



HESWM

Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi

Policies and Procedures

July 2020

Message from the Board

These policies have been in place throughout the history of HESWM. The 2020-2021 board decided to consolidate the multiple places they may be found into one document starting August 2020. Some have evolved as the group has grown while others have been added based on experiences from the previous and current board. Our goal by establishing one central document is to ensure new members and future board members will have easy access. It has been useful to evaluate and revise these policies annually.

- ACCIDENT WAIVER AND LIABILITY RELEASE
- Treasurer Policies:
- Sports
- Learning sessions
- ****Due to Covid-19**** the following guidelines shall be in place starting Aug 1st 2020 and re-evaluated quarterly with FBC McComb until May 2021
- Committees
- Beta Club
- Fieldtrips
- Background checks
- Child Safe Policy
- Open Gym Rules
- Consequences
- GRADUATION POLICY



HESWM
Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi

ACCIDENT WAIVER AND LIABILITY RELEASE

I/We waive, discharge and agree not to pursue litigation against the Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi (HESWM) operating in Pike and surrounding counties of Mississippi, their boards, officers, attorneys, employees, volunteers, associates, members, affiliates, successors, agents and assigns, and all other persons, firms and corporations, whether or not specifically named, herein, jointly, severally and jointly, and severally, of and from any and every claim, demand, right or cause of action, of whatever kind or nature, whether in tort, contract, or created by statute, directly or indirectly, for any injuries, damages, or losses the undersigned may incur as a result of his/her personal or families participation and involvement in the HESWM group.

I/We have read this waiver and release of liability form and I/we understand the contents. I/We understand that the participation of the child(ren) named below in the HESWM group is voluntary and that the child(ren) and I/we are free to choose not to participate in these activities and programs. I/we understand that if we withdraw, we are obligated to fulfill our financial obligations to HESWM.

This waiver does not expire and remains in force for the duration of my family's membership with HESWM.

I/We expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the law and that, if any portion of the agreement is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

Parent signature _____

Date _____

Treasurer Policies

- Our fiscal year is January through December
- Our current CPA/Attorney is David Dominique
- We will operate 100% electronically through Paypal
- The treasurer will meet annually with all activity leaders to discuss accounting procedures
- All fundraisers must be pre-approved by the board. If the organizer chooses to accept (or by nature accepts) cash or checks, they must be willing to submit the total funds to the group through Paypal. If we allow this, should leaders use receipt books for records?
- All expenses must be pre approved by the board or reimbursement will not be considered.
- Reimbursement will require receipts within 30 (or 60) days.
- All activities/sports/fieldtrips or HESWM sponsored anything goes through the treasure
- All HESWM sponsored groups/sports (ie Beta, Baseball) need to create an annual budget and submit to the treasurer.
- Due to insurance purposes and HESWM being the sponsoring organization hotel, rented houses, travel expenses for groups/sports will be set up and paid for by HESWM with money collected by group/ sports parents.
- Teachers/leaders need to be responsible for collecting their own class fees. We can set up Paypal to run it through HESWM or they can collect directly but the treasurer will not be responsible for chasing down non-payments.
- Paypal fees will be deducted from the group collecting the payments so they need to be taken into consideration when determining price.
- HESWM has a no refund policy for events, field trips, and programs. Only in extraordinary circumstances and with board approval will any refunds be issued.
- Payments for all events, field trips and programs must be made by due date set by the field trip coordinator.. Payments will not be accepted on-site. Because events require planning, pre-purchasing, booking fees, and/or reservations, we need to know how many are going to participate or attend ahead of time. This is also why refunds will not be issued because many times, organizers have been pre-paid or supplies have been pre-purchased.

Sports

- The primary sport of the season takes precedence when planning practices and counting attendance.
- All sports participants must sign a liability waiver each for each sport/activity
- No “official” practices can start without board approval to ensure they don’t over take the current season’s sport
- Sports in order of season currently stand as such
 - Cross country-late summer early/early fall
 - Basketball-late fall/early winter
 - Baseball-late winter/early spring
 - New for 2020-2021 if parents volunteer will be powerlifting and archery
- **HESWM Student Responsibilities**

The athletic program strives to teach personal responsibility. Participation on an athletic team is a commitment, a responsibility, and often a requirement. Attendance at practices and games is required. It is important that each student understands the team is affected when an athlete misses a practice. We expect students to plan their time around practices and plan ahead for conflicts which may have an impact on the team. Information about future events and commitments is

readily available on HESWM website and students should seek it out. Each student is also asked to take responsibility for certain equipment/uniforms that belong to the HESWM. Participation for practices is a required 75% for "official" practices, our sports programs are new and we want to allow grace for students who would like to participate in more than one sport (and encourage) by asking that full focus of students be put on sport that is currently in season. Students are expected to attend other sport practices that may overlap with giving precedence to sport that is currently competing. Coaches will allow students who are dual enrolled to miss more than the required 75%. Students who are not dual enrolled will be required to attend 75% or will not be allowed to play in games.

Learning sessions

- \$10 annual facilities fee per child if taking learning sessions
- All facilitators are responsible for collecting their fees
- No facilitator fee cap
- Session calendar has been set by a committee and will be as follows:
 - August 31 - November 18, 2020 & January 5 - April 8, 2021

****Due to Covid-19** the following guidelines shall be in place starting Aug 1st 2020 and re-evaluated quarterly with FBC McComb until May 2021**

- All parents and children entering/exiting FBC McComb must be wearing a mask while in the hallways.
- Mask may be removed once inside a learning session
- Mask requirement for learning sessions is up to the individual Facilitator
- Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will be provided by HESWM for all Facilitators
- All children entering in the classrooms must use hand sanitizer to clean hands upon entry
- Sharing of pencils and supplies discouraged
- All facilitators must wipe down tables, chairs, door knobs (and any other items in the room which might have been used during the session) between learning sessions and at end of the day

Committees

Please read bylaws regarding committee formation. Current committees are:

- Prom
- Valentines Party
- End of year celebration

Volunteers are only allowed to be on one committee to ensure we have a diversity of parents who want to help, rather than asking too much of a select few.

All committees need to create a budget and submit it to the treasurer for board approval

Beta Club

- Each Beta group (Jr. & Sr.) will have 2 sponsors
- Beta dues are \$20 per year
- All Beta dues are collected through the website via the treasurer
- Each Beta Club must create and submit an annual budget to the treasurer for board approval
- Beta Club members plan and execute the annual Easter Egg Hunt. HESWM will cover the cost of prizes, candy, lemonade, cake.

Field Trips:

- Coordinator can take suggestions for potential trips, but it's left to his/her discretion based on availability and scheduling.
- All field trip fees are non-refundable, even if you don't attend
- Group coordinated to attend a Theatre production counts as a field trip
- Field Trip goal is one per month August/September through April/May

Background checks

For insurance purposes all HESWM board members must agree and submit to a background check. All volunteers who lead an activity/group (Beta Club, Learning Session Facilitators, Sports leaders, etc.) must agree to submit to a background check with www.activescreening.com. HESWM will cover half of each volunteer's background check. Background checks for board members will be covered by HESWM as an annual operating expense.

Child Safe Policy

The **Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi** (HESWM) values young people and children as being a vital part of the organization and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

A copy of this child protection policy will be kept with the HESWM Secretary

Purposes

Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi is organized primarily for social purposes. We exist to encourage, support, and enhance home education in Southwest Mississippi, including being mindful and proactive in monitoring legislation which supports the parents' rights in education, and encouraging Christian homeschooling families in their efforts to provide spiritual, academic and physical education based on faith in Jesus Christ, thereby enabling students to become the Christian leaders of tomorrow. Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi is a Christian homeschool organization providing social and educational opportunities to home-educated children of all ages and their families, in the greater Southwest Mississippi (Lincoln, Lawrence, Walthall, Pike, Franklin, Amite, Copiah counties) area.

HESWM Membership

Each child and young person should be formally registered within the group. The information collected during registration includes an information/consent form completed by the parent/guardian. These forms are kept digitally by the HESWM Secretary for immediate access as needed.

Personal Safety

A group of children or young people under sixteen should not be left unattended at any time.

Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another adult knows where you are and why.

At no time should a volunteer or adult from any external organization arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being present.

As such meetings should be planned and have the approval of a member of the Committee (this must be someone other than the organizer themselves).

Teenage assistants should always be supervised.

Child Safety

Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture, which could cause injury in energetic games.

Make sure that all volunteers and parents know where the first aid kit is located.

A Board Member (who is always present at sponsored HESWM activities) is responsible for First Aid (or making sure it is administered when needed) and recording accidents or injuries in the incident book.

At the beginning of each semester, facilitators/parents will discuss (and execute a practice if necessary) a group practice for what to do in the event of an emergency (fire, tornado, etc.) which includes but is not limited to: exit, protection, gathering, getting help, First Aid Kit location, AED location.

Children may only leave when accompanied by an adult, unless the parent has specifically notified the facilitator or Board Member.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, slurs, jokes and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” Our goal at Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi is to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment. Any group related complaints should be made to “The Board”. All reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential. We assure you that there will be no retaliatory action taken against an volunteer who makes a good faith report of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

Child Abuse

Child abuse encompasses mental, physical, and sexual victimization of children. If you suspect that a child assigned to you is a victim of child abuse you should report this to “The Board”. It should not become the topic of conversation. The privacy of students must be respected.

- DO encourage the students to tell the program director, nurse or unit leader. Make sure that the child feels that he or she is not to blame for what happened.

All Board Members of Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi are mandated reporters based on Mississippi law. All employees are required to complete the online training course on the DHS website. The training director will email all employees the training link via email. After completion of the course a copy of the certificate will need to be given to the training director.

Volunteers are not mandated reporters. If, as a volunteer, you suspect abuse please notify a member The Board.

Internet and communications code of conduct

We expect our members will never use the internet as a vehicle for gossip, to spread rumors, speak in a derogatory manner or disclose personal or confidential aspects about Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi's, children or volunteers.

HESWM Media Policy

It is the policy of HESWM any photographs of children taken during HESWM organized events may be uploaded and shared on social media. When sharing photos to HESWM-owned pages, do not name individuals (tagging) and/or guardian of children in said photos. No photos published to newspaper/magazine publications of any kind without prior approval of the Board.

Student-Volunteer Relationships

Any relationship outside of Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi between volunteers and students needs to be initiated by and supervised by the parents of students. Volunteers must never post, tag, or publish a picture on the internet of a students where their name tag can be read or where the students or their parent(s) are identified.

If any parent/guardian has any child safety concerns (that arise during a HESWM event, trip/outing or learning session), they should address the matter with a member of the Board.

Heswm Board Members, one of which will always be in attendance at each sponsored outing, event, and on-site for Open Gym and Learning sessions will:

- Ensure that this safety policy is being put into practice;
- Is the first point of contact for child protection issues;
- Keeps a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues;
- Brings any child protection concerns to the Local Authority if appropriate;
- Ensures that volunteers are given appropriate supervision;
- Ensures that everyone involved with the organization is aware of how to contact a Board Member.

HESWM Unattended Children Policy

The HESWM organization utilizes the First Baptist Church facilities, although an educational, fun and entertaining place to be, is a busy public facility and public places may present hazards for unsupervised children.

No child aged fifteen or under may be left unattended in any area of FBC. Children fifteen or younger must be supervised by an adult.

Neither HESWM nor the FBC staff has custodial responsibility for unattended children. HESWM nor FBC staff assume liability for children left unattended.

If a child fifteen years of age or younger is found to be unattended in FBC, staff will attempt to find the child's parent/guardian. If the staff cannot locate a parent/guardian, law enforcement officials will be notified.

HESWM Parent by Proxy Policy

It is the policy of HESWM to allow members of our organization to have children participate in learning sessions, events, and trips when accompanied by a guardian approved and designated by parent (Parent by Proxy). Each child must be a member in good standing of HESWM registered on website and accompanied by parent or parent by proxy.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

This policy was adopted by Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi.

Signed on behalf of the HESWM Board by:

Signature

Name (Print) : Billie Jo Alexander 2019-2020 HESWM President

The policy has been reviewed by the HESWM Board on:

Date July 26, 2019

Open Gym Rules

Open Gym is an opportunity for our parents and children to get together and socialize. Be respectful of all rules. Help us to keep Open Gym alive!

- Parents are responsible for their own children.
- Children (16 and under) must be accompanied by an adult.
- Open Gym begins at 2:00 p.m. & ends at 4:00 p.m. SHARP.
- Only go outside when leaving or accompanied by a parent.
- No drop offs!
- Students should not be in the outer hallway unless going to the bathroom.

RESPECT FBC PROPERTY

- No running outside of the gym.
- No food or drinks in the gym area.
- No pulling on basketball goals or center curtain.
- No popping of ceiling tiles.
- No throwing balls at light or onto the walking track.
- High school students or parents only are allowed on the walking track. No one is allowed to use weight equipment.
- Praise, questions, comments, concerns please address in the Feedback Box.

Consequences

1st Offense – Warning

- If multiple families (5+) receive warnings in the same visit Open Gym as a whole will be canceled for the following week.

2nd Offense – Probation

- Cannot come to Open Gym for 1 week.

3rd Offense – Final

- You will not be allowed to attend Open Gym for the remainder of the school year.

First Baptist Church of McComb allows us to use the facility. Please clean up after yourself. Open Gym is another opportunity to come together and have fun. If there is an issue of not following the rules, we will have to cancel Open Gym permanently.

GRADUATION POLICY

HESWM hosts a graduation celebration for students graduating each year. The following policies have been established by the Board to aid in the planning of these events:

1. To participate in your Graduation activities, a family needs to have been an active member of the group from the beginning of the current school year. Effective for the 2018-2019 year and following thereafter, a family must be active for two years (junior and senior).
Exceptions can be made for families new to home education or for families who move into the area during the junior or senior year.
2. A Planning Committee will meet each year to facilitate and plan the graduation ceremony. This committee consists of the President, the graduating seniors and their parents, and other members that may be needed.
3. Graduate families share equally in the financial responsibilities of the ceremony and the following reception. It is the responsibility of the graduating seniors and their families to purchase their own caps, gowns, diplomas, covers, programs, cake, paper products and any other item(s) chosen for the graduation ceremony and/or reception.
4. The graduation date is set by majority vote of the board. Any other decisions regarding the ceremony/reception will be determined by majority vote of the graduating seniors.
5. The cake for the graduation ceremony will be purchased by HESWM. All other food will be offered as a donation by other member families if needed. Junior class parents/students will facilitate clean up following the ceremony and reception to allow senior class parents to celebrate with their seniors.
6. Headshots of senior portraits are required for programs and inclusion in the newspaper. HESWM currently has a photographer who will help facilitate this process.