



## **The Field Cooperative 2025-2026 Membership Handbook**

Welcome!

This handbook serves as a resource for you to read and refer to throughout the year. It includes our vision, membership requirements, field trip/event planning process, guidelines, and various other resources to help you get the most from your membership.

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## **Group Overview.**

**Vision** The Field Co-op is an inclusive group of families in the Philadelphia region committed to creating and sustaining community through a variety of activities.

The individuality, experience, and unique backgrounds of our members make it thrive.

**Ages** We serve families with children from ages 5 to 18.

**Location** While Philadelphia is our closest major city, we often explore the surrounding areas.

## **Guiding Principles & Culture**

*Varied* – Different types of activities on different days and times

*Accessible* – Lots of free & low-cost activity options

*Decent* – A friendly environment with trusted adults and children who treat one another kindly

*Targeted* – For K-12 with accommodations whenever possible for younger siblings

*Local* – Philadelphia area is the home base but residency is not a requirement

*Inclusive* – Open to all who complete the full application process

*Flexible* – No mandatory attendance; minimal meetings

*Participative* – Every family has an opportunity to shape the group by planning activities

## **Application Process.**

Prospective members must complete the following steps before being considered for membership:

- 1) Complete the online application under “How to Join” on [The Field Cooperative](#) homepage.
- 2) Attend a new member Q & A session via Zoom.
- 3) Pay annual membership dues. *Option 1*: \$295 per family (which includes an agreement to plan one field trip per year and an optional invitation to plan additional events), *Option 2*: \$495 per family (with no requirement for planning field trips or events.)\*
- 4) Complete the New Member Questionnaire.
- 5) Read the Handbook with special attention paid to the guidelines. Membership is contingent upon adherence to these guidelines.

Following successful completion of these steps, new members receive an email confirming membership and activated website access. Upon acceptance, families who have selected *Option 1* must sign up for a month during which they agree to plan a field trip. A sign-up sheet will be emailed.

\*Membership applies until June 1, 2026.

## **Membership Renewal.**

Go to homepage and click “Renewal” in top menu. Follow the instructions for renewal.

## Event & Field Trip Planning Process.

To plan any field trip, event, or gathering please go to “Forms” in the top menu of the members-only website and click on the link to the Field Trip/Event Planning Form. After you fill it out, it will come to The Field Co-op email and we’ll respond with follow-up questions and/or add it to the calendar. Feel free to ask questions but events will not be added to the calendar based on emails.

Field trips and events can be planned for any day of the week based on your family’s preference; however, Mondays or Fridays tend to work well for many people. If you want to survey the group to see if there is an optimal time for an event, feel free to set up a poll using [www.when2meet.com](http://www.when2meet.com) or a similar website and invite members to share their availability.

Check the calendar before submitting the form to ensure there is not a conflict.

Whenever possible, please try to put our group in touch with a person on site, no matter where we are going. This tends to lead to engaging experiences and interesting conversations.

We try to balance paid activities with free or low-cost activities.

**It’s very important to plan a field trip for the month that you sign up!** You will *not* receive a reminder to do this. So please, if you read nothing else in this Handbook: *mark your calendar, send yourself reminders, whatever works for you to remember to plan the field trip.*

Based on many years of experience, we’ve found it’s best to plan about 3 months *before* your scheduled month so that you can iron out any details and have the event ready to be posted 6-8 weeks before the event. The deadline for submitting your form is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior (so if you sign up for March, you will need to submit your Field Trip/Event Planning form by February 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest.) That means, if you sign up for March, it’s good to get the ball rolling in January or before (sometimes a person takes a while to write back, or you decide to change gears, etc.) It’s never a problem to have the event on the calendar too early. Last minute activities are hard to schedule, usually not well-attended, and better served as FYI mentions on the Forum.

**\*New Policy for 2025-26\*** — If you do not submit a Field Trip / Event Form by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the month you signed up for, there are two options: you may either swap with someone who can plan for your month (very quickly and miraculously), in exchange for you taking their month later in the year, or you will be assessed a \$200 “activity fee” (the difference between the two membership rates). This is a situation we’d all like to avoid so please plan ahead!

As tempting as it is, it does not work to delay your field trip to a later month because we have done this in the past. What happens is the month of May becomes bananas.

The goal is to try to plan events and trips that work for as many ages as possible; however, if an activity is best suited for certain ages, that is fine to state that. Please make this a clear part of the event description.

Please ask the host how many people may attend. If there are limited spaces available, please also make this part of the event description.

Always be generous about driving directions, especially if GPS won't get families to a new place without confusion. Also, include parking info if that is helpful.

Please do not post activities that are aligned with a particular political party or religion.

Avoid activities with high minimum attendees and narrow age ranges. For example, we may be able to meet a minimum of 15 students, but probably not 15 third graders.

Generally, only activities planned exclusively for our group will be posted on the calendar. Please post public event "let's meet here" or "there's a free concert in the park" type options on a Forum. There are some exceptions so feel free to ask if you feel unsure.

An event may not be a party/celebration (e.g. birthday party) for a single child. Please do not submit forms for personal events.

### **Field Trip Planning Tips.**

The aim of the field trips is twofold: to learn and to be together.

We have the wonderful benefit of living in a vibrant area. Additionally, each member and their families are typically involved in work, hobbies, areas of study, or other interests that—one can safely assume—others share. Feel free to plan a field trip that is based on your family's interests and curiosities.

If you're stumped, think about day-to-day life and all the "behind the scenes" people who work to make our lives better—in realms as disparate as farming and music, medicine and water supply—and see if we can get a window into that work.

Examples of field trips are listed on the website under "What We Offer."

### **Event Planning Tips.**

While we ask that each family plan one field trip, all are invited to organize gatherings or other ways to enjoy each other's company, share interests, etc. One of the benefits of having many families come together in The Field Co-op is the opportunity to create social gatherings and fun events. We welcome ideas for activities that you think would be engaging and enjoyable for our families. Events can occur one time, or you are welcome to plan a re-occurring event such as a chess club or book club. Please be sure that whatever you plan can welcome, at minimum, 4 families, and ideally more. Ideas include but are not limited to:

- field day
- chess club
- cooking workshop
- an out-of-town camping trip

- bowling day
- community service opportunity
- book clubs
- sewing workshop
- tennis / basketball / etc. meet up
- hikes
- outdoor moving screening

**To submit your ideas and plans for an event**, please click “Forms” in the top menu of the members-only website where you will find the link to the Field Trip/Event Planning Form. Please submit it and we’ll respond with questions or put the event on the calendar.

## **Sign-ups.**

Website calendar – The website calendar is the heart of this group and 100% of your activity sign-ups should occur on the website. You’re not signed up for an activity unless you’re signed up on the website.

Cancellations – If an event is cancelled, those who have signed up on the website will receive an email. If you can’t make an event, please officially cancel on the website as early as possible so we can plan or postpone/cancel if needed. This is very important so we’ll know who to expect and don’t waste money, time, and effort prepping for someone who is not coming. Some events also have waiting lists, so not showing up may unnecessarily prevent others from participating. Not paying by the deadlines is not an acceptable way to communicate your cancellation. If your plans have changed and you’re not coming, please be courteous and cancel on the website.

Refunds – We often cannot guarantee refunds for Field Co-op events. Frequently we have to pre-pay for group events and tickets, or we must commit to a certain number of participants ahead of time to get a group rate or make a reservation. We try to be flexible, but please do not assume refunds will be given when you cancel a reservation. You are welcome to post on the Forum to try to sell your tickets or spots.

Payments – Activities requiring pre-payment should be paid on the website. Ideally you should pay when you sign up. If you choose not to pay upon sign-up, it is up to you to remember the payment deadline date, login, and pay on time. Whenever you pay for something, **\*\*PLEASE INCLUDE A NOTE with your real first and last name and what you’re paying for!\*\*** If you do not, we can receive transactions from unknown Paypal etc. accounts with no idea what they are for. The Paypal link is: [paypal.me/fieldcooperative](https://paypal.me/fieldcooperative) (always choose “friends & family.”)

## **Group Communication.**

**Website** – [www.thefieldcooperative.com](http://www.thefieldcooperative.com)

- **Calendar:** The official group calendar on our website is the heart of our group. Please use the calendar to sign up for all events.
- **Auto-confirmation emails:** When you sign up for certain calendar events, you’ll receive an automated email confirmation and an automated reminder 2 days before the event. You cannot turn these off.

- **Newsletter:** You will receive a weekly newsletter every Friday morning with a list of upcoming activities. You can turn this off in your profile (though it's a great way to get reminders about our group!)
- **Other emails:** In your profile, you can determine whether you want to receive an email of every post on the website forum, a once-daily digest with a summary of all posts for the day, or no email. We suggest at least the daily digest so you don't get news after it is relevant.
- **Secondary contact email:** If your partner or spouse would like to receive email notifications and updates from The Field Co-op, please add them to your profile under "secondary name" and select preferred notification settings. They will not receive updates for events unless they signed up for it, but can receive other general communication.
- **Other website features:** There are a few other helpful website features aside from the calendar:
  - **Classifieds:** You can post things to buy/trade/sell to other Field Co-op families. You can adjust your profile settings to ensure that you receive emails of all Classifieds right away.
  - **Forum:** The website forum is a posting board where members can communicate about a variety of topics. It is broken into categories so you can quickly post and find info in a relevant area. Please adjust your account settings to receive forum posts via email.
  - **Member directory:** If you opted out of including your contact info in the group directory, please reconsider and update your profile. The member directory is only accessible on the password-protected website and it allows other members to get in touch with you.

## Code of Conduct for Contributions.

When you make any contributions to the website on the calendar, directory, or forums, you agree that:

- Your contributions are not false, inaccurate, or misleading.
- Your contributions are not unsolicited or unauthorized advertising, promotional materials, pyramid schemes, chain letters, spam, mass mailings, or other forms of solicitation.
- Your contributions do not ridicule, mock, disparage, intimidate, or abuse anyone.
- Your contributions are not obscene, libelous, slanderous, or otherwise objectionable or inappropriate.
- Your contributions do not violate the privacy or publicity rights of any third party.
- Your contributions do not contain any material that solicits personal information from anyone under age 18 or exploits people under the age of 18 in any manner.
- Your contributions do not violate any applicable law intended to protect the health or well-being of minors.
- Your contributions do not include any offensive comments connected to race, national origin, gender, sexual preference, or physical differences.

Any use of the website in violation of the foregoing violates our guidelines and may result in, among other things, termination or suspension of your rights to use the website and participate in The Field Co-op.

## **Group engagement.**

As we strive to make the group inviting and comfortable, please remember that the best way to feel a sense of belonging is to reach out to new people. Also, getting involved regularly will help you and your children will feel connected to the community.

## **Ages & Stages.**

The Field Co-op is a family-friendly group comprised of families with mixed-aged children, so many of our events are open to all or most ages. However, we recognize that our children also have a need and interests for age-specific activities. Preschool parents, please be mindful of what your child can and cannot handle and use your best judgement when deciding about attendance at certain events. Please also confirm with the event planner what ages are and are not allowed (or need an official “ticket” etc.)

## **Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy.**

The Field Co-op does not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student or parent. A student or parent may not intimidate, harass, or bully another student or parent through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation. Parents are responsible for discussing this policy with their children and assuring them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students or parents who bully or harass are in violation of this policy and may be asked to leave events. Temporary membership suspension and revocation of membership may result from bullying behaviors.

## **Conflict Resolution.**

If a difficulty or disagreement arises between individual members, please do not let it simmer and escalate. Go to the one with whom you have a conflict and attempt resolution by:

- Agreeing to a time to meet in person or via phone/zoom to discuss the issue.
- Affirming the importance of the relationship.
- Defining the conflict clearly and staying on topic when discussing.
- Listening carefully and reflecting back what you hear.
- Suggesting a solution that incorporates the thoughts and interests of others.

If you cannot land on a mutually satisfactory resolution, then issues that impact the integrity and operation of the group should be brought to the leadership for further discussion and to solicit support in conflict resolution. Please email [ashley@thefieldcooperative.com](mailto:ashley@thefieldcooperative.com) for assistance.

## **Guidelines.**

Your continued participation in The Field Co-op assumes that you've read and agree with all that is included in the Guidelines. Please find this document on the next page.

## **The Field Cooperative: Guidelines**

The Field Co-op is an inclusive group of families in the Philadelphia region committed to creating and sustaining community through a variety of activities. We share the following objectives:

1. To promote and offer members a wide range of educational activities.
2. To create community and support among families pursuing alternative paths in education.
3. To cooperate with other clubs and entities with objectives similar to those of the organization or formed for the purposes of fostering and promoting learning and social opportunities.

Members have a right to:

1. Be treated fairly and respectfully by other members.
2. Socialize in an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
3. Privacy and confidentiality in documentation and any other communication containing a member's personal information, unless consent is provided.
4. Participate in organized member activities within noted event parameters.
5. Be actively involved in planning and executing field trips and/or events for the organization.
6. Respectfully voice their opinions and suggestions for change and be involved in solutions.

Members must:

1. Treat other members with courtesy and respect.
2. Be courteous to our hosts (e.g. this includes watching after young ones, respecting property, abiding by the rules of the place.)
3. Comply with evolving local and CDC guidelines regarding mask mandates.
4. Stay home/not attend co-op events if any member of the family has had a fever above 100.2 or has felt unwell within 24 hours prior to an event. (If the fever has gone away, with or without medications, or symptoms have resolved, members are *still* expected not to attend in order to protect the health and wellbeing of others.)
5. Agree that all contributions to the website are in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Contributions (found on page 6 of this Handbook).

6. Be in attendance, or assign designated guardians, for all events at which their children are in attendance.

Any member not acting within the stated parameters of these Guidelines at any event may be asked to leave the function and will not be entitled to a refund. Inappropriate behavior by any member may result in a temporary suspension or permanent revocation of membership.