



Great Endeavor Homeschoolers

2016-2017 Handbook

A comprehensive reference guide to GEH policies, rules,
job descriptions, opportunities, benefits and
State & Local homeschooling information

Website : www.greatendeavorhomeschoolers.com

Email : GreatEndeavorHomeschoolers@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Our Mission.....	3
Statement of Faith	3
NC Homeschool Laws	4
Requirements.....	4
Reminders.....	5
Recommendations	6
GEH Board	7
GEH Membership	7
Membership Benefits	7
Membership Dues	9
Annual Membership Renewal.....	9
Member Expectations.....	9
Prospective Members/Non-Members.....	10
General Policies	10
Inclement Weather Policy	11
Sick Policy.....	11
Communication	11
Field Trip Policy.....	12
RSVP Policy.....	12
Reimbursement Guidelines	12
Dress Code	13
Personal Liability	13
Attendance Policy	13
Code of Conduct.....	14
Discipline	14

Introduction

Welcome to an exciting year for Great Endeavor Homeschoolers! We are feeling excited and ambitious for what we have planned and look forward to developing a great family of homeschoolers!

Great Endeavor Homeschoolers (GEH) was formed in 2014 to provide support and encouragement to local homeschooling families through prayer, support, and various opportunities to meet together and enrich our homeschool experience. Homeschooling is a GREAT ENDEAVOR but not an easy one! Every member of the family needs support, encouragement, and friends to share this unique experience. GEH strives to meet those needs with a variety of programs, activities, and events geared towards the whole family, moms, students of all ages, and even dads! Whether you are new to homeschooling, thinking about homeschooling or anywhere in the trenches, GEH wants to provide you with the means to make your homeschooling experience EXACTLY what you want it to be!

Our Mission

To bring like-minded Christian homeschooling families together for fellowship and encouragement through prayer, support, and various opportunities to meet together and enrich our homeschool experience. We seek to honor Jesus Christ in all that we say, all that we think, and all that we do.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible is the inspired and only infallible and authoritative written Word of God. 2 Tim. 3:16
- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Rev 1:8; Matt. 28:19
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal future return to earth in power and glory to rule forever.
- We believe the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. I Pet. 3:18; Tit. 3:5.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: one to everlasting life and the other to eternal damnation. Jn. 5:28-29.

NC Homeschool Laws

North Carolina law defines a home school as a non-public school consisting of the children of not more than two families or households, where the parents or legal guardians or members of either household determine the scope and sequence of the academic instruction, provide academic instruction, and determine additional sources of academic instruction. General Statute 115C-563(a) as amended changes the definition of a home school to allow parents to hire tutors, let their children participate in group settings where they receive instruction (co-ops, 4-H classroom instruction, etc.) and be instructed by an expert that is not a part of the household in the established homeschool (apprenticeships, a homeschool doctor teaching biology, etc.) This will allow homeschool parents more freedom to choose what is best for the education of their children.

The North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE) is authorized by state law to receive home school notices of intent to begin initial operation and to terminate operation, and to annually inspect the school's student attendance and nationally standardized achievement test result records. Chief Administrators of home schools should anticipate receiving a request(s) to meet with a DNPE representative at a public location in close proximity to the home school while the home school is in operation.

Requirements

Parents/guardians residing in North Carolina and desiring, in lieu of conventional school attendance, to home school their children who are at least age 7 but not yet age 16 must:

- Hold at least a high school diploma or its equivalent;
- Send to DNPE a Notice of Intent to Operate a Home School. The notice must include the name and address of the school along with the name of the school's owner and chief administrator;
- Elect to operate under either Part 1 or Part 2 of Article 39 of the North Carolina General Statutes as a religious or as a non-religious school;
- Operate the school "on a regular schedule, excluding reasonable holidays and vacations, during at least nine calendar months of the year";
- Maintain at the school disease immunization and annual attendance records for each student;
- Have a nationally standardized achievement test administered annually to each student. The test must involve the subject areas of English grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics. Records of the test results must be retained at the home school for at least one year and made available to DNPE when requested.
- Notify DNPE when the school is no longer in operation.

Reminders

- To avoid needless delays, always use this Notice of Intent form when sending your notice of intent.
- Please DO NOT send a Notice of Intent to DNPE for the present school year if the only students to be enrolled in your home school: (a) Are currently under age 7 and will not turn age 7 before this coming June 1; or, (b) Are currently 18 years of age or older.
- Please send your Notice of Intent a month in advance of your home school's initial opening date. If any of your children will turn age 7 before this coming June 1, please send your Notice of Intent at least 30 days before the child's 7th birthday. One Notice of Intent per school, please -- not per student.
- No Notices of Intent are accepted in or for May and June. If your home school will operate only during the summer months, DO NOT send a Notice of Intent to DNPE.
- The State of North Carolina home school statistical year begins each July 1 and concludes the following June 30. Therefore, do not file your Notice of Intent until after July 1 of the home school statistical year in which your home school will begin initial operation.
- In continuing your school from year to year, do not again send a Notice of Intent to DNPE unless you have previously notified DNPE that your school was terminated. IF it was previously terminated and you are now re-opening it, answer "Yes" to question 1 and then, on that same line, give the former county if it will now be in a different one. Give the current county on line 2.
- When selecting your school name, choose an academic name appropriate for inclusion on the student's future high school diploma which would be provided by your school. Keep in mind that DNPE will NOT be able to accommodate requests later for a change of school name in the division's files.
- A reminder that the State of North Carolina has no legal authority outside of its geographical borders. Consequently, if the student is living or traveling outside of the geographical borders of the State of North Carolina, DO NOT send a Notice of Intent form to DNPE.
- Before sending a Notice of Intent, be sure to read very carefully the legal definition of a home school to be certain that your proposed instructional arrangement can legally qualify as a home school. Also, your child must be capable of taking a nationally standardized achievement test annually.
- In order to expedite the processing of Notices of Intent, please do not submit your Notice of Intent until you are certain that your home school will definitely begin operation. Sending a Notice of Intent and then withdrawing it several days/weeks later creates an unnecessary additional workload for our office staff.
- Every age 15-17 student enrolled in a home school must obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate from his /her home school chief administrator within 30 days before the student attempts to obtain his/her North Carolina Learner's Permit or Driver's License. [Click here for a publication entitled North Carolina Non-Public School Student Driving Eligibility Certificate Requirements for further details.](#)
- If a home school does not meet all legal requirements for such a school, DNPE notifies the local public school superintendent that the North Carolina compulsory school attendance law is not being satisfied. The local public school superintendent then takes appropriate action.

- A home school that has met the legal requirements for such a school is a non-public school. Consequently, a photocopy of the student's cumulative record from his/her previous school may be obtained and kept at the site of the home school if the parent so desires. The last public or private educational institution which the student attended should retain the original record.
- DNPE suggests that before finalizing plans for establishing a home school, you first consult with the chief administrator of the local conventional school (public or private) which your child would otherwise be attending. Ask him/her how he/she would handle the grade placement of your child should you decide later to terminate your home school and enroll your child in that school. The initial point of student entry into the North Carolina public school system is the kindergarten level.
- When sending your Notice of Intent to DNPE, always include diploma documentation for all persons named on lines 8 and 9 of the form. Be sure to include on line 9 the name of the parent/legal guardian who is usually with the student during the day while other area children are normally attending local schools.
- Do not withdraw your child from his/her present school or begin your school until you have received written acknowledgment from DNPE that your completed Notice of Intent to Operate a School form has been received.

Recommendations

While not mandated by law, home schools are ENCOURAGED to:

- Offer instruction of at least similar quality, scope and duration as local conventional schools.
- Maintain at least five clock hours of instruction with the student(s) each school day.
- Conduct instruction each school year for 180 days.
- Maintain a current daily log, journal or lesson plan book throughout the entire school year detailing time period for each subject each day and information covered during the specified time period.
- Retain records at your school until the student has enrolled in a conventional school or has graduated.
- Administer and score a nationally standardized testing each year during the same week of your choice between March 1 and April 15 by someone not living in the same household as the student.

**taken from the North Carolina Department of Non-Public Education website.

<http://www.ncdnpe.org/>**

Meet the Board

Beth Silcott – Co-Chair

I was born in Michigan, attended Meredith College in Raleigh, lived in Wake Forest after marrying my sweet heart, Chris, and have now settled in Durham. Chris and I have 4 beautiful children: Ben (8), Katie (6), Maddie (5), and Jack (3). Ben is a self-declared 'Nature Boy'; he loves tending to the chickens, exploring the creek, and catching frogs, toads, snakes, or lizards. He also has a passion for playing hockey! Katie & Maddie love all things girly - dolls, coloring & crafts, and dance. The baby of the family is Jack; he can entertain himself for hours playing with his cars, trains, tractors, really any form of transportation! My husband, Chris, works for Duke University in Facilities Management. And me...well, when there's time, I love to sew, scrapbook, work in the flower garden and dollop in photography.

We have been homeschooling since the beginning and follow a Classical model. We use Tapestry of Grace, All About Reading/Spelling, Math U See, Apologia Science...to name a few. I have a passion for homeschooling and enjoy ministering to new & seasoned homeschoolers!

Amber Taylor – Co-Chair

I have been married to my husband Andrew since 2003, and we have two energetic and creative children. Aiden is 10, and loves writing, music, all things outdoors, and video games. Amelia is 7 and enjoys art, music, dancing, and the outdoors. I grew up in Atlanta, and moved with Andrew to Florida shortly after we were married. We lived in Florida for almost 10 years, and we moved to Durham in January 2013. We LOVE North Carolina and couldn't imagine being anywhere else! I enjoy all things music, and love singing, playing piano, and children's worship. We are members of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in North Durham where we are very involved with our Connect Group and serve in the Children's Ministry through Children's Choir. We have been homeschooling since 2009, when Aiden started Kindergarten. We felt called to homeschool when it was time to sign up for the local school system. I didn't feel right about public school for him, so we decided to give homeschooling a try! Five years later and we haven't looked back! We have a very eclectic style of learning, and employ many different methods in our day to day learning. We love to have fun together and are very outgoing! We love getting together with friends and trying new things!

GEH Membership

Membership Benefits

1. Find Support, Friendship, and Encouragement
 - Foster friendships for you, your children and your spouse! Throughout the year we offer a great variety of events and activities for all age groups, moms, dads and the whole family!

- Meet experienced homeschoolers and glean valuable information from them.
 - Share struggles with peers that all homeschool families experience and get support & advice from moms who understand
2. Access to all GEH Events & Activities
 - Monthly GEM nights, group events, the forum and field trips are great opportunities to meet people and learn valuable information from those who have gone before you.
 - Lunch Bunch – weekly lunch playgroup
 - Various field trips scheduled throughout the year
 - Showcase Night
 - Holiday Parties
 - We will be adding many events in the future. Check out our What We Do page to see some of the events we wish to implement soon!
 3. Eligibility to participate in Great Endeavor Academy (pending acceptance and available space in the co-op)
 4. Access to GEH membership directory
 - Find fellow members who live in your area via the Google Map feature. You can also sort to find others using similar curriculums or children with similar ages.
 - PLEASE respect the privacy of our members and DO NOT use the directory for solicitation purposes. Anyone violating this policy may have membership and website privileges revoked.
 5. Access to the GEH Forum
 - Learn about current homeschooling events, classes, and opportunities
 - Up-to-date information about current curriculum sales and specials
 - Get online support & advice from fellow members regarding curriculum, teaching issues, etc.
 - Stay informed about family activities in Durham and surrounding areas
 6. Online Photo Gallery
 - Share photos from GEH events with other members.
 7. Educator Discount Card
 - Present your GEH membership card as various retailers to receive educator discounts.
 - Visit the Educator Discount tab on the website for more information
 8. Ability to view & list items for sale in our Classified Ads
 - Members can sell/trade curriculum, materials, and other items

Membership Dues

Membership dues to Great Endeavor Homeschoolers are \$30.00 a year and are paid at the time of registration with GEH. Dues are paid per family and provide such privileges as yearly membership for the GEH website, attendance at GEH events, and the opportunity to join field trips. GEH prefers that dues & payments be submitted via PayPal for easier tracking. If necessary, dues can also be paid with cash or check.

GEH is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and our annual dues are used to cover group expenses including but not limited to: website fees, hospitality supplies, monthly meeting speakers, facility rental, paper, and printing ink. We would never want a family to not participate in our group because the fee is too burdensome. For scholarship availability, please contact a member of the board.

Annual Membership Renewal

GEH membership year begins July 1st and ends June 31st. On June 1st, GEH will reset the membership and, the next time members login, they will be redirected to their family profile and need to update their information. i.e contact information, child's grade level, handbook acceptance, etc.

Membership renewals are to be completed by July 1st. Members who fail to update their family profile and pay their annual dues, will be 'parked' and denied access to the website until their renewal is complete. On July 15th, any remaining 'parked' members will be withdrawn from Great Endeavor Homeschoolers.

Our website renewal date is July 15th and, at the point in time, GEH will be charged the annual usage fee for each family enrolled in GEH. We do not want to be charged for families who do not plan on renewing for the following year.

Member Volunteering

All GEH members are expected to make some kind of contribution for the benefit of the group. Activities can be simple and informal like greeting members at GEH meetings, or large and organization-intensive like planning a party or event; they can be academically oriented or purely social.

The best way for GEH to thrive is for families to assist with at least one or two activities per year.

There are many ways to contribute your energy and creativity to Great Endeavor Homeschoolers.

- Check out our What We Do page on the website to see what opportunities there are.
- If you have a need for your family that is not readily available already, please take the initiative to spread the word and organize a new activity/event. Most likely there are other families within GEH that would benefit from it as well.
- Contact a member of the board and we will be happy to help you find a place to serve that will use your talents & desires.

We do understand that everyone's situation is different and will not be able to contribute the same, but hope that each member will desire to contribute in some way for the benefit of the ministry. We are so excited to see how God has worked through our ministry and membership over the years to bring many dedicated, talented and creative members to our group.

New to GEH? – If you are new to the group, feeling too overwhelmed to take on another thing, or just a little shy, relax! Take your time getting to know the other families of GEH. If you're like the rest of us, sooner or later inspiration will strike and you'll realize there's a golden opportunity to pass on your hard-won knowledge of basket weaving, Broadway musicals, or taxidermy.

Each member family agrees to serve in at least one GEH activity each school year.

We thrive because most GEH families voluntarily initiate at least one or two activities per year.

In an effort to make this ministry as successful and fair to our members as possible, we are asking each member to volunteer their time and/or talents at various events, activities and/or duties throughout the year. Participation - To get the most out of your membership with GEH, we encourage members to actively participate in group meetings, various field trips, classes and other offerings. Participating takes planning ahead, so keep an eye on your calendar and pencil us in! We want to welcome others to be a part of our group, not just partake of individual activities our group offers its members. You'll find great friendships for yourself and your families as you join with us this year!

Prospective Members/Non-Members
Must have pre-approval from GEH.

Prospective members are welcome to attend our monthly Great Endeavor Mom's Nights (GEM Nights) or a Lunch Bunch to get to know GEH and our members.

(Please note that ONLY MEMBERS are allowed to participate in events organized by the group. Because of liability, you may NOT invite non-members to these events. Instead invite them to our monthly meetings and encourage them to join GEH.) Please remember that visiting friends and family members are also not allowed to participate, due to liability reasons. Volunteers coordinate all approved activities and field trips and many volunteers are needed to provide these enriching activities. Volunteering in some area of service is a requirement of membership.

General Policies

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather that affects a GEH activity or class, GEH will issue a notice to all members via email, Facebook and an update on the GEH website. Generally speaking, we will follow Durham Public Schools decision to close or delay activities. Please follow this schedule when planning your travels, but always use your best judgment regarding the safety of your family.

Sick Policy

Please don't attend events if you or your child is sick and contagious. Keep in mind how you would feel if another mom knowingly brought their sick child around you and yours.

Do not attend an event if you or your child:

- is acting sick
- has yellow or green nasal secretions
- has diarrhea
- has vomited within 48 hours
- has fever
- has eye drainage or bloodshot eyes
- has sore throat
- has a rash in conjunction with or following low-grade fever
- has been on antibiotics for less than 48 hours

By helping to observe good health standards, you will be protecting your child, yourself and others. Please inform us if your child has an infectious disease and other children may have been exposed unknowingly. If your child should become ill while participating in GEH activity, your prompt attention is appreciated.

Communication

We want to make sure that all our members are well connected to what is happening within the GEH community. We have many lines of communication available to our members. Official communication from GEH will be emailed to members and updated on the GEH website.

GEH Website is always kept up to date on all the happenings and policies of GEH as well as news from the community. The forum is a great way to communicate among fellow members as well as Facebook.

As listed in the membership guidelines, only GEH members may sign up to attend field trips. GEH members may bring a friend to a field trip every once in a while if they have it approved beforehand by the Membership Coordinator or Field Trip Coordinator. But the member must purchase all the tickets and be the GEH contact for the visitor. Non-members may not attend a GEH event without their member "sponsor" and cannot purchase or reserve tickets to GEH events under any circumstances. Family and houseguests are handled a bit differently and are welcome anytime. In this case, the member is still the responsible party.

Field Trip Policy

We are aware that we are representing Christ and homeschoolers wherever we go.

- RSVP promptly and pay all fees by the due date, if there is a fee
- Do not attend an event if you are not signed-up
- Do attend all events for which you have signed up
- Be punctual – we want to be courteous and not waste each other’s time and some venues will not allow other participants to start or be seated until the whole group has arrived
- Be courteous of the field trip coordinator and follow her instructions carefully
- Remind your children to respect all those in authority & to follow the GEH code of conduct
- Remember to dress appropriately for the event and keep modesty in mind
- Be sure to thank the tour guide or spokesperson
- If a fieldtrip requires advanced payment, the link to GEH PayPal will be found on the sign up for that event. There will be NO refunds for prepaid events as these usually require lots of planning and minimum participants. The only exception to this is if you are able to find a family to take your place in the activity. Then you can arrange reimbursement from the replacement family.

RSVP Policy

Please RSVP for GEH events. RSVP’ing allows us to know who to expect and look out for before proceeding with our scheduled event. Whether you are RSVP’ing yes or no, it allows us to know that members are hearing of our activities and to determine whether certain events are popular and to influence when & where we schedule events.

If you RSVP “yes” for an event, please treat that just as you would any other appointment. You wouldn’t stand your best friend up without calling and letting her know you couldn’t make it, please don’t stand us up either. We will plan to wait for all RSVP’d members to arrive before proceeding with our activity and we would greatly appreciate a courtesy call if you can’t attend or running late.

Some GEH activities require a minimum or specific number of participants and may require a deposit as well. Any family who signs up for such an activity but fails to show up without a 24-hour notice will be put on a no-show list. If this happens twice in a school year, that family will be ineligible for any similar activities for the rest of the school year. Families are required to fulfill any financial commitment if their absences are not filled by other members of GEH.

Reimbursement Guidelines

Requests for reimbursements should be submitted to the treasurer no later than 2 weeks after an event.

All reimbursements for the school year will be paid by June 31st. All requests for reimbursement should be submitted by June 15th.

Reimbursements will be mailed promptly. In general, they will be mailed within two days of submission, which results in your receipt of the check within one week of the request. However, it may

take up to two weeks, if the treasurer is traveling. If you know ahead of time that you will need a reimbursement by a certain date, just let the treasurer know in advance.

Requests for reimbursement can be submitted to in person, by mail, or by email. The required forms are available on the under Documents & Files tab. Receipts for all expenses must be kept and submitted to the treasurer, regardless of the amount.

Dress Code

In order to encourage modest dress and to give the best-possible representation of our group, we have chosen to add the following “dress code” for all group functions and field trips. Dress code violations will follow the discipline procedure.

- No stomach or underwear should be visible.
- Shirts should have conservative necklines and should not be revealing when you bend over.
- Skirts and shorts should not be excessively short.
- No wording across the back of the shorts or pants.
- Events where swimsuits are worn (beach outings, pool parties, etc.) girls are required to wear a one-piece swimsuit or modest tankini and boys are required to wear modest swim trunks.
- No Heelys (skate shoes) at any group function.
- For safety reasons, appropriate footwear should be worn for all GEH functions.

Personal Liability

Please note that by applying for membership to this group, you are agreeing to bear the sole responsibility for you and your children's safety and comfort at all events. Regardless of the presence of other adults, it is imperative that you watch your own children. In addition, event postings are not venue endorsements. You are the only one who knows your children's abilities and/or limitations. It is your duty to take these things into consideration before attending an event. Once you have decided to attend an event, you assume full responsibility for any and all associated risks, foreseeable or not.

Attendance Policy

We don't have a strict attendance policy but this group was created with the intention of bringing together families to be able to form bonds and develop a community of friendship and support. We can't do that if we don't ever see you. :)

We are aiming to be more than just an online reference point or a calendar of community events. With these goals in mind, if we don't see a member for a while, we'll contact them to check in. We do realize that extenuating circumstances exist that may keep people away for periods of time, so we'll review each case individually. :)

Code of Conduct

- GEH is committed to helping our participants develop good Christian character. Therefore, encouraging one another to exhibit godly character is an important part of our group.
- We will strive to use Christ-like speech and behaviors at all functions (kind, respectful, loving, patient, pleasant, honest, cooperative, and encouraging).
- We will not wait until the night before or the day of the function to get directions and other information.
- We will arrive at least 10 minutes EARLY for a function. Latecomers are disruptive and inconsiderate.
- When we are on a field trip, we will follow all rules and restrictions of the host site. Be clear what is “hands-on” and “hands-off”.
- We are to respect speakers and tour guides by quietly paying attention to what is being presented.
- We will remain seated during a presentation so as not to be a distraction to others.
- We understand that it is disrespectful to gather in groups in the back of the audience and chat while speakers are presenting.
- We understand that the person in charge of the activity, as well as any other parent at the activity, has the authority to address our child’s behavior.
- We will not run, jump, or climb where inappropriate.
- We will not destruct property.
- We will not display disrespectful, vulgar or rowdy behavior.
- We will not use vulgar language.
- We will clean up after ourselves.
- We will contact the coordinator before the activity in the event of an emergency absence. *GEH will not allow “failure to show” at reserved-space field trips or events. *Cancellation and refund policy will be established on a trip by trip basis. Suspension of field trip or event privileges will be invoked if a member has 3 no-shows or cancellations.*
- We will not drop off children at ANY event without previously arranged adult supervision. We expect parental involvement at all events. It is our wish that all parents participate in all functions; however, if that is not possible, it is the responsibility of the parent to arrange adult supervision. Adult is defined by law as someone 18 years of age or older.
- We will adhere to the dress code.
- We will respect the church when we are there, and not go to any area that we are not strictly given permission to go to by the board.

Discipline

Every adult, not just teachers, are expected to intervene if disruptive or disrespectful behavior is observed. All parents are responsible for enforcing GEH rules listed above. It is understood that if anyone in your family violates the rules, it will jeopardize your participation in the group. The GEH board reserves the right to deny participation to any student or family. Parents will be contacted if a disciplinary problem arises and may be asked to remove their child from class.

Guidelines for handling disruptive behavior:

- 1st Offense – Lovingly but firmly, the student will be advised to stop the particular behavior and give a warning if it is not stopped.
- 2nd Offense – Remind the student to stop and remove the student from the activity or seat the student next to an adult. Inform parents of issue.
- 3rd Offense – Remove the student from the class and escort them to one of the Leadership Team Members. If a student is excessively rude or aggressive, steps one and two can be skipped.
- Follow-up - If the student continues to be disruptive or disrespectful, it may result in the family's removal from Great Endeavor Homeschoolers.
- If a child intentionally harms another child, they will be asked to leave for the day. This will be done on a case by case basis. If this type of aggressive behavior continues, the family **WILL** be removed from Great Endeavor Homeschoolers. This **MUST** be a safe place for all its members.

As parents, it is our privilege and responsibility to encourage and equip our children for success in the classroom and in group activities. Let us pursue an attitude of grace with one another and use discretion with our spoken words holding ourselves and each other accountable the same way we do our children.