in the GCHE Co-op, to enable parents to teach or assist in other classes. These classes are not intended to function as a babysitting service nor as a stand-alone preschool option.

7) GCHE Co-op classes meet approximately 10 weeks per semester with up to 3 class periods each week. Co-op days will be on Fridays and will begin with an opening assembly at 9:15am and dismiss at approximately 12:00pm. (Times and dates are subject to change due to scheduling for HPBC, weather or other special cases)

LEADERSHIP DESCRIPTIONS

Decisions for GCHE's Co-op are made not by one individual, but by a team of people willing to serve others. Leadership positions within the co-op currently are the Advisory Team.

The **Advisory Team** consists of up to four families. One or both parents from these families may serve on the team, with each family having one vote total in decision-making. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Establishing the overall policy and direction of the co-op;
- 2) Reviewing issues pertaining to the co-op policy and making additions or revisions if deemed necessary;
- 3) Addressing conflicts unresolved
- 4) The Advisory Team will assess co-op student capacity, monitor growth, and determine appropriate limits for student enrollment.
- 5) Nominating prospective Advisory Team members
- 6) Appoint one team member to serve as Treasurer

Responsibilities of the *Treasurer* include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Distribute to and receive from new/prospective families all necessary paperwork;
- 2) Accounting of all GCHE Co-op monies;

- 3) Collecting class fees and placing orders for necessary class materials;
- 4) Distributing reimbursement in exchange for legitimate receipts;
- 5) Giving an annual financial report to the membership before the co-op year's end;
- 6) Maintaining registration rolls within constraints of specific class enrollment limits and overall co-op capacity.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Parental participation is mandatory. Parents contribute as teachers and/or teaching assistants, or by providing other needed support services, including facility clean-up.
- 2) Have all family members seated and ready for Opening Assembly. Assembly begins 15 minutes prior to the first class session.
- 3) Remain on the premises while children are participating in the co-op. In case of emergency and you must leave, please designate responsibility for your children to another parent.
- 4) Attendance is expected unless illness or other extenuating circumstance prevails. Report any absences to the Director as soon as the absence is realized.
- 5) Please be aware of ALL children, not just your own. Students are not permitted outside the building during lunch or after co-op without adult supervision.
- 6) Understand and enforce all building and co-op policies. Make sure your family adheres to proper dress and behavior at all co-op functions.
- 7) If there is concern regarding a situation in class or with a teacher, work through the conflict resolution policy. If contacted by a teacher about a problem with your child, work with the teacher to resolve the issue.
- 8) Read each class description/syllabus from the teachers and purchase all materials.
- 9) See that your child makes up any work missed due to absence. Parents of younger students should contact the teacher. Older students are expected to do this for themselves.
- 10) Clearly label all personal items brought from home. These items include backpacks, class materials, coats, lunch boxes, etc. Any personal items not needed for co-op such as laptops, i-pods, cell phones, fidget spinners, toys, etc. are not to be brought to class by students.
- 11) Laptops for class prep and cell phones for emergencies are allowed for parents only. Exceptions will be made for classes requiring such devices (e.g. laptops for a Microsoft course).

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Meet with parents and fellow teachers during co-op planning sessions to discuss classes you are willing to teach, and your vision of how they benefit homeschool students. Discuss any potential out-of-class work and evaluation at this time.
- 2) Prepare a semester syllabus for each class being taught to be presented to students the first day of class. Please include class description; resources to be used; grade level of students; method of evaluation, if applicable; class fee; and any additional supplies needed.
- 3) Announce class fees by class submission deadline.
- 4) Be punctual, prepared for each class, and ready to provide excellent instruction.
- 5) Please ensure there are at least two adults in the room at all times.
- 6) Dress and present yourself in a manner worthy of respect and treatment as one in authority.

Request that students address you as Mr., Ms., or Mrs. _____ .

- 7) Set up the room as you wish, but return furnishings and equipment to their proper locations after classes. Please leave the room in as good or better condition as you found it.
- 8) Know and support our co-op's expectations of student conduct. Quickly remind students of proper classroom behavior. Take a disruptive student to the parent or director. Do not put him/her in the hall. This may stop classroom disruption, but does nothing to help the student.
- 9) Release students at the scheduled time - not early and not late.
- 10) Willingly communicate with parents regarding a student's behavior and progress while in your class.
- 10) Teachers may find it appropriate to grade student material, and may do so provided parents of class members are advised that grading will occur before the semester begins. It is recommended that plans to have graded material be listed on the class description form.
- 11) All teachers, assistants, floaters, etc. are expected to attend every co-op session.
 - a) In the event of a planned absence, secure your own substitute (most likely the assistant) and provide lesson plans accordingly.
 - b) In the event of an unplanned absence due to illness or emergency, notify the director and your assistant immediately and secure a substitute if possible.

12) Assign class responsibilities to teaching assistants and helpers as needed.

13) If materials are purchased for class and reimbursement is necessary, see the Co-op's Treasurer for the proper form and signatures. Retain all related receipts. They will be required for reimbursement.

14.) If going to be absent, ensure that class is covered and that the substitute to has all necessary material.

ASSISTANT/HELPER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Teacher's Assistant your main responsibility is creating an environment in which the teacher can effectively teach. These responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- 1) Helping lead teacher and students with class activities and class control as necessary;
- 2) Encouraging students to come in, take their seats, and take out necessary class materials;
- 3) Preparing class as agreed upon with the lead teacher (making copies, room set-up, acquiring needed supplies, etc.);
- 4) Cleaning up the classroom, making certain room is left in as good or better condition;

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1) Be prompt and prepared for classes with all materials and completed assignments. Due to the nature of the once-a-week classes, it is imperative that students stay current with their assignments. Contact the teacher regarding any missed material and catch up prior to the next class session.

2) All students are expected to practice the common courtesies of "please," "thank you," "may I," "yes or no ma'am/sir," etc. when dealing with others. Honor other parents and teachers by addressing them as Mr., Ms., or Mrs. _____.

3) Display self-control and respond appropriately to teacher and parent directives. Walk in the halls between classes. Do not yell except in the event of an emergency.

4) Encourage and support one another in a gracious manner. No name-calling or destructive comments will be tolerated. Keep hands and feet to yourself - no pushing or hitting.

5) Be respectful of others and their property. Any item damaged must be replaced with the same or better item by the individual causing the damage.

6) Be respectful of HPBC property. The goal is to leave HPBC facilities in better condition than we found them.

- a) Clean up after yourself.
- b) Do not waste water or paper products provided.

c) Notify the director of lost/broken items.

d) Do not use supplies that are in the rooms and return any moved items to their original places.

7) Keep all language pleasing to God. No offensive language, cursing, or derogatory comments will be tolerated.

8) Attend all co-op functions wearing appropriate clothing as detailed in the Dress Code and Guidelines section.

9) Do not bring toys, fidget spinners, cell phones or other electronic games/equipment unless approved by the teacher for classroom use. Teachers will hold onto these items and give them to the parent.

10) Older students set a good example for our younger students at all times. This includes maintaining proper decorum with the opposite sex. No inappropriate physical contact will be allowed.

11) Violations of co-op policy will be handled promptly in accordance with Co-op Discipline Policy.

DRESS CODE & GUIDELINES

Dressing appropriately reflects a healthy respect for ourselves, those around us, and the God we serve.

We expect each of our participating families to adhere to the GCHE Co-op Dress Code and Guidelines at all co-op sponsored events. Our desire in this process is not to be legalistic, but to set forth a Godly example of purity and integrity.

Please Do Not Wear:

- Shorts or skorts shorter than your fingertips at the leg
- Dresses or skirts higher than the knee while standing
- Shorts, pants, or sweats with words on the back
- Pants that appear to be falling off or allow undergarments to show
- Tight clothing of any kind
- Thin-strap, spaghetti strap, strapless, backless, or halter tops
- Crop tops or bare midriffs (even when bending, stretching, or raising the arms)
- Plunging necklines (no visible cleavage even when bending)
- Clothing with objectionable messages, slogans, or pictures
- Clothing with sheer materials
- Pajamas
- Hats in the building (boys)

Violation of the dress code will require changing, adding clothing, or being asked to leave. These actions will always be taken after discussion with the attending parent so as to preserve all dignity and respect.

Please Do Not Bring:

- Cell phones, MP3s, PSPs, or other electronic devices to classes or assembly.
- Fidget Spinners
- Any form of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs
- Knives of any kind unless specifically used for meals

Each parent and all students age seven and up must sign a statement indicating they have read, and agree to abide by, the above-mentioned “Dress Code & Guidelines” while at any GCHE Co-op sponsored event.

DISCIPLINE

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Hebrew 12:11

GCHE Cooperative practices a “three strikes” method of discipline.

- 1) The first offense will be handled by the teacher speaking to the student about the behavior or problem.
- 2) If the pattern of behavior or problem persists, the teacher will speak to the parent.

This may include removing the student from the class into the custody of the parent for the remainder of the class period (even if the parent is teaching).

- 3) If still not resolved, the problem will be taken to one of the Advisory Team members for further action, including possible removal of the student from the class or co-op.
- 4) Parents may appeal disciplinary action to the Advisory Team as appropriate.

ABSENCE/ILLNESS

Though parents should remain on the premises and be actively engaged during the day, we realize that exceptions to this policy may be necessary.

- 1) If a parent knowingly cannot attend on a weekly basis, the following conditions must be met:
 - a) Parent submits a written explanation at the time of registration, and receives approval from the Advisory Team and Director.
 - b) The explanation shall state the reason for absence, transportation arrangements for children attending co-op, and the designation of an on-premise adult to be responsible for the children in case of emergency or disciplinary issue.

c) Inform the Director if transportation or on-premise adult arrangements ever change.

d) Parent need to be reached by phone in case of an emergency. If they cannot be reached, they will not be allowed to leave students in the care of another parent in the future.

2) Participants should not attend co-op if they are sick or are experiencing any of the following symptoms.

- Virus or infection known to be contagious
- Fever within the last 24 hours (unmedicated)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea within the last 24 hours
- Colored mucus
- Contagious rashes
- Head lice

3) If one of your children becomes ill and you must leave the co-op facility, you may choose to

a) Remove all of your children for the remainder of the day, or

b) Find another parent who agrees to be responsible for your other children while they are on the premises.

Parents, please see that your child receives missed material and completes any necessary work.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church...Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

(Matthew 18:15-20)

“What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?”

1 Corinthians 4:21

Personality conflicts and misunderstandings can happen in any group. It is important that we agree on how to deal with these situations before they arise. GCHE Co-op conflict resolution policy is drawn directly from Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 4:21.

Many differences can be properly resolved by overlooking an offense and forgiving the person who has offended. Because of this, we ask you to pray over the issue to decide if it is important enough to deem confrontation. After prayer, if God gives you the peace to dismiss the issue, then it is passed and forgotten and is not to be discussed with others.

If after prayer, you feel the offense must be addressed, this three-tier conflict resolution is to be utilized, parent to parent:

- 1) The offended party should first address the situation with the offending party alone.
- 2) If resolution is not achieved, take the concern before a member of the Advisory Team.
- 3) A final decision will be made by the whole Advisory Team if resolution is not achieved during the first two steps.

**Note: At each step, both parties to the conflict will be included so as to avoid gossip, libel, or slander.*

LUNCH

Children are under the authority of their own parents who need to see that all conduct complies with proper and respectful behavior. All food is to be confined to areas designated by our church staff and should not be taken into other classrooms. Each co-op member is responsible for cleaning up their own eating areas. Children are expected to remain in the designated lunch area for the duration of the lunch period.

If for any reason the HPBC Family Life Center (FLC) is unavailable then lunch would be canceled for the day or preparations would be made for a different location and communicated to the cooperative group in advance.

EMERGENCY

SNOW DAY

GCHE Co-Op will not meet if Graves County Schools have been cancelled or delayed.

For updated info, please check the GCHE Co-op Facebook page.

SAFETY

- 1) Once students have arrived for classes, they will not be allowed to leave with anyone other than the parent or designated adult, unless permission has been given by the parent.
- 2) No student will be allowed to leave in a car with another student unless the parent has given written permission to the Advisory Team.
- 3) Adults will be familiar with exit routes in case of inclement weather or emergency.

A FINAL NOTE

The Advisory Team anticipates that new issues will arise that are not specifically addressed within this policy. These unforeseen circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis using common sense and good faith judgment. The final decision will rest with the Advisory Team with input from the teachers and co-op member families.

CURRENT GCHE CO-OP ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERS

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