

Compass Handbook

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Disclaimer: The information in this handbook is accurate to the best of our knowledge. Policies, fees, and other details are subject to change without notice.

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1. Welcome to Compass!

Compass is a parent-led educational cooperative that seeks to support home schooling families by providing enrichment classes for elementary age students. We currently offer 3rd – 8th grade classes in a variety of subjects including science, literature, music, art, cooking, and more. Classes for younger students in 4/5K - 2nd grade are available for teachers' children, current families, and new families as space allows. The co-op meets on Mondays for 10 weeks in the fall beginning the Monday after Labor Day and 10 weeks in the winter beginning the second Monday in January. The weekly classes are graciously hosted by Cavas Community Church, 2333 Roosevelt Blvd, Winchester, VA.

1.1 History of Compass: Compass (Formerly Jr. SAIL) began as a small group of kindergarten through third graders meeting at the home of one of the attendees. It was first called Hart Strings. The title was chosen in honor of the family who offered to begin the Jr. classes. As more grade levels were added each year, it began to be called Jr. SAIL. It was renamed Compass in 2019. The primary organization it sprang from is SAIL (Students Are Inspired Learners), which now consists of 5th through 12th grade and meets at a separate location.

This group was created for the purpose of providing enrichment classes for homeschool families, primarily those families who taught at SAIL then remaining classes were offered to other area homeschoolers. Compass has now grown to serve the homeschooling community as a whole. Compass is a non-denominational Christian group seeking to serve homeschooling families in Winchester, VA and surrounding communities.

1.2 Mission: Compass is a parent-led educational cooperative with the goal of creating a community of learners who can grow in character and academic knowledge.

In order to achieve our mission, we must all work together to accomplish the tasks and create the environment for learning and growth to take place. Each family must contribute time and effort to make the co-op work. The following guidelines describe the co-op's expectations for behavior, participation, and the practical aspects of working together. Our hope is to keep these rules brief and prevent them from becoming burdensome while also ensuring that students can enjoy a safe and constructive learning environment, and families are sharing the load of the co-op. Everyone's cooperation is vital to keep the co-op running smoothly.

1.3 Statement of Faith: All classes are taught from, or adhere to, a biblical perspective that emphasizes these foundational truths:

1. The Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God
2. God exists in three beings: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Man fell into sin through his disobedience.
4. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for mans' sin through His perfect life, His sacrificial death, and His triumphant resurrection.
5. Eternal life is available to those who confess and repent of their sin and put their trust in Christ alone as their hope of salvation.
6. Christians have the Holy Spirit as an indwelling Person, enabling them to live lives of faith, repentance, virtue, and obedience.

Since different denominations and viewpoints exist within the larger Christian community, Compass seeks to abide by the following basic principle from Rupertus Meldenius (circa 1627):

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Participating families are not required to adhere to this statement of faith. However, all Compass parents and students should recognize that classes are taught from a Christian perspective, particularly when dealing with worldviews, and/or discussions of origins, history, ethics, and literature.

1.4 Compass Leadership: Compass is led by a board of directors who oversee the weekly classes and activities as well as planning for the future. Each board member is responsible for a specific aspect of helping the co-op run smoothly, but all board members work together to serve the best interests of the group. Board members are chosen from among current families. A list of the current board of directors and their areas of responsibility can be found on the website under the Compass General Information tab.

1.5 Website: The Compass website is located at:

<https://www.homeschool-life.com/va/compass>

Please make it a habit to check the website weekly. Information regarding activities, special notices, weather updates for cancellations, and other information is readily available on the website and is updated regularly. If you have a question, please check the website first before calling a board member or teacher. In many cases, you will find the answer on the website. The website also includes a directory of the member families, a space for classified ads, and other fun features to connect with other Compass families such as a forum.

The member information on the website is password protected and should not be shared with individuals, businesses, or organizations outside of Compass without prior approval from the Compass Board. The member side is secure, and it is important to keep it that way!

Compass also has a PRIVATE Facebook group, for those who use this platform. This group is only open to those who are enrolled. Please do not request to join the group without first enrolling. Anything sent out in email will also be on the Facebook group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1678321825721491/>

2. General Policies

2.1 Registration: Compass uses an online registration process which is further explained on our website.

2.2 Class Schedule and Descriptions: The complete class schedule and course descriptions are available on the website.

2.3 Calendar of Events: A complete Compass calendar is available on the website.

2.4 Inclement Weather and Cancellations: In the event Compass is canceled due to inclement weather, a notification will be posted on the website, on the Compass Facebook page, and sent via email by 7:30am on the meeting day. If we only cancel one day, we will not make it up. If we miss more than one day, we will add a makeup day to the end of the last semester.

We serve families in Winchester and many surrounding areas that do not always experience the same weather. If Compass is meeting for classes, but the roads near you are unsafe, we understand that you may decide it is best for you to stay home instead.

Finally, there is always the possibility that our host church might have to cancel our classes in the event of a facility emergency or urgent need for congregational use, such as a funeral.

2.5 Illness: Do not bring sick children to Compass. A sick child is defined as one exhibiting a fever, vomiting, discolored discharge from the nose or eyes, diarrhea, rash, or any combination of these symptoms. A child should be fever free, vomit free, and runny-nose free for at least 24 hours before returning to Compass. A child who becomes sick while at Compass will be quarantined, and the parents will be called immediately.

2.6 Special Student Needs: Parents are encouraged to register their children's known allergies and learning challenges with the board and provide any special instructions for accommodation. We try to accommodate without added burden to our teachers. If you have a concern, please discuss it with our Board prior to registering for classes.

3. Parent Responsibilities

3.1 Arrival and Dismissal: To keep the students safe, all children, regardless of age, **MUST** be escorted into and from the building every Monday. Driving to the door to drop-off or pickup is not allowed. Parking in the handicap spaces by the door is reserved for those with a disability or medical need.

For the first couple weeks, 3rd – 8th grade teachers will escort children to their classes as students learn where the classrooms are. 4/5K- 2nd grade students are escorted to all classes throughout the year.

Children will only be dismissed to parents unless the parent has prearranged with an administrator to have another individual pick children up after classes conclude. For security reasons, all adults picking up children must present photo ID.

3.2 Student Support: While we endeavor to teach students to be responsible for their own work, we recognize that they will sometimes need assistance and oversight to complete assignments, attend classes, and prepare for Compass. We expect parents to provide structure and support for students at home to help them be successful in their Compass classes.

3.3 Be on Time: Children should arrive at Compass on time and be picked up promptly at the end of their final class. No student will be allowed outside the building without a parent. Remember to walk your child into the building and come in to pick up after class.

3.4 Snack & Lunch: Heartstrings A & B classes has an early lunch so they do not have a built-in snack period. Students in 3rd grade and above do not have a snack period. However, if your child is hungry please have them ask a teacher if they can grab a snack from their lunchbox. Students who stay all day or come for classes during the third and fourth periods must bring lunch with them. Students are expected to bring a LABELED water bottle with them every week. Please label all jackets, lunchboxes, etc.

3.5 Communication: Open lines of communication are vital to the health and function of the group. Please don't hesitate to contact teachers or board members with questions or concerns. Please read and respond to emails to stay up to date on any changes, opportunities, homework, or issues that may arise. Finally, seek to support and encourage one another with uplifting conversation that builds community.

3.6 Participation: Since we are a cooperative, all member families must contribute in order for the group to function. Participation occurs in multiple ways such as attending meetings, serving for work shifts, teaching classes, and/or serving on the board. The basic participation requirements can be fulfilled by teaching a class or working service shifts during the semester. Working together takes some time, but it is a rewarding experience that builds a sense of community.

Each family **MUST** fulfill the minimum requirements of participation in order to remain an active member of the co-op. Failure to fulfill the participation requirements may result in the temporary or permanent removal of students from classes without refund, the inability to register for the upcoming year, or other appropriate actions as the board deems necessary. ***By signing the participation agreement, you acknowledge that you understand and commit to fulfilling the required participation by teaching or working service shifts.***

3.7 Teaching: Early each January a planning meeting is held to discuss class options and to meet with returning and prospective teachers. This meeting is open to all current and new Compass families. Even parents who are not interested in teaching are encouraged to attend to be part of the planning process. Parents interested in teaching a class are required to attend to explore class options and meet with the board. Typically, we ask that a parent be part of Compass for at least one year before taking a teaching role. Teachers are not required to sign up for service shifts as teaching fulfills the participation requirement.

Teachers are expected to adhere to the statement of faith in both word and deed. Their actions in the classroom and outside it should reflect God-honoring conduct and set an example for the students. If a teacher is no longer able to teach a class for any reason, the teacher will be required to issue a full or partial refund to the students. The board reserves the right to screen or evaluate teachers and reassign classes if needed.

3.8 Serving: All non-teaching families are required to fulfill a specific number of service shifts. Individuals under the age of 18 may **not** work a service shift. Service workers help with a variety of practical tasks such as setting up, clean-up, supervising students during snack time and lunch, assisting teachers or substituting, and any other tasks that need to be done to keep the day running smoothly. Each non-teaching family must sign up to work a set number of service shifts each semester. This set number changes each year, based on how many families we have enrolled that year. The service worker shifts consist of serving half days or whole days to accumulate to the required amount of shifts required.

Alternatively, we also offer weekly jobs that families can opt to fulfil every week, such as morning set-up workers, afternoon clean-up, and lunch monitor. These service jobs do require attendance every week for the whole semester, generally take about 45-60 minutes, and count as fulfilling all your required service worker shifts.

Scheduling Service Shifts: Service Shifts may change based on registration numbers. Families must sign up for service shifts (through the website). Fall semester signups begin in August and closes prior to the first day of the fall semester. Winter semester signups open in December (specific date TBA) and closes prior to the first day of the winter semester. Service shifts are filled on a first come, first served basis. If a family has not signed up for service shifts by the first day of class, the co-op service coordinator will assign shifts. Families can access the service schedule and sign-up for shifts by logging into the website and clicking onto the calendar page.

Individual Serving Requirements: Individuals working a service shift are expected to arrive on time and ready to work. Children who are not enrolled in Compass classes should not accompany the adult worker. Arrangements for younger siblings should be made so the worker can give undivided attention to service duties. Parents who arrive for a shift with younger children will be dismissed, and the shift will not count toward the required participation. Activities, such as computer work, crafts, grading/tutoring, that interfere with serving should be left at home. It is important for each service worker on a shift to be engaged and available for the duration of the shift. Upon arrival, service workers should check in with the co-op service coordinator or a board member. Checklists of expected work are in the Service Worker box and should be completed during each shift.

*If, for any reason, you are unable to arrive at the scheduled time, you must notify the co-op service coordinator and **find a replacement for your shift**.* Families willing to serve as substitutes should notify the co-op service coordinator.

3.9 Payments: Compass collects administrative fees, materials fees, and class fees (tuition). Families are expected to pay fees on time and in full. The registration fee is required at the time of registration. Your registration is not complete until these fees have been paid. Tuition may be paid in two parts with the first half due by the end of May and the second half due by the end of August (exact dates found on printable calendar on the website). Detailed information about fees and making payments is available on the website under the Compass General Information tab. Specific questions concerning payments or fees should be directed to the Treasurer.

4. Student Responsibilities

4.1 Homework: Students are expected to come to class prepared with appropriate supplies and assigned homework. When class is missed, students and their parents are responsible for contacting teachers for information on missed assignments.

4.2 Code of Conduct:

- Treat the building with care. No running, yelling, or damage to the property.
- Be respectful of others and their property.
- Dress modestly and appropriately for class activities (such as PE).
- Leave electronics at home or turned off in your bag.
- Listen and pay attention in class.
- Follow the instructions of the teachers, board members, or other supervisors.

- Clean up after yourself.

We encourage students to avoid distractions by keeping electronics and other personal items out of the classroom. Please do not bring items such as roller shoes, iPods, mini game systems, cell phones, toys, etc. to Compass. These items will be confiscated on the first offense and returned only to the parent. In the event a student needs to contact a parent, the student may use one of the board members' cell phones.

An attitude of friendliness is to be maintained by all. Cliques and other exclusive groups are not allowed. Each student will be mindful of the feelings of others in words and conduct, following the "golden rule": Do unto others as you would have them do to you (Luke 6:31).

When problems occur or a student has been hurt or offended by a Compass member, we ask that the individuals involved attempt to resolve and reconcile by following the steps outlined below in the section labeled *Conflict Resolution* before contacting a board member to arbitrate.

5. Conflict Resolution

Students: Students who violate the code of conduct will be given a warning for inappropriate behavior. After the warning, the student will be sent to the front desk to sit for a short period of time to regain self-control. If the behavior continues, the student may be required to leave the class for the day and parents will be notified. If inappropriate behavior becomes a recurring problem, the student will be asked to leave the class or Compass for the remainder of the session. No refund will be given.

Teachers will attempt to resolve issues before enlisting the aid of a board member to arbitrate conflicts/offenses between children to help them reconcile differences. Conflict resolution between students or students and teachers will follow the biblical pattern of confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Mt. 18:15; Gal 6:1; Eph. 4:15; Rom. 15:14). Parents may be notified. Compass also asks that when issues arise between families or between families and Compass that they also follow the biblical pattern.

Parents: Parents who are dissatisfied with an aspect of Compass should speak to the appropriate person - whether teacher, director or board member. If a parent has been hurt or offended by a Compass member, we ask that person to address the individual privately first in a spirit of peace to seek resolution. If the matter has not been resolved privately, the Compass board may be involved in working toward mediation, resolution, and reconciliation. Our goal is to handle conflict in constructive ways that promote unity and restore community.

Reservation of Rights: The Compass Board of Directors reserves the right to remove any child, parent, teacher, or board member who fails to follow the guidelines set forth in the participation agreement, handbook, or website. Member families may also be dismissed for causing undue conflict or failing to support the goals and mission of the co-op.

Appendix A – Compass Participation Agreement

We hereby agree to comply with the following rules to participate with Compass:

Be on time. Students/parents agree to be on time for classes and be picked up promptly at the end of their final class. **No student is to be left unsupervised at any time.** Parents are not to drop off students but to walk the student into the building and come in for pick up.

Modest apparel is expected for both boys and girls. Out of respect for each other, inappropriate dress will not be accepted.

Cell phones and electronics are not allowed. Emergency phone calls can be made by using one of the board members' cell phones.

Students are expected to complete all homework assigned. When absent, the student is responsible for contacting the teacher for assignments.

Cheating will not be tolerated. Copying information from the internet without proper documentation is plagiarism and is considered cheating.

Appropriate behavior/attitudes are expected toward others. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we desire to affirm and encourage each other. This includes being respectful of the sponsoring Church and their property. Inappropriate or coarse language or jesting will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from Compass.

By signing this Participation Agreement parents and students agree that:

1.1. Any complaints about Compass should be directed to a board member. If a parent or student has been hurt or offended by a Compass member, we ask that person take responsibility to go to them in the spirit of peace and speak the truth in love, seeking reconciliation.

1.2. Students who violate the Code of Conduct will be given two warnings for inappropriate behavior. Students who continue to act out will be sent out of class to sit for a short period of time to regain self-control. If their behavior continues, parents will be notified, and the student will be required to leave class for the day. Inappropriate behavior, which has become a recurrent problem, will require the student's dismissal from the class or Compass for the remainder of the session.

1.3. Teachers will arbitrate conflicts/offenses between children to help them reconcile differences following the Biblical pattern of confession, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:15 and Romans 15:14). Parents may be notified.

2. Parents agree and understand that **ALL FEES MUST BE PAID BY THE DUE DATES**. No refund will be given if a student is unable to complete any Compass session for any reason including dismissal.

3. Parents agree to assume all risks, hazards, and costs incidental to participation at Compass and agree to release and to hold blameless the teachers, assistants, parent helpers, board members and Canvas Communit Church for any accident, injury or loss suffered during Compass.

4. Parents and students agree to read and abide by the Compass Member Handbook and continue to update themselves with information posted on the Compass website.

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix B – Compass Co-op Service Agreement

Serving is vital to the function and community of Compass. Each non-teaching family is required to participate in the co-op by fulfilling a specific number of service work shifts each semester. Please read the list of requirements below, then sign and date this agreement to acknowledge that you understand the expectations and commit to fulfill your service duties as a member of the Compass cooperative.

- I commit to **working my required service shifts.**
- I understand I may be **helping with a variety of practical tasks** such as setting up, clean-up, supervising students during snack time and lunch, assisting teachers or substituting, and any other tasks that need to be done to keep the day running smoothly.
- I understand I may **choose morning or afternoon shifts, daily shifts or other shifts deemed necessary for the successful function of the co-op.**
- I understand I must **sign up for my service shifts through the website** prior to the start of each semester. If I do not sign up, shifts will be assigned to me by the co-op service coordinator.
- I commit to **arriving for my shifts on time and ready to work.**
- I understand that **younger children, not enrolled in Compass, are not allowed to accompany me** during my shift. If I arrive with children, I understand I will be dismissed, and the shift will not count toward my required participation.
- If, for any reason, I am not able to work my scheduled shift, **I will contact the co-op service coordinator and find a replacement.**
- I understand that **failing to fulfill the participation requirements through serving** may result in my children being removed from classes and/or my family losing membership in the Compass cooperative.

I have read and agree to fulfill the co-op service duties outlined above, in accordance with the Compass handbook, as part of my participation requirement for membership in the Compass cooperative.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____