

Connections New Family FAQs

OVERVIEW

Welcome! We are thrilled that you have chosen Connections to partner with you in your family's schooling journey. Our mission is to partner with parents to educate and equip students by providing arts and academic classes from preschool through high school in a supportive, Christ-centered community. This guide is meant to help you become more familiar with how our community works.

CLASS DAYS

What does a typical day look like?

A typical day looks different for every family. Some of our families take one or two classes a week while others take nine or ten classes.

When you arrive at school, arrive a few minutes before classes start. Most of our classrooms look like a normal classroom with an instructor in the front of the class and students sitting in chairs around a table. Chairs are located in the back of the classroom where parents may sit. During lunchtime, many of the students are hanging out and visiting with each other. Students aren't allowed to run around in the hallways, but they certainly enjoy hanging out there between classes.

Where can I park?

On Mondays you can park in either the north or south lots, except for the coned-off play area in the north lot. Please leave the east parking area (on the same side of the building where we enter) for the instructors. Please do not park in the west parking lot. Note that the east entrance is the only one we can use on Monday.

On Wednesday, you can park anywhere in the parking lot except in the spots indicated for church staff or the coned-off play area in the north parking lot. Please do not park on the street south of the church, across from the Montessori school. Also note that the south entrance is the only one we may enter or exit the building on Wednesday.

Where do I go when my children are in classes?

On Mondays, you are welcome to sit in The Hangout or in the open areas in the lobby. When the sun is out, feel free to bring a lawn chair or blanket sit outside. It's a great way to meet other parents! Some moms also sit in their cars.

On Wednesdays, you are welcome to sit in The Hangout, Quiet Study, or outside. We also have several comfortable sitting areas that are for parents only. You will see signs that indicate adult only areas.

Can I sit in my child's class?

We encourage parents to attend classes with their children, but please know that cell phones should be silenced, and whispering in the back of the room can be distracting to the instructor and students. As kids get older, they are less likely to want you in the classroom. If that is the case, be sure to check in with them and stay in contact with their instructor so you can track assignments and progress.

Can siblings sit in classes?

Only children who are enrolled in the class are permitted to be in the classroom, with the exception of infants. The rooms provided on-site for students or siblings without classes are: The Hangout, Quiet Study, or the Monday playroom. Each hour your child is not in a class, they should be registered for one of these.

On Wednesdays, Room 101 is allocated as an Open Playroom for children seven and under. There is no Wednesday playroom coordinator, so we ask that you or another Connections parent remain with your child and use this space as a stay and play. You will also have access to the outside playground through the Open Playroom. A Connections parent must be present when children are in the playground. The age limit for the playground is seven.

Can I run an errand while my kids are in classes?

Parents **must** remain on-site with their children. If you are caught dropping off your children, you will jeopardize your participation in Homeschool Connections. Parents must remain on-site with their children. Parents of students 15 years and older may use a Substitute Parent form after attending a Substitute Parent meeting and receiving Board approval. All parents are required to be on-site for the first two weeks of classes. There are also one-time use Emergency Forms located at the Security Table or in the Family Portal.

What is the Welcome Table?

The Welcome Table is a place where you can find answers to your questions, share a concern, ask for prayer or alert us to an urgent need. The Support Team is a group of parents who have been trained in how to address your concerns and assist you. You will often find a board member not far from the Welcome Table if you need further assistance.

Where do we eat lunch?

On Mondays, if the weather is nice, eat outside with us! This is such a great way to meet other people. If the weather isn't great, the designated rooms that serve as lunch room is the Student Center. You may also eat at the open tables in the lobby area.

On Wednesdays, the designated lunch rooms are 176, 177/178, 210/211, 212, 224, and in the open areas upstairs. You are also welcome to eat outside. Please note that 210/211 is a nut-free zone.

My student is nervous about finding their classes!

We are here to help you! You will notice on the class schedule that there are room numbers. Arrive 10 minutes early and come to the Welcome Table. We will show you where all your classes are.

My student is feeling overwhelmed by all the other kids — what do I do!?

We understand that some students might find Connections overwhelming. There are a lot of moving adults and students. You may find it helpful to have your student arrive early to school each day and find a centralized area (like The Hangout) where their parent can sit and they can leave some of their belongings. They can sit for a few minutes and take in their surroundings. In between classes the student will know where to find you and can come back to the centralized location.

I can't do my job for the day, what do I do?

This will happen from time to time! Please find a substitute person to replace you. On Homeschool-Life (the registration site), there is a Sub Job forum where you can post a request for help. If you are unable to find someone who can complete your job, please let the [Jobs Coordinator](#) know and they will assist you in finding someone.

Why do I need to do a job? I hate my job, can I switch jobs? I'm failing at my job because my kids are not cooperating, what can I do? I hate sitting around doing nothing when my kids are in class, is there anything I can do for Connections while I'm waiting?

These are great questions!! Our amazing [Facility board member](#) can assist you.

Can I bring bikes/wheels for my younger kids? What about outdoor toys (balls, hula hoops, etc)?

What about indoor toys (games, puzzles, etc)?

On Mondays, the church has given us permission to allow wheels in the coned off area of the parking lot. Feel free to bring scooters, skateboards, inline skates, etc. Please do not ride on the sidewalks. Remember that a parent **MUST** be present when children are playing outside.

On Wednesdays, the church has asked that you leave the wheels at home. However, you may bring balls or outdoor games, as well as board games or puzzles for your children for when they are not in class.

When a parent is present to supervise, students may play games in the coned-off area in the parking lot at either church at any time during the day.

I forgot something at home — what do I do?

If an emergency arises and you must be temporarily absent, ask another Connections parent to be your temporary substitute parent. Let your student(s) know; fill out and put a Parent Off-Site Emergency Form in your mailbox folder and in the corresponding board member's folder. Note: Only a Connections parent may act as your substitute parent. An emergency substitute parent applies to all students, regardless of age, that are currently registered and taking classes at Connections.

We have a new puppy we can't leave at home. Can we bring her to Connections but leave her in the car?

Puppies are so cute, but unfortunately, animals of any kind are not allowed on church property with the exception of working service animals. This is a policy from our churches.

I want to add or drop a class. How do I do it?

Our new online registration system makes it easy to do both of those. If you drop a class, be sure to do so before the next tuition due date, or you will owe the next tuition payment. Classes may be added at any point (with instructor permission after the start of the school year). Tuition for added classes will be prorated. For more information, see the Fees page located in the Family Portal.

Can I bring grandparents, aunts/uncles/cousins, other family members? Can I bring the neighbor (or my friend's) kids?

We welcome occasional adult visitors. Please have them check in and out at the Welcome Table, and they will be given a blue visitor nametag. During their visit, all visitors must be accompanied by a Connections parent. Please ask permission from the instructor if they plan on attending class. Bringing children for whom you are not the legal guardian is not permitted.

Is there a study hall?

On Mondays, we have The Hangout upstairs. You are welcome to be in there with your student or send them in by themselves as long as they meet the minimum age requirement. On Wednesdays, we have Quiet Study (which doesn't mean no talking; just quieter) and The Hangout. The Hangout is a great place to bring a board game or a place for two students to work on homework together. Students register for The Hangout and Quiet Study, but are not required to be there each week. There is no fee to register for The Hangout or Quiet Study.

How does Playroom work?

Great question! Please see the detailed information on the Playroom Page in the Family Portal tab on the [website](#).

What do all the fees cover?

Registration fees are paid to Homeschool Connections annually for administration, insurance, and facility expenses. **Tuition** payments are paid to Homeschool Connections in six payments to cover teachers' fees for their expertise, preparation, and instruction. **Copy/supply** fees are paid to teachers annually or semiannually for materials utilized by students during the course of the class. Some classes require the **outside purchase** of textbooks, books, or other supplies detailed in the class description. **Late** fees are paid to Homeschool Connections if tuition payments are not received on time. **Drop** fees are paid to Homeschool Connections upon withdrawal from a class to help offset the loss of tuition for the remaining school year.

Will notifications be sent out to know when payments are due?

Yes! Notifications will be listed in the weekly newsletter. You may find it easiest to put a reminder in your calendar now. Facilitators will remind about copy/supply fees. You can also log on at any time to the [registration system](#) and check your balance and make a payment.

What are Family Folders?

Each family at Connections has a family folder "mailbox". The family folders work like a communication system for paperwork. They are located near the Welcome Table at each building and are in alphabetical order. Be sure to check

your family folder each week; your student is welcome to check for you. You are welcome to use them as a way to leave items or information for other families or teachers.

Why do I need a name tag?

Parents will be given a name tag at the beginning of the year. On your first day of class, you will fill out paperwork in your family folder and trade it for your nametag at the Welcome Table. Please wear this name tag at all times when on campus and may be taken home. For safety and security, this helps us easily know who is supposed to be in the building and who is not. If you have forgotten your name tag, stop by the Welcome Table and pick up a temporary one. Students age 13 and up will also be given a name tag, which is kept at Connections.

Where do I go if I lost something or accidentally left something at Connections?

Lost and Found is located near the Welcome Table in a Rubbermaid container. If you do not find the item in the Lost and Found, feel free to post on the forum or [Connections Facebook group](#). There is a different bin at each location.

What do we do if our family is going on a vacation and we are missing classes?

Let the facilitator or instructor know that you will be missing classes. You will want to discuss with the instructor how missing classwork should be completed. Additionally, be sure to find someone to cover your family job while you are gone.

Who and what are facilitators?

Each class has one facilitator. The facilitator will email you before school starts to welcome you to the class. During the school year, they perform administrative duties for a class. They take attendance and assist the teacher as necessary.

What do we do if it snows?

If there is snow in the greater Puget Sound area, check your email or Facebook group for information on whether classes are being held or cancelled. Individual instructors will determine whether their classes will meet on Teams that day. We generally follow the Everett School District on Mondays, and Northshore School District on Wednesdays.

If I have extenuating circumstances, must all the rules apply to me?

All our rules apply to everyone to help make Connections run smoothly. Some are based on requirements from our church facilities or our insurance company, while others are based on past experiences. Yes, they apply to everyone; however, occasionally we have a family or student who may need an exception to a rule. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances and would like an exception to a rule, please email a board member explaining your situation. All exceptions require a board vote. We cannot always promise an exception will be granted, but we realize there are times when grace is needed.

My child is having issues with another child at Connections. What can I do?

1. If the issue is related to the safety of your child or another student, contact a board member.
2. If the issue is relational, please talk to the parent of the other child and share your concern. See if there is something you can do to work with the students. If you do not know who the parent is, we can help you figure that out.
3. If the concern is happening in class, please talk with the instructor.
4. If the issue is needing more attention, please contact a board member. We are happy to mediate a conversation between parents or parents and students, talk with parents

Is there a dress code? I saw a student not following the dress code but they were not sent home; why?

Clothing should be modest for everyone on campus. Please consider the length of shorts, hemlines, and necklines. Shirts must cover backs and midriffs. Shoes are required. Attire should not be distracting to others. Please do a quick check before you leave home. Yes, you might see students who were not asked to go home and change. We try very hard to work directly with the parent versus approaching students about their clothing. So yes, you may see students who are not following the dress code, but we may not have had a chance to discuss it with the parent.

GETTING CONNECTED

How do my kids meet other kids?

The best way to have your kids meet other kids is by attending H.O.M.E. sponsored events. H.O.M.E. is a separate organization from Connections. The organization puts on field trips, dances and other outings. Any homeschool family can join. If you wish to join H.O.M.E., you may do that through their [website](#).

Some classes more than others provide an easy way for students to get to know each other. For example, drama, band, choir, and art classes tend to be collaborative. Consider enrolling your student in one of those classes. You may add a class at any time during the year. If a class has already begun, you will need to ask for instructor permission.

Bring something to play with other students. In The Hangout, consider bringing a game and some cookies to share. For lunch, bring a big beach blanket or a soccer ball. If you see other kids playing outside, ask to join them. It can feel risky to ask but most likely you will get a yes. For high school students, offer to take photos for the yearbook class or join tech for drama.

How do I meet other parents?

Great question! There are many ways to meet other parents. The best way is to introduce yourself! We also recommend the following: attend H.O.M.E. events with your children, post on the closed Facebook group, come out of your car during lunch times and mingle, and figure out which kids your own children are connecting with and meet those parents. Perhaps suggest a time to meet at a park together.

It seems like everyone knows each other and has been at Connections forever. What do I do?

We have all felt like this at one time! The good news is we have a lot of new families each year! Yes, kids that know each other already are excited to see each other each week, but that doesn't mean they aren't open to meeting new friends.

Here are a couple things to keep in mind: please introduce yourself! We like new people. If you don't receive a warm welcome from a specific person, please know they have a story. Perhaps they are having a bad day or their child is struggling. But please know this: we are excited that you are here!

How do I find out about events or important information?

Weekly Newsletters: Every Sunday the weekly newsletter will be emailed to you and posted on the registration site ([Homeschool Life](#)) in the Newsletters link in the menu bar. This is a short one-page document with important dates and information.

Events and Calendar: On the main website, visit the [Events](#) page. On the registration site (Homeschool Life), visit the calendar on your home page.

Facebook Group: We have a closed [Facebook group](#) where families can list events they would like to invite others to. You can also ask questions or post items for sale. Politically related items are not allowed, as we are a non-profit.

Signs in the Building: We have A-frame signs as you enter the building with information for the week.

DATES YOU NEED TO KNOW

Classes

For start and end dates, as well as holidays, see the [Calendar link](#) found in the website footer.

Open House

Open House will take place in the Spring before registration. This is your chance to get to know teachers for the following year and ask questions. You and your students are invited.

School Year Kick-Off and Orientation Night

This fun event occurs in late August or early September, usually the week before school begins. There is a dinner for all new families, followed by a short meeting for all new and returning families. Finally, there is time for dessert, hanging out, and some fun and games for the students. Your whole family will be invited!

Performances

Several times a year our band and choirs put on performances. They are free and everyone is invited.

Drama performances happen in the Spring and are heavily advertised through the newsletters. Generally, the performances are free or low cost, and are performed at varying venues.

Payment Dates

Tuition payments are due six times a year and if you are registered you most likely paid the first payment already. Payment due dates can be found on our [Fees](#) page in the Family Portal tab.

2nd semester payment for supply fee - Some of our instructors have divided their supply fee into two payments. This is often the case with our art classes. Your facilitator will let you know when those are due.

Registration for the Following Year

Shortly after Mid-Winter Break you will begin to hear about registration for the following year. A schedule for the following year along with class descriptions will go out to the entire community. The email will describe when and how you can register. If you have specific questions about the best class for your specific student, stop by the Welcome Table.

Yearbooks

Yearbooks can generally be purchased online starting in October. Check your newsletter for specific dates. The yearbooks will arrive a couple weeks before school ends. They are generally picked up at a table near the Welcome Table.

INSTRUCTORS

How do I communicate with my student's instructor?

Each instructor will share with you the best way to get in touch with them. Generally, email is the best method. If you would like to talk in person, ask the teacher if you can chat after class.

Will grades be offered by the instructors?

Most high school instructors will offer a semester and end of the year-grade. If you do not receive one, please ask. Instructors do not provide transcript assistance, but lots of parents write their own, and we have an [instructor](#) who is able to provide help with an accredited high school transcript for a fee.

All course descriptions are on the website. Some teachers will note if their class is worth a full high school credit. For others, you will need to determine that. The beauty of homeschooling is that you determine what your individual child needs. Some parents add extra work to their student's homework. Other parents feel the assigned coursework is enough. Instructors are usually happy to suggest additional assignments if asked.

I have a child with special needs. How do I share this with the instructor?

Consider contacting the instructor directly and share as much about your student as you feel comfortable. Please share with your instructor specific ways they can support your student in the classroom and with assignments. If you feel like you need additional support in working with your instructor, please contact the Instructor Liaison.

What is an Instructor Liaison?

The Instructor Liaison is a member of the Board of Directors for Homeschool Connections. They are a link between the Board and the Instructors. They work each year to find instructors for our community and do the administrative tasks from collecting W-9s, class proposals, helping to set the following year class schedule, or even mediating a parent and instructor meeting.

If you have an idea for a class you think should be taught next year, contact the Instructor Liaison. You may contact her at: instructorliaison@connections nw.com

I have a concern about my child's instructor. What can I do?

Please speak with the instructor first. If you do not feel like your instructor is responding to your concern, please talk with a board member. We can talk with you about the concern that you have.

Are the Instructors employees of Connections?

No, each of our instructors are independent contractors. Connections does not employ the instructors, so by enrolling in a class, you are hiring the instructor. This is an important distinction because it means the Connections Board does not tell each instructor HOW to teach in their classrooms. Each instructor decides what curriculum they will use and how it is taught. You are in partnership with each instructor and can ask them questions, share concerns or give them lots of thank yous!

HOMESCHOOL SUPPORT

I am new to homeschooling and I need help!

We are here to help you! Stop by the Welcome Desk or post your specific question on the Facebook group. We would gladly sit down with you and help. If you have a specific question or one you would like to ask privately, please speak to or email a board member.

What are the "required subjects" homeschoolers must teach according to state law?

The answer is in [RCW 28A.225.010\(4\)](#): instruction in the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of an appreciation of art and music.

Do I have to tell anyone I am homeschooling?

Yes, for children age 8 and older. State law requires you to file a "declaration of intent" with your local school district by September 15, or within two weeks of the beginning of the quarter, semester, or trimester ([RCW 28A.200.010\(1\)](#)). You can obtain a declaration of intent from the [Washington State Homeschool Organization](#) or from your school district.

What is the difference between Homeschool Connections and H.O.M.E.?

Homeschool Connections offers enrichment classes to homeschoolers. **H.O.M.E.** is a parent support group offering a monthly newsletter, children's activity days and teen activities. Other H.O.M.E. sponsored events include a graduation ceremony and formal events for homeschooled high school students. See their separate website [H.O.M.E.](#) for more information.

If I paid for Homeschool Connections, do I need to pay for a H.O.M.E. membership, too?

Yes. H.O.M.E. is a separate organization from Homeschool Connections, and is open to all homeschoolers.

What are the leadership roles in the organization? What are the titles and what role do they play?

You can read all about our Board of Directors and Support Team [here](#).

Are there volunteer needs in the community to help me plug in?

Yes! The Board of Directors is made up of just a few volunteers, and we can't do it all! We are supported by the amazing team at the Welcome Table. But we still need help with many facets of Connections, whether that is helping younger kids with a seasonal activity, setting up or taking down events, supporting our tech team, cooking food for a teacher appreciation lunch, filling in for jobs that need a substitute, or one of many more needs that we have, we would gladly accept the gifts you bring to this community. If you are interested in sharing your time, talents and skills with Connections, please contact the board president at president@connections nw.org.