

HESWM Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures

July 2025

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.

These bylaws and policies have been reviewed and updated by Sabrina Ferrage, Vice President, on behalf of the HESWM Board on July 25, 2025.

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Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi Bylaws

Article 1 – Name, Purpose, Beliefs, Location

Section 1 - Name: The name of this organization shall be Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi, also known as Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi (hereinafter referred to as HESWM).

Section 2 - Purpose: HESWM 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 home schooling 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. HESWM 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 area.

Section 3 - Beliefs as parents: We believe our children do not belong to the state. It is the responsibility of parents to properly meet the needs of their children spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically. We further believe home education offers an excellent method for learning through one-to-one tutoring.

Section 4 - Location: The principal office location of HESWM, Inc. shall be located in the greater McComb area in the State of Mississippi. The organization may have any number of offices at such places as the Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as "the Board") may determine.

Article 2 - Membership

Section 1 - Eligibility for Membership: Application for Membership shall be open to any homeschooling family in the southwest Mississippi area that supports the purpose, beliefs and mission statements found in Article I, Section 2 & 3. Membership is granted after all of the following requirements have been met:

1. Completed membership application

2. Currently residing in the southwest Mississippi area
3. Signed Code of Conduct
4. Membership dues paid in full
5. By-laws accepted and signed

Section 2 - Membership Approval:

1. Any family who agrees with the Purpose and Beliefs as stated above and who is home schooling at least one child aged pre-k through 12th grade can become a member by paying annual dues and by fulfilling the “Eligibility for Membership” requirements found in Article 2, Section 1.
2. Members must agree to child safe policies, background checks, and security policies as deemed necessary by the Board.
3. Reasons for denial and/or termination of HESWM membership, at the sole discretion of the Board, will include, but not be limited to:
 - potentially violent or threatening behavior
 - refusal to adhere to the rules set forth in the Code of Conduct or any other official signed agreement
 - sowing seeds of discord (deliberate intent to cast in doubt a person's integrity and good standing in HESWM, and/or passing on information with no factual truth, refusal to cooperate with HESWM leaders and/or membership)
 - acts of vandalism or any action deliberately done to destroy and/or damage the property or belongings of the facilities in which HESWM meets or any other host organization
 - individuals known to have committed crimes against children or other acts of moral baseness.
4. Members of HESWM are encouraged to attend the annual membership meetings, support the organization’s activities, and notify a board member if they are willing to serve on a committee, plan or lead any activity, or have ideas that might benefit other members.

Section 3 - Membership Definition: Each homeschooled child, that child’s siblings, and all of that child’s parents and guardians who have met

the eligibility requirements listed in Section 1 shall be granted a single membership (a single vote) of HESWM and may participate in HESWM activities, contingent on good standing.

Section 4 - Dues: The membership dues shall remain fixed per academic year, unless changed by a simple majority vote of the Board. Continued membership is contingent upon being up-to-date on membership dues. Dues are non-refundable. Membership dues shall be paid once per academic year on a date determined by the Board. The amount to be paid by dues each year is determined by the Board. Payment of dues may be postponed or waived due to financial hardship if such a request is approved by the Board.

Section 5 - Learning Session Fees: Learning session fees are handled by the facilitators of each class. All due dates, amounts, etc. are at the discretion of the volunteer facilitators.

Section 6 - Continuing Membership: Members must continue to meet eligibility requirements at all times to retain membership status. Each membership in HESWM is active for an academic year beginning as early as August 1st and terminating on or around July 31st of the following year.

Section 7 - Voting Rights of Members: Each membership shall be entitled to a single vote in any matter to be voted on by the entire HESWM. The following actions shall require the approval of the membership:

1. Amendment of the HESWM By-Laws
2. Election of officers from nominated candidates to succeed those whose terms are next to expire or to fill any seat during a current term for which no officer has yet been elected by the membership.
3. The dissolution of HESWM.

Section 8 - Responsibility of Membership:

1. Every member is to abide by the Code of Conduct and promote unity within the group through words and conduct. If it is deemed by the Board that a Member's behavior (whether in-person or online) is detrimental to HESWM), the member will be given a verbal or written warning. If the detrimental behavior continues, the member may be placed on probation. If the member continues to behave poorly, the Board may take action up to and including termination of membership.

2. Members are expected to keep the members' list and content on the web forum confidential.

Section 9 - Probation: Members may be put on probation by a majority Board vote if they are not fulfilling their Responsibilities of Membership as defined in Article 2, Section 8. The length of Probation and the regaining of good standing will be determined by a Board vote. The Member will be formally notified at the time Probation is delivered to the Member. A Member on Probation:

1. Will have no access to HESWM website and other online HESWM forums.
2. Will have their voting rights suspended.
3. May not serve on a committee.
4. Must immediately pay any fees that are due to HESWM.

Section 10 - Resignation and Termination: Any Member may resign by filing a written or verbal resignation which will be filed with the Secretary. Resignation shall not relieve a Member of unpaid dues, or other monetary charges previously accrued. Termination by the Board from HESWM may occur if a family does not abide by the HESWM Code of Conduct and By-Laws. Termination should be formalized by a majority vote of the Board and the membership notified immediately after terminating members.

A Board member's membership in HESWM can be revoked with a majority vote of the Board members.

Reasons for suspension and removal from HESWM are to include (but not be limited to):

- a. Failure and/or refusal to pay fees due
- b. Refusal to follow policies
- c. Disruptive behavior and outbursts
- d. Abusive speech and behaviors
- e. Negligence to commitments
- f. Criminal behavior

Section 11 - Sports Eligibility for Students: To be eligible to participate in HESWM sports, intramurals, and clubs, a student must be:

- a. A HESWM member in good-standing (financially, behaviorally, etc.)

- b. between the appropriate ages of an elementary, junior high, or high school student
- c. actively homeschooled in our area (any person who has already received a high school diploma or GED or otherwise “graduated” from high school are ineligible to participate.)

Article 3 - Meetings

Section 1 - Membership Meetings: *Quarterly meetings* of the Board shall be deemed Membership Meetings and be *open to all members*. These meetings shall be held once per quarter. The quarters are Jan-Mar/Apr-June/Jul-Sep/Oct-Dec. Notification of these meetings will be distributed to the HESWM Membership through the online forum and Facebook at least two (2) weeks before the meeting. Disciplinary matters of termination and/or probation will not be discussed at these open meetings.

Section 2 - Quorum for Meetings: A majority of the Offices of the Board currently serving must be present in order to constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present, no voting may take place.

Section 3 - Addressing the Meeting: Any member wishing to address the Board at a Membership meeting shall contact any Officer one (1) week prior to the meeting to have the matter placed on the agenda.

Section 4 - Agenda: Agenda shall be released online one (1) week prior to the meeting by the Secretary for all members to politely discuss on the forum if so desired.

Section 5 - Cancellation of Membership Meetings: A Membership Meeting may be canceled by the Board due to emergency or other unforeseen problems. The President shall instruct the Secretary to notify the Membership of the cancellation and of the rescheduled meeting time and place.

Section 6 - Business Meetings: the Board may call *closed meetings* to transact business in between quarterly Membership Meetings. Written or verbal notice of any special meeting of the Board must be given to each Board Member with at least seven (7) days’ notice unless unanimously agreed upon by the Board Members to suspend the wait period; however, notification to the Membership shall not be required. A quorum must be present for any official business to take place. Business

Meetings may be held in person, via email, teleconference, text, or any other means or combination that allows Board Members effectively to interact. Minutes from Business Meetings will be read and approved at the next Membership Meeting.

Article 4 - Board of Directors

Section 1 - Officers: The business of the organization shall be managed by a Board of Directors comprised of the seven (7) elected Offices (outlined in Article 5). The Board is responsible and accountable for maintaining the overall policy, operations and direction of the organization. The Board shall delegate responsibility of day-to-day operations to appropriate committees and volunteers. Board members shall receive no monetary compensation for their service on the Board. No one Member may hold more than one Board office at any given time. An office may be occupied by more than one member as approved by the board and elected by the membership.

Communication of the Board may transpire between the closed Facebook group, emails, or private text group. Anything that needs to be documented should be discussed in the Facebook group and emails, not to be deleted so it remains record and may be reviewed by following Board Members.

Announcements to membership will be made on our Facebook pages, on the website, via emails, or through the RemindMe app.

Section 2 - Terms: Any Board member shall not serve for more than four (4) consecutive years in the same position if other qualified candidates are nominated and willing to run for the Board position. In the event that there are no nominations of qualified candidates for any particular position on the Board, that Board member may continue to serve as officer for an additional two-year term if they so choose.

Section 3 - Resignation of Officers: Any officer may resign at any time effective upon giving written notice to either HESWM's President or Secretary. All HESWM official records and materials pertaining to the office shall be surrendered to the President or Secretary upon resignation. Resignation from the Board in no way affects Membership standing in HESWM.

Section 4 - Removal of Officers: Any Officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Board Officers for the following reasons:

1. With cause as outlined in Article 2 Section 8, by a majority vote of the Board Officers, excluding the officer being voted upon.

2. For “failure to participate.” Examples include habitually missing meetings without apology or excuse, habitually showing up late/leaving early from business meetings without apology or excuse, traveling and remaining outside of the area (being physically unavailable) for an extended period, and any other major issue deemed important by the Board.
3. Refusal to do the tasks assigned for the specific Board position.
4. Not remaining in good standing (financially, behaviorally, etc.)

All HESWM official records and materials pertaining to the office shall be surrendered to the President or Secretary upon removal. Board removal does not necessarily preclude continuing participation in HESWM except as it pertains to the Code of Conduct. Removed Board Members are expected to maintain the privacy of the Board that they were entrusted with during their tenure. Violation of the Board’s privacy by a removed Board Member is grounds for termination of membership.

Section 5 - Probation: An Officer can be put on probation for failure to perform their duties as an Officer of the Board, openly attacking a member on any of HESWM forums or in person, either physically or verbally, and failure to perform their responsibilities as members, in their Officer position or as an Officer of the Board.

1. An Officer of the Board may be placed in probation by a majority vote of the Board for a duration to be determined at the time.
2. A Probationary Board Member’s vote is suspended during the period of their probation, and access to the board forum as well as attendance to Board Meetings may be restricted during said period.
3. The vote of a Probationary Board Member shall be relinquished to the President of the Board (allowing the President two votes during the probationary period). If the President is placed on probation, their tie-breaking vote is transferred to the Vice-President (giving the Vice-President two votes during the probationary period).

Section 6 - Conflict of Interest: A Board Member’s voting rights may be suspended on individual issues if the issue being voted upon directly involves the Member of the Board or is a blatant conflict of interest.

Section 7 - Abstaining: Any Board member who is uncertain whether a conflict of interest may exist in any matter may request to abstain from voting on the matter from the Board.

Section 8 - Votes: Each board position has one vote.

Section 9 - Statement of Faith: (must be signed by all Board Members) Board members must make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3) A member must identify and profess to be a “Christian” in order to serve on the Board. This includes an oath to make every effort to live their personal and professional lives according to the tenets set forth in the Holy Bible, and to endeavor to live a life that displays the “fruits of the spirit” found in Galatians 5:22 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)

Article 5 - Duties of Officers

Section 1 - Offices: The elected officers of the organization, which shall comprise the Board of Directors, shall consist of:

- President
- Vice President
- Event Coordinator
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Field trip Coordinator
- Athletic Director

These positions shall be voted on by the Membership to serve their appointed terms as Officers and Members of the Board.

Section 2 - Creation of New Officers: The Board may create new officer positions as it deems necessary to fulfill the needs of the HESWM operations, though these positions may not be declared Members of the Board unless voted upon by the Membership.

Section 3 - President: The President shall have an overarching viewpoint at keeping HESWM running smoothly and shall freely consult with the Board and membership concerning the activities of HESWM.

1. The term of the President is a two (2) year term which can be re-elected. The office of President is up for election in the spring semester of odd numbered year.

2. The President shall be responsible for facilitating Membership meeting sites, and shall instruct the Secretary to notify the Membership of date, site, and time of scheduled meetings. The President shall be responsible for setting the agenda and chairing the meeting.
3. The President shall provide a yearly "State of the Organization" report to be distributed to the HESWM Membership following the first Membership Meeting of the fiscal year.
4. The President shall perform such other duties as shall from time to time be assigned by the Board.
5. The President can delegate these responsibilities as necessary.
6. The President represents both the interests of the Membership as a whole and the operational and legal interests of HESWM to the Board of Directors. The President is expected to act in the best interest of HESWM as a whole.

Section 4 - Vice President: Shall be responsible for administering the disciplinary policies and procedures for HESWM, act as mediator between Members when conflict arises, and respond to all requests for disciplinary action in a timely manner.

1. In the absence, resignation, death or disability of the President, the Vice President shall perform all the duties of the President and shall be vested with all the powers of the President until such time as the president's vacancy can be filled.
2. The term of the Vice President is a two (2) year term, which can be re-elected. The office of Vice President is up for election in the spring semester of every even numbered year.
3. Stays abreast of political happenings concerning home education and parenting and keeps both the board and members at large informed by verbal or written means.
4. Maintains and updates social media and the HESWM website by facilitating discussion and/or group notices.
1. Is responsible for Open Gym

Section 5 - Events Coordinator:

1. Plan, organize and oversee HESWM events (dances, holiday parties, end-of-year celebration, graduations, athletic banquet, science fairs, art expositions, etc.) The Event Coordinator may assign committees to help with HESWM events. The Event Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating with these members to avoid conflicts on the calendar.

2. The term of the Event Coordinator is a two (2) year term, which can be re-elected. The office of Event Coordinator is up for election in the spring semester of every even numbered year.

Section 6 - Field trip Coordinator:

1. Plan, organize and oversee field trips.
2. Communicate plans and details to the board in time for inclusion on the calendar of events.
3. The term of the Field Trip Coordinator is a two (2) year term, which can be re-elected. The office of Field Trip Coordinator is up for election in the spring semester of every odd-numbered year.

Section 7 - Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping records of Board actions, including overseeing the taking and reading of minutes at all board meetings, publishing minutes to open board meetings only, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each Board member, making ballots for voting, and assuring that corporate records are maintained.

1. The term of the Secretary is a two (2) year term, which can be re-elected. The office of Secretary is up for election in the spring semester of every odd numbered year.
2. The Secretary shall prepare letters, notices, etc. and perform such other duties as from time to time as requested by the Board.
3. Ensures all HESWM documents are current and provided for upload on to HESWM website.
4. Files paper work with the Secretary of State annually
5. Will receive and maintain committee files.
6. Emails an action check lists for each Board Member (after meetings) outlining tasks for the next meeting.

Section 8 - Treasurer: Shall make a report at each Membership and Business Meeting. The treasurer shall be responsible for all the monies of HESWM, shall receive and disburse all monies in accordance with the instructions of the Board, shall receive Membership application fees and dues, maintain a record of current paid members, prepare the budget, and make financial information available to Board members and the public.

1. The term of the Treasurer is a three (3) year term, which cannot be re-elected

2. Maintains a bank account to receive and disburse all organization funds and keeps complete and accurate records of all transactions in books belonging to the organization
3. Provides a financial statement at each board meeting in writing of funds received and disbursed since the last meeting
4. Maintains and services the group's bank accounts (including digital banking platforms.)
5. Maintains and services the group's website accounting program to insure all accounts are paid in full
6. Coordinate the filing of taxes annually
7. Manages insurance quotes and payments annually

Section 9 - The Athletic Director: Shall have a principal concern for all athletic and sporting activities within the HESWM group and shall freely consult with the Board and membership concerning all athletic and sporting activities.

1. The term of the Athletic Director will be two years, which can be re-elected. The term of the Athletic Director will be up for re-election in the spring of even-numbered years.
2. The Athletic Director shall be responsible for creation of teams, seeking out sporting opportunities for HESWM students, recruiting coaches, and facilitating discussion/making decisions about all athletic events. This includes competitive team sports (HESWM Gators) and intramural sports.
3. The Athletic Director will make every effort to provide a safe and reasonable atmosphere in which to work and practice for the coaches, parents, and student athletes.
4. Under the guidance of the treasurer, the Athletic Director will present pricing proposals to the Board to consider with respect to team fees, jersey selection/purchase, and any other accoutrements needed to successfully hold competitive athletic competitions.
5. The Athletic Director can delegate any specific responsibilities to coaches and volunteers as he or she deems necessary.

Article 6 - Election of Officers

Section 1 - Qualifications: All candidates for Officer:

1. Are expected to be familiar with these By-Laws and see that they are followed, enforced and/or amended.

2. Must be Members in good standing for at least one (1) continuous year just prior to election, unless otherwise approved by the Board.
3. Must abide by and sign the Board Code of Conduct.
4. Must pass current Board approval as a qualified candidate.

Section 2 - Nominations: Membership of HESWM shall nominate candidates for office to members of the current Board.

1. Members may recommend themselves or someone else.
2. The current Board shall review the candidates' qualifications. The Board shall obtain the candidates' agreement to serve, their statement of Christian faith, as well as signed statements affirming they will uphold the responsibilities of the offices for which they are running and will maintain their personal qualifications for becoming an Officer.
3. A Member currently on probation or a Member who has been asked by the Board not to return the following semester is not qualified for nomination.
4. If no one offers nominations, the current Board will seek qualified candidates. Candidates to be recommended by the current Board will be published on the forum/ private Facebook page prior to the final business meeting of the operational year if possible.
5. The Board will submit the list of all qualified candidates to the Membership for vote during the final Membership Meeting of the academic year.
6. A member may not run for more than one office simultaneously.

Section 3 - Voting: Voting for Officers shall take place at the final meeting of the year. The Membership will elect Officers through a simple majority vote via a secret ballot of those in attendance at the meeting unless otherwise approved beforehand by the Board, which will be collected by the Secretary. Election preparations shall be the responsibility of the current Secretary; *two other Members*, assigned by the Board, shall be responsible for the counting of the ballots.

Section 4 - Term and Transition: The normal term for officers of HESWM begins on the first day of June. The period between the election of officers and the beginning of the new term (May-June) is a transitional time during which the current Board is to train and inform the new Board.

Section 5 - Vacancies: In the event of a vacancy on the Board (including situations where the number of Board members has been deemed necessary to increase), new Board members will be chosen in one of two ways.

1. The Board will seek nominations from the Membership of qualified candidates to fill the position and a replacement will be elected as soon as possible. This replacement shall hold office for the balance of the unexpired term he or she has been appointed to fill.
2. If an officer position is vacated mid-term, the Board will make all attempts to hold elections as soon as possible. If the remainder of the vacated position's term is less than six (6) months or under extenuating circumstances, with a majority vote of the Board, the Board can appoint a Member to fill the vacant position for the remainder of the position's term. An officer so appointed shall hold office for the balance of the unexpired term he or she has been appointed to fill.

The President or Acting-President may ask other board members or HESWM members to be responsible for specific duties of the vacant position until it can be filled.

Article 7 - Committees

Section 1 - Committee Creation: The Board may create committees as needed. The Board shall appoint all Committee Chairs and assign their mandate. All Committee Chairs are responsible for reporting directly to the Secretary, unless otherwise stated.

Section 2 - Committee Limitations: No committee shall have any power to: fill vacancies on the Board, adopt, amend or repeal the by-laws, amend or repeal any resolution of the Board, or act on matters committed by the by-laws or resolution of the Board to another committee of the Board.

Section 3 - Committee Members: Committee chairs have the right to determine the members of their committees.

Article 8 - Non-Profit Provisions

Section 1: Upon the dissolution of Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning a qualified public charity according to the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal

government, or to a state or local government, for public purpose and providing that the qualified public charity does not conflict with the purposes, beliefs, or mission as set forth in Article 1, Sections 2 and 3..

Section 2: Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi is organized exclusively for non-profit purposes under the Internal Revenue Code. No part of home Educators of Southwest Mississippi's net earnings shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof.

Section 3: No substantial part of the activities of Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 4: Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Article 9 - Amendments

Section 1: These By-laws may be amended when deemed necessary by a 75% majority vote of the Membership present at a meeting to vote on such amendments unless a proxy vote is approved beforehand by the Board. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the President or Vice President and sent along with regular board meeting notices.

Section 2: HESWM Members can amend the bylaws as deemed necessary by the Board in the second and fourth quarters of a calendar year.

END Bylaws

Official HESWM Code of Conduct

HESWM is a supplemental social group to parent-led learning and social training. Although each HESWM family is bound to have slightly different standards of behavior, the HESWM Code of Conduct outlines standards that are in keeping with Biblical guidelines on which the majority of us have agreed and/or are beneficial in a group situation.

Each person attending a HESWM event, whether adult, youth, or child, will be expected to abide by the following standard of behavior. We have all agreed to be held to this standard and we are trusting one another to keep that commitment. We want all families to feel assured that these common standards of behavior will be expected of each other.

It is each parent's responsibility to be knowledgeable about, and to make their own child(ren) aware of, HESWM's standards of behavior. Likewise, enforcement of these standards is ultimately the responsibility of the parent(s) of each student. This is a commitment in which you and your children sign must agree to participate in all HESWM events.

A standard of behavior that encourages everyone to act in a Christ-like manner will make HESWM gatherings manageable for everyone.

Standards of Behavior

1 Peter 3:8--Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another, love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous...

Behavior:

Refrain from any careless, unkind, foolish, or rude behavior.

Let the command to "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," be your guide.

Commit to representing Christ in your attitudes and behaviors toward others.

Bullying, physical aggression, recklessness, destruction, abuse of property, or violent behavior that endangers others will NOT be tolerated.

No alcohol or illegal drugs are to be present at any HESWM functions/events. Adults who legally smoke or vape will be asked to do so in their vehicles when at church facilities and far away from the group at field trips.

Speech:

Honor others with your speech.

Children and adults alike should refrain from making unnecessary noise or participating in off-topic discussions or activities during assemblies and open board meetings.

Curse words, any use of the Lord's name in vain, and other offensive speech are unwelcome at all HESWM activities and events, no matter the location.

Lies, gossip, insults, and mean-spirited teasing will not be tolerated.

Property:

Show respect for others' property by using only what you have permission to use.

Keep personal items inappropriate for specific activities at home or put away. Any violation of this rule may result in an item being confiscated and held until a parent retrieves it. A few examples of such items are toys, knives, cell phones, gaming devices, off-topic media, etc.

Take care to leave every place in a better condition than you found it.

Restitution for abuse or neglect of others' property, including church property, will be the responsibility of the member causing damage.

Electronics and Internet Usage: It is 100% the parents' responsibility to make sure your child/children are not misusing electronic devices, cameras, smart phones, etc. to violate trust of anyone in the group. No unwanted photos or videos of any fellow members will be tolerated, especially ones that are used with the intent to bully or betray a fellow member.

The group and/or host facilities will in no way be responsible or liable for any damage caused to your electronic devices. It is best practice to not bring them or use them at HESWM events.

There will be zero tolerance for the inappropriate use of media.

Respect:

Children should show respect for adults and each other in speech, manners, behavior, and attitude.

Members should never be in undesignated areas of homes, churches, restaurants, field trip locations, sporting events, etc. If your child has a class, they need to be in the classroom. Between class times, they need to have parental supervision no matter what age. If they are “too old” for parent supervision and there is downtime between their classes, they need to leave the premises.

Under no circumstances should parents or children take items from any facilities that have not been offered. To be specific, do not take anything from supply closets, classrooms, refrigerators, etc without explicit permission from the administration of the facility. Do not enter rooms that have been deemed forbidden (kitchens, classrooms, offices, sanctuaries, play yards, etc.)

Organized group events are an ideal place for homeschool students to practice group etiquette by raising their hands before speaking, waiting for a turn, and occasionally standing in line. Please teach your kids these practices before sending them into a class so they are aware of the expectations from the volunteers who lead classes.

Limiting interruptions, looking for opportunities to serve, and practicing first-time obedience are a few ways our children can show respect.

Being an Example:

All members should be mindful that they will be looked to by younger peers for examples of the standard of behavior in a given situation.

Set a good example and offer deference to younger members at all HESWM events.

Modesty:

Keep in mind general principles of cleanliness, neatness, and modesty of dress. Males and females should make sure that their dress and conduct is modest at all times. Clothing should not be tight or revealing. When in doubt, please err on the side of modesty.

Flirting/Dating:

HESWM events are not the occasions for public displays of affection.

Since each family has different ideals and expectations about dating or courtship, HESWM activities should not be a place for the practice of either.

Obvious flirting and any public displays of affection should not take place at HESWM activities.

Any unwelcomed physical contact or sexually explicit speech aimed at a child in our group will absolutely NOT be tolerated on any level. This can lead to immediate removal of that member from HESWM. We want all of our children to come to HESWM functions without fear of any form of harassment, embarrassment, or uncomfortable situations involving sexuality.

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

Of course, we all understand that children misbehave at times. An advantage of homeschooling is that, in most cases, we get to be with our children to help train and guide them through new or difficult social situations. One of the reasons for participating in group activities is to have opportunities for social training that we might not have within our own homes. Because we are partnering with other homeschooling families, we should be surrounded by friends who understand the trials and joys of this significant responsibility. Understand that minor infractions of the Code of Conduct will be handled in the following manner.

- **Offense #1 Verbal warning from parent/coach** who witnesses the breach to at least one adult in the offender's family. Any disagreement on whether a breach actually took place needs to be immediately brought to the designated disciplinarian of the group
- **Offense #2 Verbal warning from VP/Board member** and documentation of misconduct
- **Offense #3 Child's suspension** from group activities for specified time decided by the Board
- **Offense #4 Child or Family suspension** from group activities for specified time as decided by the Board
- **Offense #5 Child or Family suspension** from the group with **no invitation to return**

Note: Steps 1-3 or 4 may be skipped in the case of a serious infraction of the Code of Conduct. A child may be removed from class, without warning, at the discretion of the teacher volunteer. A student's parent or guardian will always be notified in such cases. We believe that we do one another a disservice by neglecting to make one another, as parents, aware of issues that might need to be addressed within our own families.

Handling an Offense

As we fellowship and build relationships, we trust that all will be thoughtful of others and display Christ-honoring attitudes and actions. When instances arise where there is an offense or concern, approach the matter prayerfully, first considering your own part in the matter. Then let the Matthew 18 principle be your guideline:

This means that you should 1) speak directly, in a calm, friendly manner, to anyone who has offended you or caused you serious concern. If you are unable to resolve the problem between the two of you, please 2) bring the issue to the Vice President of the HESWM board. They will assist you in further addressing the matter with the parties involved. If there continues to be a problem, 3) the entire Board will be consulted and brought in to handle the problem from there.

Conclusion

It is our prayer that these guidelines will unify and protect our members. Ensuring that everyone is clear about what is expected and how HESWM activities will operate, will hopefully prevent conflict.

Official Calendar

Open Gym will happen Thursdays from 2-4pm on the following schedule:

- First Thursday after annual Kickoff through the first Thursday in December
- Second Thursday in January through the first Thursday in May

*Exceptions and cancellations will be made for weather, holidays (such as the week of Thanksgiving and Easter), cancellations by our host church, disciplinary cancellations, etc.

Registration: Registration will open July 1.

Registration late fee: A \$15 late fee will be applied to membership dues after August 15th

Graduation: Will be the second Saturday in May.

End of Year Picnic: Will be the Thursday after graduation.

TBD:

Kickoff

Easter Egg Hunt

Fall Dance

Prom

Spring Break

Fall Picnic

Accident Waiver and Liability Release

I/We waive, discharge and agree not to pursue litigation against the

Home Educators of Southwest Mississippi (HESWM),
Or the business/facility HESWM events are held,

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.

HESWM Media and Photography Policy

As a paying and participating member of HESWM, I give permission and acknowledge that photographs can be taken of my child(ren) at any HESWM organized event, public or private. In addition, any photographs taken, including group photos, may be shared online, on social media, and/or in print for publication, including placed in the HESWM yearbook.

If I upload a photo to any website/page that is owned and or operated by HESWM, I hereby release my rights to those photographs. When sharing photos to HESWM owned pages, children, individuals and/or guardians and parents of children in said photos will not be named or tagged.

No photos will be published to outside newspaper/magazine publications of any kind without prior approval of the Board.

Treasurer Policies

- Our fiscal year is January through December
- Our current CPA/Attorney is David Dominique
- We will operate 100% electronically through NewTek with invoices for better organization. If a parent does not want to use the website for payments, they may submit a check before the due date.
- All coaches are responsible for creating a roster for their athletes that has parent info (phone number, and email) so that invoices can be sent for payment. (Coaches will be responsible for reminding parents to pay their invoices)
- 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. They must submit an itemized list of funds collected, including who they collected from and the amounts that were collected.
- All expenses must be pre-approved by the board, or reimbursement will not be considered.
- Reimbursement will require receipts within 30 days.
- Teachers/leaders need to be responsible for collecting their own class fees. We can set up Paypal or send homeschool-life (website) invoices to run it through HESWM or they can collect directly but I as treasurer will not be responsible for chasing down non-payments.
- Paypal and NewTek fees will be deducted from the group collecting the payments, so they need to be considered when determining the price, generally adding \$1.

Maybe not for Treasurer specifically, but in general:

- 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 xx days in advance. 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 Policies

- 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 overtake 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
- 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 the HESWM website and students should be informed.
 - Each student is also asked to take responsibility for certain equipment /uniforms that belong to 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 the sport that is currently in season.
 - Students are expected to attend other sport practices that may overlap with giving precedence to the 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.

Coaches Code of Conduct

Athletic Coaches at HESWM are responsible for developing our student-athletes in a range of sports, promoting teamwork, sportsmanship, athleticism, physical health, and Christian values. Coaches will work closely with students, Athletic Director(s), and parents to ensure our athletic programs align with the goals and faith of our homeschool co-op.

Primary Responsibilities:

1. Work alongside Athletic Director(s) to develop and execute coaching strategies for various sports activities.
2. Ensure all coaching and practice activities reflect and reinforce Christian values and principles.
3. Provide instruction and mentorship to student-athletes, promoting teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal development.
4. Collaborate with parents to promote a balanced approach to academics, sports, and spirituality.
5. Maintaining athletic equipment and notifying the athletic director of any equipment needs.
6. Comply with all local, state, and national guidelines and adhere to HESWM policies.
7. Promote the safety and well-being of all HESWM student-athletes.
8. Participate in community events and outreach programs, representing HESWM in a professional manner.

Qualifications:

1. Strong understanding and commitment to Christian values and principles.
2. Excellent interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills.
3. Ability to inspire and motivate students.

Code of Conduct: Athletic Coach

1. **Integrity:** Coaches at HESWM should exemplify and uphold Christian values and principles at all times, setting a positive example for all student-athletes, not showing (child) favor or exclusion.
2. **Respect:** Treat all students, “staff”, parents, and competitors with kindness and respect, maintaining a professional and courteous demeanor at all times.
3. **Safety First:** Prioritize the physical and emotional well-being of our HESWM student-athletes above all else. Comply with all safety guidelines and regulations.

4. **Sportsmanship:** Promote fair play, respect for opponents, and grace in victory OR defeat.
5. **Commitment:** Display commitment to HESWM, team, and athletes. Understand that this role involves significant responsibility, and dedication is key.
6. **Academic Importance:** Encourage HESWM student-athletes to maintain a healthy balance between sports and academics.
7. **Confidentiality:** Respect the confidentiality of students, staff, and HESWM operations. Avoid discussing sensitive issues unless necessary or required by law.
8. **Continuous Improvement:** Seek opportunities for growth and development to improve your coaching skills and better serve our HESWM student-athletes.

Parent Code of Conduct

Parents are vital partners in the success of our organization and in the cultivation of an environment that embodies Christian principles. We respectfully ask all parents to adhere to the following code of conduct:

1. **Respect and Support:** Respect all participants, coaches, officials, and other parents at all times. Support your child and others positively, celebrating their efforts and achievements.
2. **Uphold Christian Values:** Demonstrate the Christian values of love, respect, integrity, and compassion in all interactions.
3. **Communication:** Maintain open, respectful, and constructive communication with coaches, athletic director, and HESWM board members. Address any concerns privately and appropriately.
4. **Sportsmanship:** Encourage good sportsmanship and fair play. Teach your child to accept BOTH victory and defeat with grace, reinforcing the importance of character over winning or losing.
5. **Participation:** Support your child's commitment to the team or group by ensuring consistent attendance and punctuality.
6. **Safety:** Prioritize the safety and wellbeing of all children, reporting any concerns to the appropriate authority in the Athletic Director and Vice President of the HESWM Board.
7. **Positive Environment:** Help foster a positive, nurturing, and inclusive environment that allows all children to grow and flourish.
8. **Volunteerism:** We can not do this without our parent volunteers! Whenever possible, participate in volunteer activities and support the HESWM's community initiatives.

By adhering to this code, we can work together to create a nurturing, uplifting community that embodies the principles of our faith and benefits all children.

Consequences for Non-Adherence

Failure to uphold the principles outlined in the Parent Code of Conduct can disrupt the positive and nurturing environment we aim to create. Consequently, violations may result in one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity and frequency of the infraction:

1. **Verbal Warning:** A verbal warning may be issued for minor or first-time offenses, expressing the organization's concern and expectation for future behavior.

2. **Written Warning:** Should issues persist, or in the case of a more severe violation, a written warning will be issued. This formal notice will outline the specific violation and necessary corrective actions.

3. **Mediation Meeting:** Parents may be requested to attend a meeting with HESWM board members to discuss their conduct and collaborative solutions moving forward.

4. **Temporary Suspension:** In cases of continued or severe misconduct, a temporary suspension from HESWM events or activities may be enforced.

5. **Permanent Removal:** As a last resort, and in the interest of the community, parents may be permanently barred from organization events and activities. In all cases, our organization commits to fair and considerate treatment. We believe that open communication and shared understanding can resolve most conflicts, and we're always ready to work together towards the best interests of our children and the values we uphold.

HESWM Athletes Code of Conduct

To be read by and signed by all athletes and their parents, prior to participating in sports.

1. **Christian Values:** All athletes should uphold Christian values in their conduct, on and off the field. They should demonstrate honesty, integrity, respect, and compassion in all their interactions.
2. **Sportsmanship:** Athletes are expected to compete with integrity, respecting all rules, officials, opponents, and teammates. They should graciously accept victory OR defeat, remembering that their behavior reflects on HESWM as a whole.
3. **Commitment:** Athletes MUST commit to their team, attending all practices, games, and team events. They MUST notify their coaches if they are unable to make a practice or game. They should strive to do their best, encouraging and supporting their teammates at all times.
4. **Respect for Self and Others:** Athletes should treat all individuals with respect, refraining from any form of discrimination, bullying, or harassment. They should also show respect for their own bodies, maintaining a healthy lifestyle and abstaining from harmful substances.
5. **Safety:** Athletes are expected to follow all safety rules and regulations and to report any injuries immediately to the coach or relevant school authority.
6. **Responsibility:** Athletes should take responsibility for their actions, both on and off the field. If mistakes are made, they should acknowledge them, learn from them, and make appropriate amends.
7. **Community:** As representatives of HESWM, athletes are encouraged to participate in community service activities and uphold a positive image of the school in all public and social platforms.

Consequences for Non-Adherence:

Non-adherence to the HESWM Athlete Code of Conduct will not be taken lightly, and may result in one or more of the following consequences, depending on the severity and frequency of the breach:

1. **Verbal Warning:** For minor first-time offenses, athletes may receive a verbal warning from the coach, athletic director, the VP, or members of the HESWM Board.

2. **Written Warning:** If the behavior continues or in case of more serious breaches, a written warning will be issued from the VP. This will be documented.
3. **Suspension from Athletic Activities:** Severe or repeated breaches may lead to temporary suspension from practices, games, or other team activities.
4. **Dismissal from Team:** As a last resort, serious or ongoing misconduct may result in dismissal from the team, and possibly affect future athletic participation. This is at the discretion of the Board, not the coaches.
5. **Academic Consequences:** In line with HESWM's policies, serious breaches of conduct may also affect the athlete's ability to participate in other HESWM activities, including privileges and eligibility for certain awards.

All consequences are subject to the discretion of the relevant HESWM authorities and will be administered in a fair and consistent manner. In all cases, parents or guardians will be informed of the breaches and ensuing consequences. We believe in providing our student-athletes with opportunities to learn and grow from their mistakes, while maintaining the integrity of our athletic program.

This Code of Conduct is in place to ensure that all athletes at HESWM understand and adhere to the standards of behavior expected from them. It reflects our group's commitment to developing well-rounded individuals who embody Christian principles in their daily lives. Any breaches of this code will be addressed in accordance with our organizations disciplinary policies.

Policy for the Athletic Director

The Athletics Program within HESWM is committed to fostering a Christian environment that promotes physical, emotional, and spiritual growth among our student-athletes. This policy outlines the guidelines and principles that the Athletic Director must adhere to in order to ensure the development of our athletes in alignment with our Christian values.

Spiritual Integration:

The Athletic Director is responsible for promoting the integration of Christian values into the sports program. This includes encouraging athletes, coaches, and staff to demonstrate integrity, respect, humility, and compassion both on and off the field.

Sportsmanship and Respect:

The Athletic Director should enforce a culture of sportsmanship, fair play, and respect for opponents, officials, coaches, and teammates. Displaying Christ-like behavior in victory and defeat is essential to upholding the values of our school.

Character Development:

The Athletic Director should work closely with coaches to design programs that nurture the character development of student-athletes. Emphasis should be placed on teamwork, leadership, accountability, and the development of life skills that align with Christian values.

Inclusivity:

The Athletic Director is responsible for creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. Discrimination, harassment, and exclusionary behavior will not be tolerated.

Health and Safety:

The safety and well-being of student-athletes are of paramount importance. The Athletic Director must ensure that proper safety protocols, equipment, and facilities are in place to minimize the risk of injuries during athletic activities.

Compliance:

The Athletic Director is responsible for upholding all relevant rules and regulations set forth by HESWM board members, rules and regulations, sports governing bodies, and applicable laws.

Community Engagement:

The Athletic Director should encourage athletes and teams to engage in community service and outreach initiatives that reflect the school's commitment to serving others in the spirit of Christ.

Communication:

The Athletic Director should maintain open communication with parents, athletes, coaches, and members of the HESWM Board to provide updates on the athletics program, share successes, and address concerns.

Continuous Improvement:

The Athletic Director is expected to engage in ongoing professional development to stay current with best practices in coaching, athletic administration, and Christian leadership.

Conflict Resolution:

In cases of conflicts or disputes involving coaches, athletes, or parents, the Athletic Director should facilitate resolution in a manner that reflects Christian values and principles.

Adherence to this policy ensures that the Athletics Program within HESWM contributes to the spiritual, physical, and character development of our student-athletes, embodying the Christian principles upon which our group is founded.

Committees

Please read bylaws regarding committee formation. Current committees are:

- Prom
- Valentines Party
- End-of-year celebration
- Senior Graduation
- Junior class
- Kindergarten Graduation
- Athletic

All committees need to create a budget and submit it to the treasurer for board approval (the Graduation Committee has an established budget through the Treasurer)

All committees are assigned by the Board and report to the Events Coordinator.

Senior / Graduation Committee: Will comprise one primary seat (chosen by the Board) with 3 additional assistant seats (a total of 4 seats).

Junior Committee: Will comprise one primary seat (chosen by the Board) with 3 additional assistant seats (a total of 4 seats).

Athletic Committee: Will compromise of 7 seats:

1. the Athletic Director as primary seat
2. a concessions head
3. a volunteer head
4. a cross country representative
5. a girls basketball representative
6. a boys basketball representative
7. a cheer representative.

Any meetings that need to be held and don't pertain to either cheer, basketball, or cross country can be skipped by the representatives not needed, leaving still 4 committee members present.

The volunteer head will coordinate parent volunteers needed to work concessions, door entry, etc. The volunteer head will also coordinate athlete community service, like clean up after events, and not to include handling money.

Beta Club Policy

- Beta Club has a sponsor/leader
- Beta dues are \$10 per year
- All Beta dues are collected through the website via the treasurer
- 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.

In order to a member according to the National Beta Club constitution,

Students must be working on or above grade level, show exemplary academic achievement and high moral character for membership consideration.

Membership is a privilege and not a right

Article II

The National Beta pledge is:

As a proud member of National Beta, I pledge to be honest and truthful, maintain academic excellence, and conduct myself in an ethical manner. I am dedicated to serving others and contributing to the collective success of my peers.

1. HESWM Beta club members will abide by the HESWM code of conduct.
2. Beta Club is a service club. Therefore, members are required to complete a certain number of hours of community service each year.
Grades 6-8 will complete 15 hours of community service per year
Grades 9-12 will complete 25 hours of community service per year
3. Beta club will provide at least 10 hours or more of group project service hours.
The remaining hours will be up to the student to complete on his/her own.
A list of acceptable service ideas and contact information shall be given as help.
4. Service hours shall be kept up with by the member by completing the Community Service Verification Form and turn it in at the end of the year.
***Seniors not completing their hours will not receive the Beta stole for graduation.**
5. Members may miss no more than **two** of the required meetings and service projects given for the year. Dates and projects will be given at the beginning of the school year.

Beta Club Offices

President- Must be a senior. Responsibilities will include presiding over meetings, helping plan service activities, and cooperating with the Beta sponsor(s), administration, and fellow Beta members

Vice-President- Preferably a junior. Responsibilities include serving as the president if he/she is absent, working with the Beta sponsor(s), administration, and fellow Beta members

Secretary- Responsibilities will include paying close attention at meetings, taking detailed notes on club activities, and delivering information from past meetings so that members stay up to date on all club activities. Secretary will work with the Reporter to make sure all social media and outside media is accurate.

Reporter- Responsibilities will include taking pictures of Beta club events and possibly posting the pictures on the HESWM Facebook page, working with the secretary to send the pictures and descriptions to the yearbook staff and/or the newspaper (Enterprise-Journal).

Chaplain- Responsibilities will include praying before meetings and events, keeping a positive, encouraging attitude during events, and leading the prayer at See You At the Pole.

Field Trips:

- Coordinator can take suggestions for potential trips, but it's left to his/her discretion based on availability and scheduling.
- Field Trip goal is one per month August/September through April/May
- Plan at least a quarter ahead if not a semester, get them on the calendar, figure out fee schedule, etc.
- Discuss pricing with the treasurer before posting events to assure all fees are covered.
- Each month make an official post as a reminder for each event/sign-up. Give as much detail as possible, including place, address, times(s), what is required for the facility, what the facility is offering, etc.
- Plan as many as possible on Fridays.
- Field trips and events must be signups and paid for by a deadline. This is for the reputation of our group and to avoid last-minute cancelations. Refunds are not available after sign-up deadline.

Background checks

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.

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.

Adults should avoid being alone with an individual child or young person. 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 of 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.

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 student 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 facilities outside of our group for activities. Although an educational, fun and entertaining place to be, public places may present hazards for unsupervised children.

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

Neither HESWM nor the staff of the facility being utilized have custodial responsibility for unattended children. HESWM nor facility staff assume liability for children left unattended.

If a child fifteen years of age or younger is found to be unattended, a HESWM volunteer will attempt to find the child's parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian can not be located, 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.

Open Gym Policy (Johnston Chapel, Summit)

Open Gym is an opportunity for our parents and children to get together and socialize. It is required that all parents and children in attendance be respectful of our code of conduct and other policies in place.

- Open Gym will be on Thursday's from 2:00-4:00
- Open Gym days are on the calendar. If for some reason we will not be able to have it on a scheduled day, we will post the cancelation to Talk and Swap and RemindMe.
- The pastor's house and yard are off limits.
- Parents please pack snacks and drinks for your kids.
- Adults only may use the ice machine.
- Keep children off the pianos.
- When intramural sports are in play, non-players will have to stay off the gym floor.
- Only basketball or cheer practice can stay late. Everyone else must leave at 4pm.
- Parents help clean up before we leave, like sweeping floors, checking bathrooms, and taking trash out.
- If this becomes a pattern and no one steps up to volunteer to help clean and keep an eye on all of our kiddos then we will have to discontinue Open Gym.
- Please refer to the discipline policy for further insight on what is and is not appropriate behavior. Please be aware of the suspension policy.
- All of the classrooms are off limits unless you are in a scheduled class.
- The Christmas Box room is always off limits.
- Ensure your children remain in designated areas only.
- The outside playground equipment is in need of repair and thus unsafe, do not go there.
- Please feel free to bring any toys and or games from home that you would love to share with everyone. Make sure to clean them up before leaving.
- NO SKATES OR ITEMS ALLOWED ON THE GYM FLOOR, like chairs

PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN KIDS AT ALL TIMES.

- Children cannot be dropped off at Open Gym. PARENTS MUST STAY WITH THEIR OWN KIDS UNLESS THEY HAVE APPOINTED A PROXY WHO MUST BE 21 OR OLDER.

Consequences for Open Gym Policy Violations

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.

If there is a continual issue of not following the rules, we will have to cancel Open Gym permanently.

Junior / Senior / Graduation Policies

Senior Moms / Graduation Committee

- a. This is a volunteer committee. There will be a primary and 3 assistants. One board member shall have a seat, but NOT the main chair of the committee. In the instance that more than 4 Seniors parents volunteer for the position, is it the duty of those parents to vote on the 4 chair positions. Votes are to be tallied by the board members.
- b. The Senior Moms / Graduation Committee will set the dates for the two mandatory senior meetings, the parents-only meeting, and facilitate those meetings.
- c. The Senior Moms / Graduation Committee will be responsible for any changes to the graduation policy, pending board approval.

Location: Graduation is to be held at the SMCC auditorium on the second weekend of May at 2 pm every year.

- a. Time may be changed by a majority rule vote, to be concluded no later than Nov.
- b. Ceremony
 - i. The MC will stand behind the podium on the right side when facing the stage.
 - ii. Parents will sit in the front rows in the lower right section. When cued, by the attending Junior mom, the entire row will go to the staging area in the stairwell to the right to await their turn to present the diploma.
 - iii. Parents will travel from the right to the left across the stage.
 - iv. The presentation of the diploma will be center stage where a photographer or student from the yearbook staff will be taking pictures.

- v. Students will return to their seat on the stage or accompany the parents in exiting the stage to the left staircase, before rejoining the other graduates in the auditorium seating.

c. Seating

i. Graduates off stage

1. Graduates will be seated in the front middle section.
2. When prompted by the attending Junior Mom, the full row of graduates will proceed to the left stairwell and await their turn to receive their diploma.

ii. Graduates on stage

1. Graduates will be seated center stage with chairs arranged in a staggered pattern with appropriate gapping, so all faces are visible.
2. When prompted by the MC graduate will leave their seat and meet their parents center stage.

d. Decorations:

- i. Graduation stage decorations will be decided on by the parents during the mandatory parent meeting

Suggestions:

- a. Ferns or flowers can be purchased by families collectively through a small donation per family
- b. Grandparents, other family members or businesses can sponsor a plant/decoration and get an honorable mention in the program
- c. Rent flowers or decorations at families expense or fundraisers.
- d. Ask flower shops or decorators to donate services as a donation, with a mention in the program.

Meetings:

1. A total of two student/parent meetings will be held about the graduation ceremony in the fall prior to graduation.
 - a. First mandatory meeting - the basics of the graduation ceremony will be explained, including date, time, essential how things work and what to expect, etc. Students will be given a list of items to vote on at the next meeting.
 - b. Second mandatory meeting - After a brief review of the items to be voted on, students will fill out ballots anonymously.
2. Parent meeting
 - a. A mandatory parent only meeting will be held separate from the graduate meeting to cover the following:
 - i. Diplomas
 - ii. Transcripts

- iii. Graduation Stage Decorations
 - iv. Gown, stoll, chords (meanings), tassel info where on to purchase
 - v. Hosting graduate events (if desired/required)
3. Voting - the following is the list to be voted on. All voting will be done anonymously away from other students and parents to allow students to voice their opinions without reproof.
- a. Stolls - options are blue, green or white
 - b. Tassel Colors - Gator colors (blue, green, white - solid or bicolored) OR each person picks their own color.
 - c. Class Verse
 - d. Class Motto
 - e. Class Song - and if it will be played as they walk out
 - f. Class Representative to present a speech for the class - this is an option, a speech from a graduate is not required. The vote will cover if they want a student speech, then who among the volunteers (if any) they choose to make it.
 - g. Prom Theme - options depend on decorations on hand
 - h. Senior Meal/Videos
 - i. Reception - optional, with or without cake , senior tables
 - j. Programs for the ceremony - digital or print, who will print, how they will be funded, what will be included, etc.

Gowns:

- 1. Gowns will be purchased (single use*). Sites from which to order will be given to parents during the parent meeting.
- 2. Gowns will be black.

Senior Meal:

- 1. This breakfast/lunch/dinner get together will be for the sole purpose to celebrate seniors and share senior videos.
- 2. Suggestions - projector with screen and picnic at Percy Quinn, renting a conference room and holding a potluck, renting a facility with catering.
 - a. All costs are the responsibility of the families through personal funds or fundraising with their seniors.

Reception:

- 1. Reception
 - a. Reception will be held at the workforce building after graduation.
 - b. Tables are optional for students who would like to have them.
 - c. Refreshments to be decided by graduates through a vote at second meeting

Volunteering:

1. Students

- a. Current members - Only students who have volunteered as Juniors will be permitted to walk with the Senior class.
- b. If a current student skips their Junior year AND does not volunteer prior to their senior year, they are not allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony.
- c. If a student is unable to volunteer during their Junior year. That responsibility can be made up by participation in ANY HESWM event.
- d. A student's sibling is allowed to volunteer for the Junior.
- c. New members - will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony, however, they are required to participate in the student meetings and fundraising events.

2. Junior Moms Committee

- a. This is a volunteer committee. There will be a primary and 3 assistants. One board member shall have a seat, but NOT the main chair of the committee. In the instance that more than 4 Junior parents volunteer for the position, is it the duty of those parents to vote on the 4 chair positions. Votes are to be tallied by the board members.
- b. The primary Junior Mom should not have a Senior graduating too, as it puts a lot of unnecessary strain on the mom during the ceremony.
- c. The primary Junior Mom is required to be at the graduation ceremony for its entirety.
- d. The Junior Moms are responsible for organizing and orchestrating the other Junior Mom volunteers during all volunteer events.
- e. Junior Moms will communicate and highly encourage participation in all senior and junior volunteer opportunities.

Other changes

1. Parents will no longer be allowed to make speeches at the graduation ceremony.
2. All deadlines, requirements and limitations must be followed, or the parent and graduate relinquish their rights for their content to be shared. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Senior Bios - long or short
 - b. Senior videos
 - c. Senior quotes

HEWSM Cheerleading Policies

Cheerleader Expectations

- Each student will be expected to attend all practices and performances. You are also required to be on time for all practices and performances. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend or will be late, you will need to text either the coach or co-coach ahead of time.
- Each student will be required to practice at home to improve their skills since our practice time will be limited. Our performances will only be good if we all work together and do our best to learn the routines.
- Each student will be a representative of HESWM and thus need to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects well on our group. Bad attitudes, back-talking, bullying, and cyberbullying will not be tolerated. Remember that at all times, we are a Christian group and therefore represent not only HESWM but also Jesus Christ to the world, and we should act accordingly.
- Each student should come to practice in proper attire and be prepared to do conditioning before each practice. Conditioning will consist of stretching, squats, sit-ups, running/jogging, or any other exercise the coach feels necessary to properly condition the students for the performances.
- Our primary goal is for every student to feel included, have fun, learn the routines, and grow as a cheerleader.

Parent Expectations

- Parents are expected to take their students to all practices and performances on time. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend or will be late, please text either the coach or co-coach ahead of time.
- We ask that you encourage your student to practice at home to improve their skills since our practice time will be limited. Our performances will only be good if we all work together and do our best to learn the routines.
- Parents will be required to participate in fundraisers. If you choose not to participate, you will be required to pay your students' share of the fundraiser.
- We ask that parents be involved, and we encourage you to stay for practice when possible.
- Each parent will be required to help with at least three home games, including, but not limited to, helping with concessions, working the door for an hour, and helping with cleanup. (This is required of all parents who have children participating in any sport.)

Cheerleading Code of Conduct

- First and foremost, all students and parents are required to follow all HESWM codes of conduct, rules, and bylaws.
- The coach and co-coach will be the first to handle disciplinary actions unless the offense requires the HESWM Athletics Director to be involved. A coach will not be allowed to handle any situation with a cheerleader alone and is required to bring in a parent or the co-coach.
- We plan to learn multiple cheer routines. The number will depend on how quickly the students learn the routines. We want quality, not quantity.
- You will be asked to attend all practices.
- If two consecutive practices are missed, for any reason, the cheerleader will not be allowed to participate in the halftime routine. However, we understand personal emergencies, and we are willing to videotape a practice of all new material to keep the cheerleader from falling behind. When a cheerleader misses practice, the placements, routines, and stunt formations are affected. Therefore, we encourage cheerleaders to attend all practices.
- We will perform at all home games.
- We will do all we can to keep the cost of uniforms to a minimum; additionally, we will also have fundraisers to help cover the cost.
- Most importantly, we want our kids to have fun, make friends, show team spirit, and take pride in what we do.
- To ensure safety, cheer mats are to be used at all times. We will not practice any stunts on hard or soft ground.

Communication

- There will never be a coach left alone in a room with the cheerleaders. There will be a co-coach and/or parent present.
- The coach, co-coach, or parents are required to be included in group chats.
- To prevent cyberbullying, no personal videos will be shared in a group chat.
- All discussions about themes, songs, dances, and stunts will be made in person at practice, so every voice is heard.

Appearance

- No display of body art should be visible while in uniform. Appropriate “school spirit” face paint is acceptable.
- Uniforms should always be worn properly; not be altered to an inappropriate length.
- Nails will be cut short.
- No jewelry will be worn at practice or games.