



**Home Circle of Hernando County
Membership Agreement and Field Trip Etiquette
2022-2023**

MISSION

The purpose of Home Circle is to help and encourage new and experienced homeschooling parents to strive for spiritual and academic excellence for their children. Although we are not experts, we will assist and direct families to information regarding homeschooling. We encourage the support of the statewide group: Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA), as well as support the Home Education Foundation (HEF), our Lobbyist in Tallahassee, in order to ensure our freedom to homeschool. We inform our members of legislative action required to protect our rights as parents and educators. We also cooperatively organize educational, social, and physical activities for the families.

I. Home Circle will attempt to provide the following for its members:

- A. Member Directory (online)
- B. Monthly Meetings (August- November; January - April)
- C. Awards Night, Kindergarten Graduation, Promotion Night, High School Graduation (May)
- D. Used Book Sale (May)
- E. Ladies' Christmas Party (December)
- F. Children's activities organized by Board and Members who CAN volunteer to do so.
- G. Support for HEF (Home Education Foundation)
- H. Legislative updates
- I. The setting for a group test with a FL certified teacher for the purpose of Annual Evaluations.

As a volunteer organization, Home Circle's ability to organize the above is dependent upon the effort of its' members. The inability of Home Circle to organize any of the above items shall not be considered actionable.

II. Home Circle Members will:

A. Pay yearly dues to Home Circle (\$50.00/yr.) The membership dues helps cover a variety of costs, such as support to HEF, monthly parent meetings, helping create a full-color yearbook for preserving memories, some of the costs of children's activities, and the cost of having an incredible, convenient and user-friendly website to communicate among the membership, among other things. ** A discounted fee of \$25/ yr is available for *single parents*, if they desire one. There is also a \$20/yr membership fee for *Alumni* of Home Circle; those who were members of Home Circle while homeschooling, and have 'graduated' all their children.

B. Attend as many monthly meetings as possible. We need everyone's input and participation, and hope to provide encouragement to the parents at these meetings. In case childcare cannot be provided at a

certain meeting, **ALL** children (including teens) MUST sit quietly with the parent, and will not be allowed to freely roam the building, or sit out in the lobby.

C. Adhere to a "Returned Check Fee" Policy as follows:

- The first time a check is returned for insufficient funds, the member will pay a \$ 30 fee.
- The second time a check is returned, the member will pay a \$ 45 fee, and will no longer be allowed to write checks to Home Circle.

D. Maintain a standard of dress that is appropriate for each activity. Parents should set the example for their children and we should strive to be above reproach as we are judged by how we appear. (This refers to modest, clean apparel that does not advertise something that would not reflect well on our statement of faith. This does not refer to the price tag of the apparel.) We will also honor the dress codes of churches and the other facilities that we utilize.

E. Maintain a standard of behavior that reflects well on home educators and Christians.

1. Arrive early to events.
2. Consider age-appropriateness of activities.
3. Children should behave in an appropriate manner with courtesy and respect.
4. Parents should set an example for their children by being attentive, etc. Members will refrain from smoking and the appearance of smoking, and will refrain from consuming/using tobacco products, all liquor products and the use of illegal substances at all Home Circle functions.

F. Parents are responsible for their children's behavior.

(Hebrews 10:24.) Children should be responsive, obedient, quiet, and attentive while someone is speaking. They should raise their hand to ask questions in a group. It is especially important that they exhibit obedience and respect for their parents. (Ephesians 6:1). Children should also respect each other.

G. Parents should assist in some capacity with activities in which their children participate.

This might be set-up, clean up, errand-person, phone calls, or the actual planning and presenting.

H. Honor our telephone policies, which are as follows:

1. Many answers to your questions can be found at www.homecircleofhernando.com, please review this resource before calling for information.
2. Do not give out other members' names and phone numbers without that person's permission. It is better to take the name and number of the caller, place the call yourself, and deliver the information.

I. Honor our website etiquette policies which are as follows:

1. The Home Circle website and Facebook group functions as a tool to aid in educational activities. There may arise Biblical, political, or health questions or statements from members seeking or sharing information. These questions or statements are not necessarily shared or endorsed by Home Circle of Hernando support group. When views are shared that distract from the focus of schooling our children, the Board retains the right to cut that thread.

2. Members must use the website and Facebook group in a manner that is respectful toward the feelings and beliefs of each member. No negative personal comments are to be posted about members, or about opinions expressed by a member. Disagreements that arise should be resolved privately off forum according to the Biblical standard represented in Matthew 18:15-17.

3. Any member behaving in a manner in opposition to this policy will be asked by the Board to cease. If negative website or Facebook behavior continues, that member will be given the option to cease or to quit their non-refundable Home Circle membership.

4. Do not misuse the benefits of the Home Circle website and Facebook Group. This includes excessive advertisement for services offered for a business profit, such as classes and co-ops. Home Circle of Hernando offers advertisements for businesses by offering reduced rates to sponsor various events throughout the year.

III. Home Circle will use the Biblical example of Matthew 18:15-17 to enforce our Membership Agreement.

If a member refuses to abide by our Membership Agreement, we will revoke membership. While our activities are not “evangelical” in nature, our members should be fully aware of our Christian purpose to glorify the Lord God in all activities. As such, we will not provide, participate, or knowingly endorse activities that would in any way dishonor our Lord.

Furthermore, member families are in agreement that during their participation in any activities or field trips as part of Home Circle, they will conduct themselves according to standards that will reflect positively on our group, homeschooling, and our Savior. Home Circle is not a legal entity; it exists only as a cooperative association of parents who are committed to protect and educate our children, without any attempt to delegate that responsibility to others. These responsibilities are not shared. Any activities associated with Home Circle are merely cooperative activities participated in by various families who are active in the cooperative. Home Circle cannot sue or be sued. Home Circle and its Board of Directors and members are volunteers. We are not experts, and we do not provide professional advice or counseling. Although volunteers active in Home Circle coordinate some activities, we are responsible ONLY for our children and ourselves. EACH family is responsible for the health, safety, and education of their own children and should not be required to perform duties for parents who are not present. The Board of Home Circle maintains the right to deny or revoke (non-refundable) any membership.

Home Circle Field Trip & Social Functions Etiquette and Policies 2020-2021

We want to have a good reputation as home educators as well as representatives for Jesus Christ when we are on field trips, in public, or at a social function. We should strive to be above reproach. If we are to be a light to the world, we need to behave on field trips with promptness, courtesy, and attentiveness. This not only reflects well on our Savior, but also encourages the tour-giver to welcome us and other homeschool groups to return. It is the policy of Home Circle that **“members only”** are allowed on designated HC field trips or social functions.

Incident Report- In the event that an incident happens at a field trip or social function, we ask that you print off the Incident Report, within 24 hours of the incident, and email the Coordinator in charge of that event. By doing this within 24 hours of the incident, it gives the Coordinator the ability to handle any given situation in a timely manner.

If an incident is reported after 72 hours (3 days), it severely limits all parties involved to come to a resolution. So we ask that you do your best to report an incident within 24 hours and not wait beyond 72 hours. If an incident does occur, please don't talk it over with several others, but go directly to the Coordinator of the event so that it can be handled in a proper manner.

The following are a few guidelines:

1. **Sign up for field trips on the website calendar.** Always verify the email address AND (cell) phone number listed when signing up. Check emails regularly for important information regarding trips/events.

Maintain your sign-ups by frequently checking the website calendar of events. Sign up for as many trips/events as you like, however do NOT sign up for the trips/events if you are not sure you are available to attend them. Failure to maintain your sign-ups greatly decreases the opportunity for others to attend trips/events. Be mindful of deadline dates and minimum/maximum participation requirements when signing up. Check the status of the field trip prior to attending. In the event of a last-minute cancellation, notice will ONLY be given via the Facebook group and email.

2. If there is a fee and/or a sign-up deadline please make sure to honor that. Payments for field trips/events will be made ONLY through the website. Please make payments as soon as possible for these events. If you must cancel, please be sure to notify the field trip organizer as soon as possible, so that they have time to revise the attendance forms, and refund your payment if canceled within the allotted time frame. **A forty-eight (48) hour notice MUST be given in order to receive a refund, unless the venue has stipulated otherwise, and in which case, NO REFUND will be given. Refunds will only be given by check or PayPal when possible.**

When a member exhibits a pattern (after 3rd time) of signing up for field trips and/or events, and then fails to attend, he/she will be placed on a "waiting list" for subsequent events, until adequate time has been allotted for others to sign up. There are times when Field Trips require a set number of attendees in order to get the discounted group rate. Last minute cancellations could cause this rate to be altered by the venue, the reason we highly encourage you to commit to attend such events you sign up for and avoid the group unnecessary higher cost. Remember, last minute cancellations or no-shows will not receive a refund. Refunds will not be issued to anyone after final numbers/payments have been given to the venue/event/activity.

3. Please plan to arrive at field trips at (or before) the designated time. The group cannot enter a scheduled field trip late, and the venues do not allow us to prepay for people arriving at a later time. It is not reasonable to ask punctual members to delay their trips for those who did not allot enough time. No exceptions. If you do not show up on time you will forfeit your spot and will not receive a refund. We will not be able to wait for late members to arrive.

4. Be aware of the age-appropriateness of the field trip, and don't bring a child that is too young or too old. Nursing babies are always welcome. Try to co-op with other families so that one parent could stay home with the younger children. Field trips are designed for parents and their school-aged children. Please make note of the age classifications for all field trips and activities with Home Circle, unless otherwise stated:

- * Elementary group ages 0-10
 - Preschool ages 0-5
 - Elementary ages 5-10
- * Middle school ages 10-14
- * High school ages 14-19

5. Maintain a standard of behavior that reflects well on home educators and Christians.

- A. Arrive at the designated time to events.
- B. Children should behave in an appropriate manner with courtesy and respect. Hebrews 10:24 Children should always be responsive and obedient. Touch only when permitted. Children stay quiet if an adult is talking. Children raise their hand if asking a question in a group. It is especially important that they exhibit obedience and respect for their parents- Ephesians 6:1. And, the children should respect each other.

C. Parents should set an example for their children by being attentive, etc. Members will refrain from smoking and the appearance of smoking, and will refrain from consuming/using tobacco products, all liquor products and the use of illegal substances at all Home Circle functions.

6. **Please dress your children to suit the occasion.** A Home Circle t shirt is always appropriate, but clean, modest clothing is expected. Parents should set the example for their children and we should strive to be above reproach, as we are judged by how we appear. (This refers to modest, clean apparel that does not advertise anything that would not reflect well on our Statement of Faith. This does NOT refer to the price tag of the apparel.) We will also honor the dress codes of churches and other facilities that we utilize.

7. **Inform your children of any learning experiences that will take place on the field trip.** You might want to take advantage of the field trip opportunity, by working into your curriculum, beforehand, any information that would enhance the learning during the trip and afterwards, having the children write a short report and/or illustrate or take a quiz. Check the website calendar for a particular event for any extra-learning printouts or links.

8. **Parents or a designated adult should stay with their children.** This is not the time to be visiting with each other. **You are responsible for your children's behavior.** Do not let them run ahead. Arrange with another adult to watch your child for a minute if you must attend to the needs of another child. Strive to appear as a professional teacher with a classroom, not just as a group of parents and children.

All members must read and agree with our Membership Agreement and Field Trip & Social Events Etiquette and Policy form.

Please note: All activities of Home Circle, unless otherwise noted, have an expectation of "Members only" participation.