

# Young Explorers



HOMESCHOOL CO-OP

## Handbook

### **Who are the Young Explorers?**

Young Explorers is a non-profit, community of Christian homeschool families in Coles County, Illinois. We meet once a week to give our children both educational and social experiences, as well as field trips, community service projects, and school party opportunities.

Young Explorers currently serves Kindergarten through 5th grade. Older grades are offered for students who have been with our co-op and graduated out of the elementary grades, however at this time we don't have those grades open to everyone.

We offer a wide range of academic as well as elective classes including P.E., art, and music. All classes are taught by the parents and volunteers from the community. Our teachers are required to teach from a biblical worldview. The Bible is the foundation of our curriculum.

Each week, students bring their lunches and enjoy lunch together in our lunchroom, followed by recess either on the playground or in the gymnasium.

Families are responsible for knowing and abiding by all of the policies and procedures as outlined within this parent handbook. The success of our co-op community depends on a high standard of respectful behavior from all members, both adults and children.

It is incredibly important that we demonstrate a good example of home schooling and protect the facility we have so graciously been allowed to use. Observance of the guidelines listed in this handbook will ensure that co-op's objectives will be met. They can be summed up in this way: Show thoughtfulness and respect toward the teachers, parents, other students, and our host church facility and staff. At all times our actions and attitudes should honor our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." Col. 3:17.

## Mission

The mission of YE is to provide a place where homeschool moms and their children can get together to encourage each other, in the Lord, through educational classes, field trips, and other special events. To be parents who are actively training the hearts of their children to model Christ in all areas of life. As homeschool parents, we feel that God has called and enabled us to homeschool our children. We feel that cooperatively we can provide enrichment opportunities that may not be possible on our own.

## Vision

We are here to impact the next generation for Christ. We are a Christ-centered cooperative that provides a variety of educational and enrichment classes as well as field trip opportunities for homeschooling families of primary and secondary age children in a safe and loving environment. We strive to provide a safe and loving Christian environment for our children to grow in social awareness and make lasting friendships.

## Statement of Faith

YE is a Christ centered homeschool co-op. We put God at the center of our lives and live by His word. In order to preserve the function and integrity of YE and to provide a biblical role model to our members and the community, it is imperative that all members, adults and children, agree to and abide by the YE Statement of Faith.

Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." **\*lifetime habits are formed from training**

Deuteronomy 6:5-9: "... You shall teach them (God's words) diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.." (vs.8) **\* Training is a lifestyle not a curriculum. You teach your children how to love and live for God when you are living it out in daily life.**

Isaiah 54:3: "All your children will be taught of the Lord; and great will be the peace of your children."  
**\*True peace comes from being taught by God and in His ways.**

The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, the final authority of faith, truth, morality, conduct and life, without error in its original writing both in doctrine and historical details. All true knowledge is consistent with its revelation. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21)

There is one self-existent, sovereign God who is eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent. Knowing God is the foundation of all knowledge, wisdom, understanding and truth.

There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1,3 & 4:24; Acts 5:3,4; Romans 1:20; Ephesians 4:5,6; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

God created the world in 6 literal 24 hour days and rested on the 7th day. (Gen 1) Man was created by God in the image of God, but fell into sin and therefore is lost, and can only be saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone (John 14:16. Acts 4:12) *God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ* (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11)

Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, is the incarnation and supreme revelation of God. Jesus alone is the Promised Messiah, the Savior of mankind through His death on the cross, burial, resurrection from the dead and ascension to God the Father. He will return again and reunite with those who believe in Him, to reign with Him in power and glory throughout all eternity.

Every believer of Jesus Christ has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, ".....lives with you and will be in you..."(John 14:17). The Holy Spirit is the inspiration behind the writings of scripture, administrator of the church, the believer's counselor, the source of a believer's spiritual and physical strength, the believer's teacher, and the believers' confirmer of salvation.

#### **Statement on Gender, Marriage, and Sexuality**

- a. God wonderfully and immutable creates each person as male or female. Those **two** distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- b. The term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25)
- c. God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other (1 cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4)

#### **The Board's Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct**

The Statement of Faith and Statement of Gender, Marriage and Sexuality does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself is the sole and final source and authority for all that we believe.

The Board of Young Explorers Co-op reserves the right to deny or revoke membership to any individual (or family), if it is determined by the Board, that to allow such an individual (or family) as participants would be detrimental to the group, or there have been clear violations of Christian principles, which are reflected in the Statement of Faith and/or in the Bible. These decisions will be made at the sole discretion of the board.

## Young Explorers Code of Conduct

- All students and parents will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Christ, on homeschooling, and on our families at all times.
- No profanity, vulgar or insulting language.
- No hitting, slapping, pushing, biting, scratching, etc. will be tolerated.
- Clothing should be modest, adequately covering all private body parts including the midriff. Tank tops can be sleeveless, but not spaghetti straps and no cut offs. Shorts and skirts should be an appropriate length and should not be shorter than the fingertips of the children when the arms are at rest (Finger-tip rule.) Gender (as Scripture recognizes) appropriate clothing will be expected of all students. Failure to abide by this rule may result in immediate dismissal from the coop.
- Clothing and other items (jewelry, backpacks, etc.) will not include emblems or writing that are directly or implicitly lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene or promote ideas and/or groups that violate Young Explorer's statement of faith.
- Children who behave inappropriately during a class or group activity while away from their parents will be lovingly corrected by the adult in charge. If the behavior continues they will be asked to step out of the class. The parent will be sought immediately to correct the child. If the behavior continues the child will need to remain with their parent.
- Parents shall be responsible for the conduct of their children at all times. Furthermore, all adults will be expected to be watchful of all children and be proactive to help in correcting children as needed. **It takes a village!**

### **Building and Grounds**

- Children are expected to be in their appropriate class during co-op time. Children under 7 are not permitted anywhere on the property without the accompaniment of an adult or siblings over the age of 12. Children 7 and over must have permission from their teacher to be outside of class and remain in appropriate areas at all times.
- For the child's safety and respect for the church, please no running and/or chasing in the building.
- Stay out of all areas that are not part of your designated areas.
- Climbing trees and fences on the property will not be allowed, for the child's safety and insurance reasons.

The building owners are in no way liable for the protection and safety of your children while they are attending the Co-op. You are attending the Co-op in the facility at your own risk. Be responsible and accountable for your children and respectful of all children at the Young Explorer's activities you attend.

# Young Explorers Discipline and Standards Policy

1. Parents should monitor their children's behavior when needed. Appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken privately. Uncooperative or disruptive children will be removed from activities.
2. Children should respect authorities as well as peers.
3. For minor infractions, the child will be given a verbal warning, and a written note will be given to the parent.
4. In cases of more serious disciplinary issues, the following should be considered standard procedure:
  - a. Child will be given a verbal warning by the instructor, and parent will receive written notice.
  - b. If unacceptable behavior continues, the child will be taken to his/her parent for the rest of the day.
  - c. If this behavior continues in class the student may be dismissed from class and may be withdrawn from the co-op and no fees will be refunded. Any other participation in future co-ops will be for a probationary period. The Young Explorers Homeschool Co-op reserves the right to expel any student from the co-op, if disruptive, disrespectful, or inappropriate behavior fails to be curtailed.
  - d. Parents need to be willing to allow the instructors to discipline their children according to the procedures outlined above and must be willing to abide by the instructor's decision to dismiss their children from the class if the instructor deems it necessary. Parents should not undermine the authority of a teacher in front of the student. If there is an issue or discrepancy, please discuss this privately and involve the director if a compromise is not attainable.

## Parent Involvement

**1. Parents are required to serve at co-op classes in at least 2 of the following areas:** lead teacher, co-teacher, class/teacher's aide, lunch and recess duty, field trip coordinator, clean up committee, or any other area that the director deems necessary.

**2. Moms or appointed guardians must remain on the church premises at all times.** Since we are a true co-op and not a drop off educational program, a child may not participate in the co-op unless his/her parent/guardian is on site. (There will be occasions that exceptions will be made, but not on a regular basis.)

\*\*If you are unable to attend a particular Thursday and someone is willing to take responsibility for your children (guardian), that may be arranged. It is up to you as a parent to make these necessary arrangements and to notify the director.

\*\*\*\*A signed release will also be required, from the parent, to appoint another guardian of your child.

**3. Parents are to monitor their children at all times. Children are not permitted outside the building after co-op or during our lunch fellowship without adult supervision.** The parking lot can be a very dangerous place. **Please be aware of ALL children, not just your own.**

## **Student Expectations and Responsibilities**

1. Be on time and be prepared.
2. Walk in the halls between classes. Absolutely no yelling.
3. Honor parents and teachers by being polite.
4. Be respectful of others and their property. Keep hands and feet to yourself.
5. Be respectful of the church property **and clean up after yourselves**. Failure to respect the host facility can result in possible dismissal.
6. Complete class requirements and cooperate with teachers at all times. Students who disregard any classroom expectation are to be dealt with immediately.
7. Students are expected to have self control and respond appropriately to the teacher's directives.
8. Students are not to leave the classroom for any reason, without permission from the teacher.
9. Students are expected to encourage and support one another in a gracious and loving environment. No name calling or destructive comments toward one another will be tolerated.
10. No cell phones, other electronic games/equipment, or personal items should be brought to class unless approved by the teacher. Each teacher reserves the right to confiscate any such items until the end of classes should this policy be violated.
11. Only be in areas of the church and school building that are part of your regular schedule. No wandering and exploring other areas of the church building.
12. There will be no tolerance for boy/girl relationships other than friendships at this co-op. You are all too young to ruin friendships over a boy or girl.

## **Field Trip Behavior Expectations**

Classroom rules apply while at a field trip location.

Students must stay with their teacher or parent at ALL times.

Running, pushing, playing tag, etc. are absolutely not allowed while walking in line and/or inside a building.

Cameras are permitted. However, taking pictures may not be allowed at all locations. Ask permission from the tour guide before taking a picture.

Games, toys, food, drink, etc. must stay in your car.

# **General Policies and Guidelines**

## **Clean Up Policy**

Please help clean up before you leave each week. Clean up includes wiping down tables with Lysol, taking out the trash(making sure all dirty diapers are out of the nursery trash), sweeping, returning materials to their proper place, making sure bathrooms are decent, making sure windows are closed and locked, and turning lights off. We want to respect any place we meet so one of our goals is to look like we were never there, like it was before we were there.

\*\*Older students will be asked to help with some of the clean-up duties

## **Conflict Resolution Policy**

Unfortunately, personality conflicts and misunderstandings can happen. It is important that we agree on how to deal with these situations, should they arise.

Based on Matthew 18, if conflict arises, parents and teachers should seek to resolve the issue on their own. If either party is unsatisfied or resolution\* cannot be met, the parties then need to seek the assistance of one of the ladies on the leadership team.

**\*resolve/resolution—achieved when all parties reach mutual agreement or understanding.**

## **Inclement Weather Policy/Snow days**

If Charleston schools close on co-op days, we will cancel co-op for that day. We have several families that drive quite a distance and we don't need to be out on inclement weather days. If we cancel a Thursday, there will not be a make-up day or refund for that day. This policy applies for pandemic and other reasons for closing down public and private schools, if it applies.

## **Group Communication Procedure**

Communications between the director, teachers, and members of Young Explorers Co-op will come in the forms of e-mail and/or text.

Weekly general reminders will come in the form of an email and text.

## Illness Policy

Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to co-op, if the child shows any signs of illness (see SYMPTOMS REQUIRING REMOVING OF CHILD below), or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular day school day. Sick children will expose all children and adults who they come in contact with. These people can in turn expose the other children. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to co-op before full recovery or because he/she was not removed from co-op promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced.

Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important. In the event a child becomes ill at co-op, parents will need to immediately take the student out.

### Symptoms requiring removal of child from co-op

- **Fever:** Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school, that means the child is fever free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance.)
- **Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion.**
- **Diarrhea:** runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within the last 4 hours.
- **Vomiting:** 2 or more times in a 24 hour period. Note: please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night.
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.
- Frequent scratching of the body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- **Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our car**

**Head lice Policy-** Young Explorers has a nit free policy. No student may knowingly attend co-op with nits (live or dead louse eggs) in his/her hair.

## Fees & Discounts

### Fees

We strive to keep this co-op affordable, so class fees pay for supplies only, our teachers aren't paid.

**Annual Membership fees:** (billed out in July, to be paid with fall registration) The Annual Membership Fee covers facility expenses and minimal operating expenses. (Discounts are available, see below)

- New families= \$90** (they need the background check which is \$15 per parent)
- Returning families= \$60 yearly fee** (\$9/family for website fee, \$15 church donation, all other expenses for extra activities and events that arise)
- Families only participating in field trips= \$25 annual membership fee.**

### Insurance Fee-

#### **\$20/family/semester**

Charleston Bible Church has an extended policy to cover our coop as a ministry, under their insurance policy. Young Explorers reimburses CBC each semester at the rate of \$20 per family. The rest of the insurance fee is graciously absorbed by CBC.

### Class Fees

Class fees are charged **per semester**. (this covers the cost of supplies for each class). Individual class fees will vary, depending on the class and the supplies needed for that class. All fees must be paid by the end of the registration period. This allows supplies to be purchased before the first day of classes.

**Individual supplies-** additional supplies required by classes, i.e. glue, scissors, construction paper, snack for your class. (A list will be given at time of registration)

### Discounts

Because we try to keep costs as low as possible all fees have been carefully worked to charge the minimum amount possible. The only discounts that we currently offer are for Administrative and Coordinators/Directors. These discounts are as follows.

**Coordinator/Directors: \$35 discount** (still responsible for \$10 website fee and \$15 church donation)

### Refund Policy

No refunds will be given for class fees, once the semester has started, since teachers will have bought supplies for their classes.

## **Classes offered**

All classes offered are supplemental to what is being taught in the home and are meant for enrichment purposes only. The classes offered may vary from term to term and are determined by the willingness of group members to lead. However, we may have people who volunteer their time and talents teaching classes who are not co-op members (examples, Master Gardener programs, foreign language, Healthy Kids, etc).

Classes are broken down into 30-40 minute sessions.

## **Co-op Board Responsibilities:**

The volunteer leaders organize Young Explorers. The co-op leadership team evaluates the policies and classes annually. The committee is always available for suggestions. Decisions made are based on what the committee feels will benefit the co-op as a whole. Leaders will be expected to model the positive behaviors expected of all members of Young Explorers.

What the co-op leadership committee does:

- Review, approve, or deny applications for membership and conduct family interviews.
- Make decisions based on disciplinary issues that may arise.
- Make decisions regarding policy violations.

Duties of the Directors

- Organize classes, field trips, and special events.
- Maintain the coop website.
- Keep parents informed about classroom changes, holidays, etc.
- Facilitate the relationship with Charleston Bible Church
- Assure they are available for teacher and parent inquiries.
- Communicate with the church immediately if anything is damaged or broken so the coop/parent can replace it.
- Walk through the building at the completion of each co-op day to assure that all clean-up duties have been completed.