

Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers' Policies and Guidelines

Purpose Statement

Founded in 1998 as a Christian member organization, Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers strives to reach the following goals:

- Provide opportunities for children to socialize with other homeschooled children.
- Arrange activities in a group setting such as physical education, music, field trips, enrichment classes, and social events.
- Offer support, encouragement, and prayer for the mothers and fathers of our homeschooled children at parents' meetings through information sharing, informal mentoring, and uplifting fellowship.

It is the intent of our group to facilitate the above activities and learning experiences for our children by utilizing the gifts and talents of all co-op parents for the benefit of the entire group.

Membership and Fees

There is a \$150.00 membership fee, per family, per year, with no refunds given. As the co-op is run on a low -cost basis, no discounts on fees will be given. If finances are an issue, families may set up a payment plan with the co-op treasurer. The membership year runs June 1 - May 31. Additional fees may be required for classes, special events, or field trips. **Annual Fee Schedule:**

Renewal Fee: Due Last Day of Spring Co-op or (no later than) May 31st if communicated to Treasurer

Fall Class Fees: Due on Back to School Night

Spring Semester Fees: Due by First Day of Spring Co-op

Your Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers' membership fee also includes membership to the Coalition of Homeschoolers Across Lancaster County (CHALC) and its benefits, which consist of discounts to Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), county-wide CHALC graduation and CHALC seminars, plus a subscription to *The Scrawls* (CHALC's newsletter).

Communication

The primary means of communication for Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers will be our website: www.homeschool-life.com/pa/cvhomeschoolers. Members are expected to regularly check for email communication, particularly on co-op days.

Attendance

Membership is granted based upon your commitment to 20 weeks of co-op involvement. If your circumstances should change and you are no longer be able to fulfill this commitment, please communicate this to a leadership team member immediately.

Weekly on-time arrival is part of your responsibility as a member of Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers. Co-op starts promptly at 12:45 PM, and your family is expected to arrive on time every week. If you are running late, please contact the Scheduler ASAP.

One parent is required to be present in the church building during the co-op day; drop-offs are not permitted. Co-op membership commits your children and one parent to be present each week unless there is an illness or other excusable absence. In these cases, if a parent is unable to attend co-op, but the children are able, a parent designate may oversee the children during class time and with their arrival/departure. A Parent Designate Form must be completed, signed, and posted in the parents' room, and leadership must be notified of this arrangement. [\(Parent Designate Form PDF can be found on the Links page of the website.\)](#)

When We Meet

Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers meets on Thursday afternoons for 10 weeks in the fall and 10 weeks in the spring. We begin our co-op day as a group with opening announcements and prayer before breaking out into three 45-minute periods. Classes are taught on a volunteer basis by our parents.

In the event of inclement weather, a forum post will be sent by 10AM if co-op will be cancelled. If co-op is not cancelled, but you are uncomfortable driving in the weather conditions, please notify the Scheduler if you choose to stay home.

Serving

Each family must have at least one parent teaching/helping in classes and/or clean-up positions. Each session one parent must either teach in 1 period or help in 2 periods per week of co-op. ([Teacher Guidelines PDF is available on the Links page of the website.](#)) For students with disabilities or special needs, the parent (or designate) needs to provide support all 3 periods of co-op if she deems it necessary for the child to have 1:1 aid/support.

Health Policy

Use safety precautions and common sense in NOT attending co-op if anyone in your family is experiencing signs of sickness. Contact the Scheduler ASAP so a substitute can be assigned to your helper/teacher positions.

Required Participation

We have two annual meetings that one parent is expected to attend. The Back to School Night (fall) is designed to kick off the co-op year by reviewing policies and procedures, providing dates and details, connecting with friends, and meeting our new members.

The February planning meeting determines classes for the next co-op year. Come prepared with specific class ideas that you are willing to teach or assist. The final decision on classes/schedule will be at the discretion of the leadership team to best meet the needs of the entire co-op.

Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers presents a concert annually at the end of the spring co-op session for our family and friends to enjoy. Attendance at the rehearsal and concert are expected.

Required Background Clearances

In order to participate in co-op activities, you are required to complete background clearances as mandated by PA Act 153. All background information collected will be kept confidential and either physically locked or password protected. Background information will only be released to outside entities per requests from law enforcement agencies or by court subpoenas. **You will not be permitted to attend or participate in co-op activities until these clearances are completed.**

Class Registration

Class registration details for each semester will be announced via the co-op forum. Fall class registration opens August 1st; spring class registration opens November 1st.

- Classes have a maximum set for number of students and are filled on a first come, first serve basis. There are no waiting lists.
- Teachers are permitted to pre-register their students for the class they are teaching.
- Each student should be registered for (1) class for each of the (3) periods.
- Parents register for (2) helper slots each semester. Teachers do not need to register.
- [How to Register for Classes](#) PDF is available on the Links page of the website.
- Some classes have fees; most are minimal. Unused class fees are not refunded and will be maintained by the co-op for miscellaneous supplies.

Age Groups / Grade Levels

- Nursery – children who are under 3 years old on September 30. Children will be in the nursery when their parent is serving and remain with their parent during her free period – unless staffing allows otherwise.
- Preschool – children who are at least 3 years old by September 30.
- Kindergarten– 1st grade – 5 years old by September 30
- 2nd – 3rd grade – 7 years old by September 30
- 4th – 6th grade – 9 years old by September 30
- 7th – 12th grade (7-ups) – 12 years old by September 30

Students will not be permitted to change grade levels within the school year. We ask that you respect the age requirements within each grade category and register your child for the grade level which corresponds with his/her biological age, not his/her academic grade level. Age cut-offs are based on maturity level and physical safety, which factor into the students' ability to participate and interact on the same level as others in the class. Exceptions will be considered at the discretion of the leadership team, but requests should be brought to leadership first before action is taken. **Holding a child back a grade level is acceptable, but please communicate with leadership.**

Dress Code

All co-op members will wear modest clothing reflecting Christ and showing respect towards one another. Undergarments should be under garments. The parts that undergarments are to cover, need to be covered by clothing. No midriff should be visible.

For gym class please make sure your children's shoes are non-marking soles, which will preserve the gym floor. If your daughter(s) wear dresses or skirts please have her wear shorts underneath.

Swimsuit Policy

Females – Modest one-piece swimsuits with modest bodice and modest leg cuts are required. No bikini or midriff showing. A dark t-shirt cover-up can be used to cover a two-piece suit. Tankinis are permissible if no midriff is exposed. *Males* – Swimsuits must be boxer style suits. No tight-fitting swim team suits or Speedo suits permitted.

General Guidelines for Behavior

It is the responsibility of each parent to read and discuss group rules and discipline procedures with their child/children. God's Word, which is grounded in love, is the foundation for all our group rules and guidelines. Please allow God's Word to direct your attitudes, words, and actions. Your cooperative spirit facilitates unity within our co-op. (Ephesians 4:29-5:7; Psalms 133:1)

- Misbehavior, disrespectfulness, and disruptiveness will not be tolerated.
- Cell phones may be carried by students, but should be kept in purse or pocket and not used from 12:45 PM to 3:30 PM, unless it is requested by a teacher.
- No crude or profane language tolerated.
- No bullying, off-color jokes, or coarse gestures.
- No threatening of other students or parents.
- No weapons, such as knives (pocket or otherwise), are permitted.
- No public display of affection of a romantic nature is allowed.
- If you have a special circumstance, please speak with both the teacher and a leadership team member so there are no misunderstandings.

Please follow the proper channels in addressing any issues you may have within/at co-op. First, refer to the policies. If you cannot find a clear answer, then speak with a member of leadership about your concern. Be positive and proactive, remembering to be gracious to others as you might not know all the details of a given situation. Finally, ask how you can help in the situation and propose your possible solution to leadership. Refrain from discussing your concerns with others in the co-op and work to keep the lines of communication clear.

Discipline Procedures

The following procedure outlines how habitual misbehavior will be addressed by the teacher and/or helper of the class:

- Step 1: Address and redirect the behavior with the student.
- Step 2: Take the student directly to the parent – even if the parent is teaching/helping in another class.
- Step 3: Communicate the situation with a leadership team member and follow up with the parent.
- Step 4: If the behavior does not change, the student will be not be permitted to attend co-op for the remainder of the semester.

Each child, teacher, and helper should feel respected and co-op should provide a safe, inviting atmosphere for everyone. The above steps empower teachers and helpers to take action and control the environment of their classrooms. Clear communication is also key. The leadership team of Conestoga Valley Homeschoolers commits to keeping communication open with all students and parents. We also reserve the right to permanently dismiss a student or family based upon the severity of any offense.

Facility

Please respect the building, as well as the staff, of this generous church that so graciously welcomes us as guests each week. Carefully review these rules with your children:

- 6th grade and younger students should be, at all times, under a parent's supervision. If your 7-up students are not trustworthy, please keep them under your supervision as well.
- Name tags must be worn by parents and students, at all times, during co-op. Contact our Secretary for replacements.
- ALL classrooms (including the Gym) are **OFF LIMITS**, unless: your class is meeting in that room, you are prepping the room for class, or you are cleaning the room after class.
- Teachers/helpers will walk preschool through 6th grade students to their classes. 7-up students will change classes on their own, with no wandering around the building permitted.
- No running in the building except in gym class.
- Students are not permitted to chew gum in the church building.
- No food should be consumed outside of the parents' room. Teachers may serve snacks in their classrooms, but it must be consumed in class or packed away to be eaten at home. Teachers are responsible for clean-up and vacuuming of the floor at the end of class. Parents are responsible to clean up after any toddler/baby messes left by snacks.
- No open cups are permitted. Leak-proof water bottles are acceptable.
- Promptly pick up your children at the end of the day and exit the building as our clean-up crew wants to finish quickly and the church has other groups using the facility later in the day.

All members who make a mess, find a mess, or see a mess in the making, promise to clean it up. Please locate our Facility Assistant or a leadership team member if extra help is needed.

Visitor Policy

Children of member families that do not attend co-op on a regular basis may be permitted to visit, but please communicate with the leadership team regarding such special circumstances. Visitor tags should be worn for the day. Students are not permitted to bring non-member family or friends along to classes.

Families interested in membership are invited to visit on a regular co-op day. Please connect with the leadership team in advance to schedule a visit so that we can greet them, give a guided tour, and answer any questions. Guests are welcome to bring their children, but children must remain with them during the visit and will not be permitted to participate in classes.