



MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

Revised 3/2023

*We are so glad to have you in Eastside! You are an important part of the success of this group, the growth of our children and the memories that will be made!
We appreciate each of you!*

HISTORY OF EASTSIDE EXPLORERS

Eastside Explorers began in 1989 as Northeast Valley Home Educators when North Phoenix/Scottsdale was the “eastern” most part of the Valley. A group of homeschool parents saw the need for a faith-based community to support their journey when homeschooling wasn’t as common. They paved the way for our group today!

WHO WE ARE

Since then, homeschool parents have carried this precious group under the guidance and direction of God’s sovereign hand. Today, we are a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) group of homeschool families who still seek to continue those same values and experiences for our own children.

OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of Eastside Explorers is to bring together like-minded homeschooling families who each contribute their gifts, talents, and time to create a beautiful experience for our children. As a group, we agree to encourage and support each other and to abide by our [Statement of Faith](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) treating each other respectfully and modeling the same for our children.

WHAT WE OFFER

As an Eastside Explorer, you will receive:

- Access to our calendar, forum, and directory
- Email messages from the group and access to our private Facebook group
- Opportunities to participate in the following member-led activities (varies by interest, attendance, and planning of our members):
 - Park Days
 - Discounted or free field trips
 - Holiday parties
 - Planned main events and gatherings (i.e. family picnics, Geography Fair, etc.)
 - Small groups (God’s Girls, Boys’ Club, Tween, Teens, Moms, Dads)
 - Drop-off Class Days
- A sense of community with other homeschoolers for mutual support, friendship, and encouragement

MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

Eastside Explorers is a completely volunteer-led homeschool group. At least one parent from each family must commit to serve in Eastside on a short-term, volunteer basis by **planning/assisting once per semester in an area of your choice**. Contributions by our members are not only minimal, but they are a necessity in making Eastside successful.

Each member must commit to the following*:

- Agree to follow our [By-Laws, Code of Conduct, Terms of Service](#)
- Respect our [Statement of Faith](#)
- Be homeschooling at least one child who is a minimum of six years of age
- Understand that EE leaders are unpaid volunteers who give their own time and talents. It is your responsibility to see to it that you fulfill your volunteer commitments, submit payments, or stay active within the group. While we are here to fully support you and your family, we expect each family to be proactive in their membership.
- Fulfill your volunteer commitment promptly by [contacting our Membership Team](#) to coordinate immediately after registration or renewal.
- Be an active participant - attend a minimum of ONE non-class day event per month (i.e., park day, field trip, small group, party, etc.)
- Watch your children at all events or coordinate help from another parent
- Submit yearly membership dues and update your Family Profile
- Communicate promptly with leadership - this involves reading emails and responding within a reasonable timeframe.
- Pay any field trips, class days, or other fees at the time of sign-up. Non or late payments may result in removal from events, classes, or the EE group.
- Be a friend — we have many new families and members without any extended family out here. Share a smile, set up a playdate, get to know each other, and have fun on your homeschool journey together!

** Any conflict or non-fulfillment of these items may result in being removed from the group.*

CODE OF CONDUCT

- All participants, students and parents alike, are to treat others with courtesy and respect at all times. Interpersonal concerns should be directed to the parent first.
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and/or any type of electronic nicotine delivery system or weapons is prohibited at all EE functions.
- Children should be supervised at all times.
- Conflicts should be handled in a mature, Biblical manner. Problems should be taken directly and privately to the concerned individual(s) and not become an object of gossip.
- Inappropriate conversation, gesture, or aggressive physical contact will not be permitted.
- Physical affection between males and females or homosexual behavior is unacceptable during co-op.
- We should seek to honor God in both character and dress. Modesty and discretion are the standards. No visible underclothing, bare midriff or cleavage is allowed.
- All members shall respect our co-op as a blessing to families encouraging involvement and friendship within our group.
- Members may participate within other homeschool co-ops but shall not hold leadership positions in other group where there could be a conflict of interest.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT EASTSIDE EXPLORERS

Q: What is the purpose of Eastside Explorers?

The purpose of Eastside is to provide homeschooling families in the Northeast Valley with educational, social, networking and support opportunities within a co-op framework for parents and their children with a Christian emphasis and worldview.

Q: Who runs Eastside Explorers?

Families are required to volunteer and contribute a reasonable yet minimal amount of their time by planning field trips, helping to organize events, hosting an event, etc. Eastside Explorers has a Board of Directors made up by volunteer members who take into consideration the input of all families while making decisions for the group but it is truly the participation of our member families that make Eastside successful.

Q: Is Eastside Explorers a Christian group?

Eastside Explorers is led by a Christian Board of Directors, who follow and share Biblical precepts when planning and facilitating our group's activities. We do not intend to be divisive in any way, however we do ask that each of our members reads and signs our Statement of Faith and Honor Code to fully understand the basics of our faith as it pertains to our function as a Christian homeschooling co-op.

Q: Where does Eastside primarily meet?

Our activities are held in Scottsdale and northeast Phoenix. Park Days are held near Scottsdale/Cactus Rd. Optional classes are held in North Phoenix/Scottsdale. Field trips are scheduled around the valley and beyond. Check our member calendar to see when and where our park days and special events are held.

Q: How does Eastside Explorers communicate with their members?

Members can reach each other through the private website forum, private Facebook page or contact each other directly using contact info. found in the Directory.

Q: How often can/should I expect to see other members?

Members can reach each other through the private website forum, private Facebook page or contact each other directly using contact info. found in the Directory.

Q: Do you have a weekly park day?

Our Park days are on Tuesday afternoons in North Phoenix/Scottsdale.

Q: What activities can I expect in Eastside Explorers?

Eastside Explorers is completely volunteer-led and the number of field trips and events is based solely on the planning of our members. These events are typically offered each year:

- Field trips
- Weekly Park Days
- Holiday Parties (Christmas, Valentine's Day)
- Kick-Off Gathering
- Friendsgiving
- Teen group (co-ed)
- Tween group (co-ed)
- God's Girls group
- Boys' Group
- Special Events (vary by year) including Geography Fair, Showcase, Market Day
- Mom's Time Out
- Optional Drop-off Classes

Q: Do you have age-specific activities?

Homeschooling is a multi-generational adventure! Most of our activities and events can be attended by all ages, however we do have a few activities that are age-specific. These groups vary by year and the interest of our members in organizing them.

Q: Do you have a teen group?

While we have many teens in our group, participation by teens in Eastside s offered activities varies by event and by year. All of our activities are open to teens and we encourage them to participate and be a positive role model to our younger members. Parents of teens are encouraged to plan a monthly teen event (a game night, pizza in the park or similar) for students age 13-18.

Q: Do you make accommodations for food allergies?

Eastside Explorers is sensitive to the needs and requirements of all of our members. While we do offer food items at many of our events, we do occasionally ask our members to bring nut-free, peanut-free items if a parent makes a request because of a severe allergy. We cannot, however, guarantee that exposure or cross-contamination won't happen.

Q: Are there other homeschool groups in the area?

There are many support groups in the Phoenix metropolitan area. Please see our [Other Support Group Info page](#) for more information.

Q: What events does Eastside offer throughout the year?

Eastside usually hosts a Kick-Off, Friendsgiving, and holiday parties such as Christmas, Valentine s Day and Easter. If there is enough interest and parent leadership/organization, we sometimes also host a Science Fair, Geography Fair, Art Fair and Talent Show among other things!

MEMBERSHIP:

Q: What does my membership fee cover? Are there any additional fees throughout the year?

We are a 501c3 non-profit organization, registered with the Arizona Corporation Commission. The membership enrollment fee covers:

1. Yearly and monthly website fees,
2. An insurance policy required by the state of Arizona for all non-profit corporations,
3. Additional administrative costs associated with running a non-profit organization.
 - Nominal fees (with group discounts) are charged throughout the year for some events and field trips to cover the entry fee and/or facility rentals. You may purchase a copy of our yearbook for an additional fee. Our park days have no additional fees associated with them, unless you sign up to participate in an event which is held in conjunction with park day.
 - We seek only to cover our costs associated with our offerings and research every avenue for keeping the fees as minimal as possible. You are welcome to share resources with which you have had a positive experience as well.
 - Occasionally a fundraiser may be initiated to benefit seasonal parties, provide member scholarships, keep our yearbook costs to a minimum and/or provide items needed for service projects.
 - While Eastside covers most of the PayPal fees that we are charged for each transaction, occasionally the Board may vote to add a periodic fee when our resources get below our recommended bank account amount. You may be assured that the Board of Directors has a double-accountability system in place to ensure that the monies you spend are allotted with the utmost care and responsibility.

Q: Are there membership requirements?

Yes, each family is required to select only one area to serve throughout the year. A member may choose to join the Field Trip Team (and plan two field trips for the entire year), or join the Social Events Team (and help at two events such as our Fall Kick-Off and Spring Showcase) or join a Small Group Team (and help plan events for that age group) — there are many possibilities based on what interests you and your children. These volunteer opportunities are listed on our Membership Application.

We value our members precious time, therefore these volunteer opportunities are very minimal. In comparison to other co-ops where you must volunteer hours each week, we just ask for a handful of hours over the course of the entire year! Because we feel this volunteer requirement is not only fair but light, we reserve the right to “park” any members who do not fulfill their volunteer commitment.

Q: Who do I talk to if I have an issue with another family, child, etc.?

We ask that all of our members adhere to our Code of Conduct and treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. However we do know that, at times, there may be conflict between families. We ask that you first come peacefully to this another member to try and resolve the issues between you and handle the manner with a Biblical approach. If there is no resolution, please reach out to our President or Vice-President so that we may help meditate the situation.

ABOUT FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS:

Q: How many field trips per month does Eastside offer?

Since our field trips are all planned by our members, they vary by location and frequency each month. We try to offer at least 2 field trips per month that appeal to a variety of age groups.

Q. How do I sign up for a field trip?

Once logged-in to our member site, click on Calendar then on the field trip you would like to attend. Follow the instructions on the bottom of the pop-up screen to sign up.

Q: How do I pay for a field trip?

After signing up, you will be prompted to pay immediately via PayPal, credit or debit. Registration for field trips is complete once payment is made, with PayPal as our preferred method of payment. Unpaid registrations (not paid within 24 hours of signing up) will be deleted without the requirement of providing advanced notice to the individual member family.

Q: If I can't attend a field trip can I get a refund?

Field trip fees are non-refundable. If a member family is unable to participate in a field trip for which they have already paid, they are welcome to gift their openings to another Eastside family or sell them privately by advertising them on our website forum and/or private Facebook page.

Q: Can an extended family member bring my kids on a field trip or to an event?

Because of the size of our group and the necessity of keeping field trip spots open to as many members as possible, extended family members may be signed up to attend field trips with the member family within 24 hours of the field trip sign-up deadline if openings exist at that time UNLESS you need one family member to help you with your children. You can register that family member when you sign up for the field trip. As our organization is unable to be aware of and monitor every guest at every field trip, each member family bears the responsibility of ensuring that their guest(s) pose no real or perceived safety risks to others.

Neither non-member teens nor adults may accompany children in place of the member parent(s) on field trips unless approval from the field trip coordinator. No student should be left alone on any field trip with less than two adults present (unless one adult is the student's parent or guardian). Parents are responsible for their children at all times at both public and private venues, as Eastside offers no drop-off field trips.

Q: How do I plan a field trip?

Planning a field trip is super easy and a great way to fulfill your short-term volunteer commitment to Eastside. We offer a step-by-step outline for everything you need to ask the venue. You simply arrange it and send the info. to the Field Trip Team Leader to add to the calendar. The day of the field trip you show up, check off names and take a group photo! [Email the Field trip Team HERE!](#)

ABOUT DONATIONS:

Q: Is my membership fee or payment for classes/field trips tax-deductible?

Although Eastside does not offer tax-deductible receipts for any payment that is made in exchange for a service or a product, feel free to check with your accountant.

Q: Can I receive a tax-write-off if I donate to Eastside Explorers?

Yes! As a 501(c)(3) public charity, Eastside Explorers gladly accepts donations in three forms: Monetary, Property/real estate, or Assets of any kind. Contributions for which tax-deductible receipts are issued are fully under the control of Eastside and are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. No goods or services can be received in connection with these contributions.

Q: What is done with my donation?

Eastside graciously uses contributions for homeschooling support services, events, operating expenses, and scholarships to families who would not typically be able to join Eastside Explorers or participate in field trips or classes.

ABOUT CLASS DAYS

Q: Why does Eastside offer classes?

Eastside has always kept the interest of our members at heart and, after member feedback and careful prayer, we feel Eastside can serve our homeschool community by providing an enriching experience. These classes are taught by qualified tutors and offer optional classes in a small group setting while providing an exciting educational and social experience.

Q: What classes are offered this year?

Classes, days and times will vary each year. Please check our current class schedule on our 'Class Days' page.

Q: Since Eastside will offer classes, is it considered a school?

No, Eastside is not a private, charter, or public school. The IRS recognizes Eastside Explorers as a non-profit, community service organization. Due to our non-profit status, Eastside can never become a school. The fees you pay for the tutors are paid directly to the tutors and do not go through Eastside. These tutors are independent contractors; we just provide the meeting space and the connection between the students and the teachers.

Q: Do I need to stay the entire time my child is in a class?

Parents are not required to stay for the classes. Eastside will have a member on site during class time and has performed background checks on all teachers in charge of students. There will also not be supervision for students not enrolled in a class but on campus. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the supervision of his/her child. In addition, we ask that all parents complete and sign a Release and Liability Waiver.

Q: How do I drop-off my child?

If arriving at the start of classes, please walk your child to the **front door and sign him/her in** for the day. No child may be dropped off more than 5 minutes before class as there will not be an adult to supervise. No child may be dropped off in the parking lot. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that his/her child enters the building. We ask that all parents and students do their absolute best to make it to class on time each week. This will greatly help to reduce distractions and disruptions. Excessive tardies may result in termination from classes. Likewise, for safety reasons, we keep all doors locked at all times. If your child is late, you will need to text the Class Day Director for the doors to be opened for you.

Q: How do I pick up my child?

Please be prompt when picking up your child since the teachers and supervisor(s) have a tight schedule to keep.. Parents may pick up their child(ren) outside of the entrance door. Doors may not be opened while classes are in session so, if you arrive early, please wait patiently until a teacher opens the door for you. All students must be signed out of classes for the day.

No student may wait in the front of the building or in the street for his or her parent. Please also be respectful of the ongoing classes by not entering the building unless necessary and with permission (via phone) from the teacher or Director.

Q: How can we register for classes?

Only members may view and register for classes. You may do so directly from our CLASS DAYS page located under your membership account.

An Admin/Facility Fee of \$50 per family, per semester will be due to cover our operating costs. We have uploaded a helpful [video tutorial](#) to aide in the registration and payment process.

Q: How do I pay for the classes?

Visit our CLASS DAYS page, register for classes and pay for classes by: 1.) Logging on to the EE member site 2.) Using the link at the upper right of the page title "Balance" 3.) Following the steps to pay for the class via PayPal.

Each class requires a minimum of the Supply Fee + 1st month's tuition at the time of registration to secure your child's spot. Additionally, you may select to pay the entire semester at once by selecting the remaining monthly payment checkboxes.

Your Class Day Admin fee will be invoiced to your account separately and will also be required before classes begin.

Q: What does each class cost and are there any additional fees?

Each class semester fee varies by class and length of class however all are very reasonable priced for the quality of small group instruction. Each family enrolled in one or more classes will also be required to pay an additional \$50 Class Day Admin/Facility fee per semester.

Class tuition ranges from \$32-50/month per engaging classes taught by experienced teachers. Each class has a supply fee to cover teacher-purchased materials.

Q: What qualifies as a semester?

There are two semesters in each academic calendar year. First (1st) semester runs from Sept. - Dec. and Second (2nd) semester runs from Jan. - April. A full academic calendar is listed at the bottom of our Class Days page.

Q: Do we have to be a member of Eastside Explorers for my child to take a class?

Yes. EE members will receive early-registration and all the year-long perks of being in Eastside such as discounted field trips, parties, active forum, and amazing fellowship.

Q: What if I need to drop out of a class after we ve joined?

Once you enroll your child in a class, you are contractually obligated to pay for the entire semester of that class whether or not your child continues to attend the class. Our teachers work as Independent Contractors and pre-plan, pre-purchase many items based on the number of students enrolled in the beginning of the semester. Special circumstances may be privately addressed with the teacher. When the semester is complete, you are not required to enroll in the Second Semester. Under EE's Member requirements, members must also fulfill payments on time.

Q: Do I have to pay if my child misses a class or is sick?

We have a conservative and firm Sick Policy in place. Your child will be sent home if he/she displays any signs of illness or complains of illness. Tuition is based on each semester and no refunds are given, however, a teacher or director will happily drop-off or email any missed work your child may miss

Q: Can we add a class after it has already begun?

Yes, you can add classes once the academic year has begun if there is still room in the class, at the approval of the teacher of that particular class.

Q: Do we have to pay by semester?

You may choose to pay for each class by the month or full semester. However, the Facility Fee, Supply Fee, and a minimum of the first month's tuition is due at the time of registration. If using ESA, please read below on payment policies and visit our Class Days page to view the complete ESA instructions.

Q: Will we receive statements?

No, you will not receive statements (emailed or mailed). You are responsible for payment online by selecting either the monthly or full semester option. If choosing the monthly payment option, please set a reminder to pay on the 1st of each month to avoid any late fees.

Q: Are there any late fees?

Monthly tuition is due on the 1st of each new month. Any late payments will be assessed a \$20 late fee per class for payments paid on or after the 5th.

Q: Are these classes a full curriculum? Will there be graded work?

Although we are not a school, students in upper elementary, middle and high school are expected to complete all assigned work throughout the week. Teachers will be providing feedback, either orally, written or in grade format. It is most beneficial for students to keep up with the assignments to ensure there are no gaps in learning and he/she may contribute in class the following week. Parents are expected to oversee students' work throughout the week and will be responsible, as homeschool parents, for assigning any final grades.

Q: Does Eastside require any specific classes?

Parents and students are free to choose whatever classes they feel best compliment their homeschool endeavor. You may choose one class or five.

Q: I am interested in teaching a class. Is this possible?

Yes! Please [contact our President](#) with your class idea and, after Board approval, we can coordinate adding your class.

Q: Are there any classes for high school students available?

If there is enough interest, we offer high school classes. Please check our current class schedule for this semester's offerings.

Q: Does Eastside provide transcripts or send report cards?

No, Eastside is not a school; therefore, we do not provide transcripts. As home educators, each parent is responsible for creating his/her child's transcript and assigning a final grade.

Q: Can I use ESA for the classes?

Most teachers accept ESA payments but not all do. It is the parent's responsibility to determine eligibility. Please note that since ESA is severely behind on payments to teachers, all ESA families must pay the ENTIRE semester supply fee in full at the time of registration.