

# Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative (TGIF)

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## Mission and General Information

Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative (TGIF) is a Christ-centered inclusive co-operative available to home schooling families of all Christian denominations.

The purpose of this co-operative is:

- To provide unique, student-centered, activity-based learning opportunities which require group interaction,
- To foster positive Godly relationships among members and provide a support network for moms,
- To provide a convenient, efficient forum for sharing parent/student skills, expertise, and resources, and
- To offer programs of excellent quality, using instructors with expertise and experience in specialized fields.

We offer:

- Field Trips
- Special Events
- Support Meetings for Parents
- Specials Day Enrichment Classes
- High School Tutorial Classes for Credit

Course offerings vary from semester to semester and year to year, but have included:

<u>Younger Children</u>	<u>Mixed Ages</u>	<u>Older Children</u>	<u>High School</u>
Spanish	Art	Debate and Life Skills	Drama Production
Crafts	Hapkido	Chess and Games	English
Science	PE	History	Government
Literature	History	Ultimate Frisbee	History
Preschool	Science	Yo-Yo and Fencing	Math
Baking and Decorating	Drama	Sports	Science

**For membership information about Together Growing in Faith Homeschool Co-operative (TGIF), visit our website at [www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif](http://www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif) or email [tgifhomeschool@comcast.net](mailto:tgifhomeschool@comcast.net).**

# TGIF Program Description

## Group Leadership

The governing body of TGIF is the Board of Representatives with each representative heading up a committee staffed by group members. Board representatives meet regularly throughout the year to plan and make decisions on behalf of the group. Members at large are welcome to attend the new business portion of the board meetings or to give input to board members for consideration.

## Field Trips

Field trips are usually scheduled twice a month throughout the school year. Generally, one trip each month is for younger children and one is for older children.

## Special Events and Activities

Special Events and activities are held throughout the year. Each year we offer several exciting opportunities to enrich your educational program. These may include:

- Talent Show
- Field Day
- Curriculum Fair
- Hearing and Vision Screening
- Theaterworks and BSO Tickets
- Keys for Reading Program
- Thank You Luncheon for Church Staff
- Box Tops for Education
- School Pictures

## Meetings for Moms and Dads

Support group meetings are held throughout the school year to provide support and encouragement for moms and dads. Mandatory member meetings are also held to go over policy and procedures. Most meetings are held in the evening and do not include children.

## Specials Day

Enrichment classes meet on Fridays. Our program runs for two 10-week semesters and is open to home schooling families who are members of TGIF.

## High School Tutorial

High School Tutorial classes are for thirty-two weeks on Fridays during the school year and can be used for high school credit. High School Tutorial families must be members of TGIF but do not have to attend Specials Day.

## **TGIF Website**

[www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif](http://www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif)

## **TGIF E-mail**

[tgifhomeschool@comcast.net](mailto:tgifhomeschool@comcast.net)

# **TGIF Membership Requirements**

## **TGIF Family Enrollment**

All families complete a yearly enrollment form online. Re-enrollment for current members ends the first week of June each year. New member enrollments begins in mid-June and will be accepted while spaces still remain in the group. Enrollment closes at the end of June.

## **Additional Paperwork**

### Background Clearance

We require all TGIF members and teachers to complete a criminal background check. TGIF can give you information on how to complete this clearance through SentryLink. The cost is approximately \$20 and is payable by the member. Any adult that will be teaching or volunteering must pass the background check before attending classes. This is for the protection of our children and Friendship Baptist Church (FBC) also requires that all members have completed background checks.

### Emergency Forms

TGIF requires a signed Emergency Form for each child. Emergency information will be completed when you enroll on our website. The forms are printed and must be signed by the parent or responsible adult.

### Hold Harmless Agreement

A Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement must be completed and signed by each member family. This form will be required upon initial enrollment and will be kept on file.

### Statement of Faith

A Signed Statement of Faith (or agreement not to contradict our Statement of Faith) must be signed by each member family. This form will be required upon initial enrollment and will be kept on file.

## **Membership Fee**

The membership fee to join TGIF is determined each year and is due at the time enrollment. There is a \$5 late fee if the payment is not received five days after the due date.

## **Service to the Group and Member Job Deposit**

All TGIF members are required to serve the group in at least one of the positions listed on the website under Member Duties. *Specials Day parents have additional duties related to their involvement in that*

*cooperative.* TGIF High School Tutorial families who will only be taking tutorial classes will not have a member job but they are encouraged to help plan a high school event during the year.

If a member fails to complete a member job, the family will be reverted to new member status and will not be able to register for Specials Day classes until new families register.

## **Specials Day and High School Tutorial General Information**

### **Teachers**

Homeschooling parents are the primary teachers of their children. TGIF's Specials Day Program is designed as a learning cooperative for families with children of all ages. The High School Tutorial has children ranging from upper middle school through high school. Some teachers are hired from the community while others are TGIF parents.

### **Location**

Friendship Baptist Church, 1391 Sykesville Road, Sykesville, MD 21784

### **Calendar**

Specials Day consists of two 10-week semesters in which a variety of classes will be offered on Fridays for children in Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The calendar for Specials Day is divided into a fall and a spring semester.

The TGIF High School Tutorial meets for thirty-two weeks on Fridays throughout the year. Please view the current calendar on our website at [www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif](http://www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif).

### **Catalog of Courses, Registration, and Fees**

The catalog for Specials Day with descriptions of classes, costs, and teacher biographies will be posted on the website usually three weeks before classes begin. Registrations for classes will be accepted online according to the schedule posted on the calendar. The fees for each class are listed in the catalog. Each family registered for Specials Day will pay a registration fee to cover facility expenses. Registration fees are non-refundable. Due dates for registration and class fees will be listed on the confirmation registration email. Information on where to send payments will also be indicated on the confirmation email.

The High School Tutorial Catalog of Classes will be posted on the website in April each year. Registrations for classes will be accepted online when the catalog becomes available. The fees for the classes are listed in the catalog. Each family registered for the High School Tutorial will pay a registration fee to cover the facility expenses. This is in addition to the Specials Day registration fee if your family is participating in both programs. Due dates for registration and class fees will be listed on the confirmation registration email.

## **Cancellations of Classes**

Specials Day classes may be canceled if the class minimums are not met. Families will be contacted so they can choose another class during that time period.

For the High School Tutorial, if the minimum class size is not met, the class may be canceled or a higher class fee may be suggested to interested families.

Class cancellations due to unusual circumstances (bad weather, large funerals at the church, etc.) will be avoided whenever possible but may occasionally happen. In such instances, there will generally be no make-up classes and no refunds. High School Tutorial students will likely receive make-up instructions from their teachers.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Parent Obligations**

One of the fundamental principles of home education is the primary role of parental authority for the education and welfare of their children. Parents are responsible to comply with the Maryland home school law, to oversee the student's work and behavior, to ensure the safety of their children, to make payments on time, to be informed, to volunteer their time for the benefit of the group, and to model Godly behavior. TGIF events and classes are designed as cooperative efforts, to provide low-cost, efficient, quality programs for families who educate their children at home. The benefits of this program are derived from mutual cooperation; parents who do not fulfill their obligation for service will not be permitted to participate in TGIF activities.

Parents are expected to show respect to the teachers. If there is a conflict between a teacher and a member, the teacher or member with the complaint will notify the board. The board will then take steps to rectify the situation according to Article VII of the bylaws – Conflict Resolution.

### **Student Behavior Expectations and Responsibilities for Both Programs**

- Act in a well-behaved and respectful manner toward all adults, instructors, and peers.
- Come to class prepared.
- Complete assignments on time.
- Take care of church property and equipment.
- Dress neatly and modestly (see detailed dress code below).
- Follow our Public Displays of Affection Policy (see detailed PDA policy below)
- Limit cell phone use to between classes or lunch.

### **Student Dress Code**

- Clothing will be neat, clean, and modest.

- Shorts, skorts, skirts, and dresses must be appropriate length.
- Clothing must cover the body from the shoulders to mid-thigh. No exposed midriffs and no spaghetti strap shirts, halter tops, or bare-back shirts.
- No Heelys or cleats inside the buildings.
- No underwear should be visible at any time.
- No inappropriate or suggestive wording on clothing.

### **High School Tutorial Student Expectations**

- Students are expected to spend time daily studying and completing homework and/or tests at home.
- Students are expected to complete assignments thoroughly and on time. If a class is missed, it is the student's responsibility to obtain the missed material.
- Students are expected to be on time for class.
- Students are expected to be respectful of teachers, students, other adults, and those working in the building.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves as mature, well-behaved, well-mannered, Godly young adults.
- Students are expected to be familiar with the current membership policies and bylaws.

### **Public Displays of Affection (PDA)**

- No kissing.
- No holding or hugging from behind.
- No sitting on each other's laps.
- Handholding and brief hugs are acceptable between classes only.

### **Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior**

Consequences are intended to maintain a positive and safe environment for everyone and to provide a training period for children who are willing to learn appropriate social skills. Disrespectful, demeaning, or hostile behavior will not be tolerated. Class time is too precious for any instructor to deal continually with repeated class disruption. We will follow a Biblical example of correction, training, and development. When a situation occurs the teacher will talk to the student about it. If the problem continues the parent will be contacted. These guidelines will be implemented by the board members when a situation arises:

- First Offense – the child will be placed on probation. To continue in class, the parent must attend class with the child. The parent will model appropriate behavior and provide training for the child until the teacher is satisfied with the behavior improvements. Parents are responsible for finding a substitute for their assigned volunteer duties if necessary.
- Second Offense – the child will be given a one week suspension. Further training requires removal from class. To return to the classroom, a student must demonstrate a willing attitude to improve their behavior.

- Third Offense – the child will be removed permanently from the class. Refunds will not be given for behavior problems. A child may return to classes in another semester when behavior has improved.

## **Schedule Changes**

Changes to the Specials Day schedule will only be accepted one week before classes begin. In special cases, you may contact the Specials Day Representative.

## **Refund Policy**

Refunds will be granted in full one week after the last day of Specials Day registration (see dates on the website). If a class is canceled, you will be notified by the Specials Day Representative and have the opportunity to sign up for another class. Class fees will be adjusted.

No refunds are given if your child wants to switch to a new class after Specials has started. Contact the Specials Day Representative to let her know your child would like to change classes. The Specials Day Representative will contact the teacher and will let you know if it is possible to attend a different class. You may have to pay the teacher directly when your child attends the new class for the first time.

For the High School Tutorial, if a class is dropped before June 15, a 100% refund of class fees will be made. (Note: Enrollment and lab fees are nonrefundable.) After June 15, however, no refunds will be given for dropped classes.

## **Safety Precautions**

The following procedures are intended to assist parents in the monitoring of their children and to provide a pleasant working environment for everyone.

- Children who are not scheduled to participate in a class may not be left unattended. Children not attending class or a scheduled lunch break must have parent supervision. High school students with a free period may sign up for a supervised study hall if it is available. They are also encouraged to help during their free period as a teacher's aide.
- Running and rough playing are not permitted in the classrooms, hallways, or Fellowship Hall. Only quiet activities are allowed.
- No child under the age of 11 is to be unattended throughout the day.
- If your child (of any age) has a free period, they must be under the supervision of their parent.

## **Church Facility**

The use of the church facility is a privilege. Specials Day is not a church-sponsored activity. Friendship Baptist Church is an active and vibrant Christian worship center and the staff is very busy at work. All program business shall be communicated only through TGIF board members. If you are in need of something during the day of Specials, please find a board member to help and they will contact the FBC staff if needed. Please remember that we are guests in the facility and that we should conduct ourselves accordingly. Disrespectful and destructive behavior will not be tolerated. Also, please try to refrain from talking in the hallways upstairs where the staff offices are located.

## **Food and Drinks**

Please limit food and drinks to the Fellowship Hall or SALT Room during lunch hours. A 25-minute lunch break is scheduled every week. Pizza lunch can be purchased or members may bring a bag lunch.

Classes that are serving snacks as part of the curriculum should make sure to clean up any spills, etc. in the classroom before the end of the class period. If trash cans are overflowing, please remove the trash bag and set it beside the trash can. Place a new bag in the trash can. The trash bags can be found in the janitor's closet.

## **Visitor Policy**

Please contact our Specials Day Representative if you would like to bring a visitor to Specials. The non-member family will need to complete our Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement and Emergency Forms for their children if the parent is not in attendance. Non-TGIF children must be accompanied at all times by the TGIF member who is assuming responsibility for them for the day.

Adults visiting for the purpose of learning about the group should try to attend on our Open House day at the end of April each year. If they are attending on a different day, they must be escorted by a TGIF member at all times.

## **Teacher Policy**

First time members or non-members who would like to be considered as teachers should contact our Specials Day Representative or High School Tutorial Representative for more information. Proposals for Specials Day classes may be submitted to the Specials Day Representative twice a year, usually in June/July and December/January. Proposals for High School Tutorial Classes will be accepted by our High School Tutorial Representative usually beginning in March.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

1. Enter through the back door of the building and go to Room 108 to sign in.
2. Parents should check their mailbox and the information table throughout the day.
3. Once signed in, parents should escort their children to their first class.
4. Children in consecutive classes will be escorted to their next class by the teacher's aide.
5. Parents should pick up their children at the classroom at the end of their final class.
6. Parents will sign children out at the end of their last class.

## **Personal Belongings**

Coats, lunches, backpacks, etc. should be kept with the student throughout the day. Please do not bring valuables and only bring books and materials that are needed for class. Items left behind at the end of the day will be placed in our lost and found box and stored in our supply cabinet. If they are not claimed in two weeks, they will be donated to charity.

## **Cancellations Due to Bad Weather**

If Carroll County Schools or Howard County Schools are two hours late, Specials Day will most likely begin on time. Please check your email for updates.

If Carroll or Howard County Schools are closed due to weather, classes are canceled.

If Carroll or Howard County Schools close early due to weather, afternoon classes will be canceled.

## **Staying in Touch**

Information is provided for all families in various ways. It is your responsibility to read the information made available and to keep informed. Please check your email regularly and visit our website at [www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif](http://www.homeschool-life.com/md/tgif). Also, read the notices on the information table in Room 108 at Specials Day and attend any member meetings that may be scheduled during the year. Email is our most used form of communication so please get in the habit of checking it regularly.

# **TGIF Security Procedures for Keeping Our Children Safe**

## **Parent Responsibility**

Please make sure to sign your children in when you arrive and to cross their name off the sign in sheet when you leave for the day. If your children do not have a class at a given hour, they must remain with you or another responsible adult. Teen children also must be supervised by a parent when they are not in class.

## **Aide Responsibility**

- Bring the class folder to the classroom and take attendance. If there are any children absent, compare that with the sign in sheet in Room 108. If a student is signed in but is not in class, start proceedings to locate the child.
  - Check the child's schedule in the Information Binder in Room 108. Go to the last class to see if the child is still there.
  - Find a board member or another member to help you locate the child by searching bathrooms, etc.
  - If the child cannot be located, go to the Emergency Forms Binder and contact the parent.
- Escort students in grades pre-K to age ten from class to class or to the bathroom.
- Lunch aides will be given a detailed explanation of lunchroom procedures before aiding at lunch for the semester.
- Aides for classes immediately after lunch (1:00pm) should meet their class in the fellowship hall and escort the students from the lunch room to their classroom. This is for any classes with children ages three to ten years old.

## **Substitutes**

If you are not in an emergency situation, please find your own aide substitute. Substitutes must be other TGIF members or your spouse (who has had a background clearance). Find a substitute by asking the parents of students in the class or by sending an email request to the group. Once you have found a substitute, please let the Member and Aide Duty Representative know who will be taking your place. If

it is a last minute emergency or you cannot find a substitute, please let the Member and Aide Duty Representative know.

## **Special Needs and First Aid**

Since we are a non-profit homeschool co-operative run by parents, we do not have any special accommodations for Special Needs Students. Although most of our teachers are not trained in how to handle special needs, we do encourage you to speak to your child's teachers to inform them of any issues they need to be aware of. Teachers are not required to make special accommodations but we are happy to help your child have the best experience they can at Specials Day. An open line of communication is very important between the parent, teacher, and Specials Day Representative.

We do require parents of Special Needs children and parents of children with severe allergies to stay on the premises in case any issues would arise. If you have a child that you must accompany to classes, please let the Member and Aide Duty Representative know and she will try to work with you for aiding purposes.

There is a first aid kit located in our supply cabinet or in Room 108 for minor ailments. For major emergencies, call 911.

## **Emergency Evacuation of the Building**

During an emergency evacuation, teacher's aides should take the class folder, line the students up at the door, remain at the front of the line, and escort the children out the nearest exit to the open field or parking lot. Teachers will follow the last child out of the room, turn off the light, and close the door. Once in the field and parking lot, aides should take attendance again.

Any board member or adult member in Room 108 should pick up the attendance sheets, Emergency Forms Binder, and Specials Day Information Binder and proceed to the field.

Parents who do not have other responsibilities are asked to assist with the children in the nursery if possible.

We try to have a fire drill (emergency evacuation drill) at least once every semester.

## **Lockdown Procedures**

**Lockdown with Warning: The following procedures should be followed when the threat is outside of the building:**

- Board member will announce "lockdown with warning". The message will be repeated several times throughout the building.
- An additional board member or other assigned parent will announce "lockdown with warning" to all classes outside of the building. Students and parents will go inside the building.
- Lock exterior doors.
- Classes in the SALT Room and Fellowship Hall should move to an interior classroom. This may result in more than one class in a classroom.
- Clear hallways, restrooms, and other rooms that cannot be secured.

- Secure and cover classroom windows if possible.
- Move all persons away from the windows.
- Take attendance of students in each classroom.
  - If there are multiple classes/students in a room, attendance should be taken and the extra children be added to the attendance list.
  - Aides should take this list with them once they are directed to leave the classroom.
- Control all movement, but continue classes. Move on announcement of “all clear” only.
- Once the threat has subsided, board members announce “all clear” and visit each classroom with the announcement.

**Lockdown with Intruder: The following procedures should be followed when the threat or intruder is inside of the school building:**

- Board member announces “lockdown with intruder.” The message will be repeated several times throughout the building.
- Immediately direct all students, staff, and visitors into the nearest classroom or secured space.
- Classes that are outside of the building SHOULD NOT enter the building but should go behind the shed at the back of the parking lot.
- Classes in the SALT Room and Fellowship Hall should move to an interior classroom. This may result in more than one class in a classroom.
- Anyone in the hallway or bathrooms should go to the nearest secure classroom.
- Lock classroom doors.
- Move people away from the windows and doors. Keep all students sitting on the floor, and turn off the lights.
- Take attendance of students in each classroom.
  - Teachers and aides should prepare a list of missing and extra students in the room.
  - Teachers and aides should prepare to take this list with them once they are directed to leave the classroom.
- DO NOT respond to anyone at the door until “all clear” is announced.
- Keep out of sight.
- Be prepared to ignore any fire alarm activation.
- When or if students are moved out of the classroom, assist them in moving as quietly and quickly as possible.
- When the threat is over/the intruder has left the building, board members announce “all clear.”

**Lunch Room Policies**

- Children will be escorted by the aides to the lunch room. All children ages eleven and up may proceed to the lunchroom on their own.
- If a parent would like to take a child outside or elsewhere to eat, please inform the lunch aide at the door.
- Children and parents should clean up after themselves by throwing away all trash and putting away their chairs. Older teens are asked to help put away the lunch tables.
- Children aged three to ten should line up by their class sign at 1:00pm to be escorted by the classroom aide. Children aged eleven and up may proceed to their class at the 1:00pm dismissal.

- Children aged ten and younger and families will eat in the Fellowship Hall.
- Children aged 11 and up may go to the SALT Room for lunch. It is not required so if your child would like to go to the Fellowship Hall, that is fine also.
- No family or child should eat in any of the classrooms unless they speak to a board member first. Teens in the SALT Room may also eat in Classroom 109 if it is available.
- During nice weather, children are allowed to go outside to eat but should be close to the building so the aide can see them. No child should be near the pond at any time during the day.