



Stafford Homeschool Co-Operative

Member Policy, Procedures, and Handbook

Our Mission: To provide Stafford County (VA) area homeschoolers, secular and inclusive opportunities through enrichment classes, a learning co-operative, and community activities.

Part 1: Collective Guiding Principles

1.1 Our Philosophy

We are a community, and our success depends on the active participation and commitment of every family. We acknowledge that the quality of the program we provide for our children depends upon our collective level of commitment and investment in the group. We are not a replacement for family instruction, but a complimentary program that provides engaging group activities and learning experiences that can be challenging to recreate at home.

1.2 Inclusivity and Safe Space Commitment

We believe it is most important for children to hear about worldviews directly from their parents/guardians. Our classes and activities are worldview-secular and do not promote or criticize any religion or lack of religion. We celebrate our differences and are committed to being a safe and welcoming place for families, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), people of any or no religion, and LGBTQ+ individuals and families.

- **Anti-Discrimination:** We do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion, disability, or economic status.

- **Anti-Bullying:** We strictly prohibit bullying, harassment, hate speech, and violence of any kind (verbal or physical). All members are expected to be considerate and respectful.
- **Physical Violence:** Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, hitting, etc.) and extreme swearing are strictly prohibited within SHC, including toward your own children.

Part 2: Collective Operational Policies and Procedures

2.1 Communication

- The Collective's primary method for official communication is the BAND App. All families must join the SHC BAND Channel that meets their needs (Community, Classes and/or Co-op).
- For direct inquiries to leadership, please email the Board at staffordhomeschoolcollective@gmail.com.
- If any Collective classes or events are cancelled due to inclement weather or other foreseen reasons, families will be notified via BAND, SHC Facebook page, and/or email.

2.2 Illness Policy

To prevent the spread of illness, students and families should remain home from Collective classes or events if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 100.4°F (must be fever-free for 48 hours without medication)
- Vomiting or diarrhea (must be without symptoms for 72 hours)
- Unexplained rash, lice, conjunctivitis (pink eye), or other contagious condition
- Positive test for a contagious illness (e.g., flu, COVID-19). Please follow current CDC guidelines for return.

If one family member is sick, we kindly ask you to consider keeping the whole family home until well.

We would appreciate notification if your family is not following the AAP vaccination schedule.

2.3 Safety and Emergency Procedures

- **Weapons Policy:** Weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on the premises.
- **Substances:** Drugs, alcohol and smoking/vaping are not permitted at any SHC event.

2.4 Conflict Resolution

1. **Direct Discussion:** If a conflict arises between members, please first attempt to resolve it through a respectful, private conversation.
2. **Mediation:** If a resolution cannot be reached, contact a Board Member to request mediation. The mediator will facilitate a discussion to find a solution.
3. **Board Decision:** If mediation fails, the issue may be brought before the full Board for a binding, final decision.

2.5 Food and Allergy Policy

- We are a Nut-Free cooperative. Please do not bring products containing *peanuts* or *tree nuts* onto the premises. Please wash hands upon arrival if any of those items were eaten on the way to an SHC event or class.
- Families should clearly label any bring snacks, lunches, and water bottles.
- Eating is permitted only in designated areas.

Part 3: Cooperative Membership and Participation

3.1 Membership Requirements

- Families must be actively homeschooling at least one child between 4th and 12th grades.

- An adult family member must remain on-site during co-op hours and fulfill an assigned volunteer role. Exceptions for dropping off older students are outlined in Section 5.2.
- Families must agree to abide by all policies and procedures outlined in this handbook.
- All financial obligations must be paid on time.

3.2 Family and Parent Expectations

- **Volunteer Participation:** As this is a cooperative, every family must contribute. Volunteer roles may include teaching, assisting in a class, monitoring common areas, completing administrative tasks, or helping with setup/cleanup.
- **Supervision:** Parents/Guardians are responsible for their own children's behavior and well-being at all times. If a parent/guardian is volunteering in a classroom, their child may be brought to them if a behavioral issue arises.
- **Communication:** All families are required to join our primary communication platform (BAND) and monitor it for important announcements. If you need to reach your child's teacher, please message the Staff subgroup. This ensures your message reaches all staff and avoids communication gaps if someone is unavailable. You are also welcome to email the Board at staffordhomeschoolcollective@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.
- **Punctuality:** Arrive on time for the start of the day and for classes. Respect for teachers and fellow students in this way is appreciated as to minimize class disruption.

3.3 Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to:

- Be respectful to all adults, students, and property.
- Arrive at class prepared and participate actively.
- Refrain from bullying, physical violence, and disruptive behavior.

- Keep personal electronic devices turned off and stored away during class, unless a teacher grants permission for educational use.
- Remain within designated co-op areas unless accompanied by a parent or teacher.
- Not bring food into class unless provided by the teacher. Exception: Drinks with a closed lid are allowed.
- Not bring weapons of any kind (real or simulated).
- Refrain from public displays of affection.
- Express individuality in dress, but do so in a manner appropriate for an educational setting, i.e. no violent or inflammatory designs or text, full midriff and bottoms covered.

3.4 Attendance Policy

- Regular attendance is expected. Please provide advance notice for planned absences (e.g., vacation) and same-day notice for illness or emergencies.
- Excessive absences or tardies (defined as 5 or more in a semester) may affect future enrollment eligibility. A conference with a Board Member may be requested after 3 absences. An absence is defined as missing an entire class day for students and missing volunteer positions for the on-site parent/guardian.

3.5 Drop-Off and Pick-Up

- All students must be checked-in and checked-out by an adult at the sign-in table upon arrival and dismissal.
- **Grades 4-8 (Ages 9-13):** Must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or designated on-site guardian at all times.
- **Grades 9-12 (Ages 14+):** May be dropped off at the parent's/guardian's discretion. However, parents/guardians remain fully responsible for their student's conduct and must be reachable and able to return promptly if needed. Students who are dropped off are expected to manage their time responsibly and respectfully between classes.

Part 4: Cooperative Registration and Fees

4.1 Registration Process

- Registration is held before each semester. Priority is given in the following order: Board Members, Leadership Team, returning teachers, returning families, and then new families with approved background checks.
- Class registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. A student may request to change classes within the first two weeks, subject to teacher approval and space availability.

4.2 Fees and Payments

- **Co-op Fee:** A non-refundable, non-transferrable fee is due per family each semester at the time of registration. This fee covers administrative and rental costs.
- **Class Supply Fees:** Due two weeks before classes begin, these fees are set by teachers to cover material costs and are non-refundable.
- **Late Payments:** If class supply fees are more than two weeks late without prior arrangements, the student may not be allowed to attend class until payment is received, and their space may be forfeited.

Part 5: Cooperative Academics and Classes

5.1 Teacher Roles and Expectations

Our classes are taught by parent/guardian volunteers and community members. Teaching is a valued contribution to our co-op.

- **Lead Teacher:** Responsible for planning, preparing, and teaching a class. Must create lesson plans and a supply fee budget. Teachers shall have class outline submitted to the Co-Op Leadership Team by the date agreed upon by the Board along with sub plans.
- **Co-Teacher:** Shares all responsibilities equally with another teacher.
- **Assistant:** Assists the lead teacher during class but has no planning responsibilities.

- **Substitute:** Agrees to teach in case of a planned or unexpected absence.

5.2 Classroom Management and Behavior

Teachers will establish their own classroom expectations. If a student's behavior disrupts the learning environment, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Verbal Warning:** The teacher will provide a verbal warning or redirection.
2. **Parent Notification:** If the behavior continues, the teacher will speak with the parent/guardian. The child may be sent to the parent/guardian to regroup.
3. **Board Conference:** For persistent issues, a parent/guardian will meet with the teacher and a Board Member to create a Behavior Improvement Plan.
4. **Removal:** If the plan is declined or the behavior persists, the student may be removed from the class or, in severe cases, from the co-op for the remainder of the semester. If a student is expelled, tuition will not be refunded or prorated.

Part 6: Cooperative Emergency Procedures

- **Fire:** In case of a fire alarm, everyone will immediately evacuate the building and meet at the designated assembly point: the three crosses in the church's front lawn.
- **Severe Weather:** Everyone will move to the designated interior shelter-in-place location: **[Designated Shelter Location]**.
- **Lockdown:** In the event of an intruder or nearby threat, all classrooms will be locked, lights turned off, and everyone will remain silent and out of sight until an "all clear" is given by authorities or a Board Member.

Part 7: Collective Governance

6.1 Leadership

Stafford Homeschool Collective is led by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the cooperative, enforcing policies, and making final decisions regarding its operation.

By signing below, you agree to the above policies in this handbook.

Student Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date