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## FHA Rules & Policies

**MEMBERSHIP:** Membership to FHA is available for fellow homeschool families with school age children within the general North/ West Georgia area. We are based out of Paulding County and serve all surrounding areas. For our purposes, homeschool families are defined as those who file a State of Georgia Home Study Program Declaration of Intent Form (DOI) with the Georgia Department of Education, if applicable. Registration is to be completed online at the Family Homeschool Alliance, Inc. (FHA) website at [www.familyhomeschoolalliance.org](http://www.familyhomeschoolalliance.org).

\*\*Upon registration you are committing to the full school year, or remainder thereof. FHA currently has two levels of membership. The basic level of membership is the community level. Community Members have access to all field trips, events and clubs. Community members may then also sign-up for co-op membership which will give access to weekly classes in addition to community benefits.

FHA Board Members and Lead Teachers will have the first choice in signing up their children for co-op classes, followed by existing FHA Co-Op members, followed by FHA Community Members and then members of Lost Mountain Baptist Church. New members will be allowed to sign up after these spots are filled. Registration will not be complete (meaning that your child's classes will not be secure) until you have paid your fees and signed up for your required volunteer positions.

Any member may resign from FHA by a written note to the Co-Op Coordinator ([co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org](mailto:co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org)). Membership may also be terminated by a majority vote of the Board for failure to act ethically and/or responsibly with regards to the activities and other members of this group. Terminations, whether voluntary or involuntary, *determined before July 31st* will be eligible for a complete refund of the co-op membership dues. Any dues paid after that date are nonrefundable and prorated accordingly as outlined below. Community Membership, registration fees, supply fees or other fees paid are nonrefundable and not prorated. If you had been placed on a payment plan, all fees are due immediately upon termination.

***VOLUNTEER & DROP OFF POLICY: FHA is NOT A DROP OFF PROGRAM and at least one parent must be on site at all times while your child/children are present.***

At the co-op level, if your child/children are only registered for 1-2 classes, you will be required to volunteer for the amount of time your child/children are registered. Families that have children enrolled in all 3 class hours will be required to volunteer for 2 of the 3 hours their child/children are registered. During your off hour, you will be considered a floater and must stay in (or near) the Parent Lounge so that you can be put into an empty volunteer space as required.

Community Member clubs are run in the afternoons of the co-op day. The same 'parent on site' rules apply to all FHA activities, but you will not be required to volunteer during clubs unless desired. Co-op members can fulfill some of their volunteer time during club hours as needed or desired as long as we have all of the holes covered during the co-op day.



On occasion, if it is absolutely necessary for you to be off site, you must notify the Co-Op Coordinator, Stephanie Schmidt. You may do this in person, by email - [co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org](mailto:co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org), or by text - 785-250-0834. We must have a completed copy of the NON-CUSTODIAL CHILD/STUDENT CARE AGREEMENT & LIABILITY WAIVER on file **before** such an instance occurs that designates an adult who will be on campus and directly overseeing your child/children.

*Your kid's classes are not secure until you have also registered for volunteer slots if you are a co-op member.*

**PAYMENTS:** All payments will be made directly to Family Homeschool Alliance, Inc.

**Registration & Membership Fees:** All members of FHA must be a Community Member and pay the annual \$75 Community Membership fee. For Co-Op, a registration fee of \$35 for the first child plus an additional \$10 per child after the first will also be due. The annual Co-Op Membership fee will then be due within 30 days. Membership fees are determined by the Board of Directors each calendar year based on budget requirements, see website for current annual cost. Payment plans are available upon request.

**\*\*Upon registration you are committing the full school year, or remainder thereof.**

**Supply Fees:** Some classes require supply fees to be paid by the parents as indicated in the class descriptions. The payments are due in full, two weeks prior to the start of the unit of said class or upon registration (whichever time frame is less).

Members who join and start participating in co-op after the first unit, will be required to pay a prorated co-op membership fee based on the number of units remaining. All other fees will remain the same for new registrations into the co-op level.

**CODE OF CONDUCT:** All students are expected to speak and act respectfully toward teachers, leaders, other parents and one another. This means students should be attentive in class, follow teachers' instructions, obey safety rules, respect church property, and act in a manner that would bless and encourage others (e.g. no mocking, criticizing, arguing, fighting, use of crude language or joking, or taking the Lord's name in vain). If a student's speech or conduct is inappropriate, he/she will receive a warning by the teacher and, if inappropriate conduct continues, the student will be removed from the classroom and taken to their parent, and if necessary, asked to leave the premises. There will be NO food or drinks (except water-filled closed cover drink containers) allowed in the classrooms; nursery and preschool rooms being the exception.

**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH:** Members must do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in FHA activities. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and neglect of a child or youth is prohibited and will not be tolerated by the organization. FHA requires all adult co-op members who are 18 and above, who are by definition volunteers and will



be working with children or youth, to undergo and pass a criminal background check. FHA also requires all adult members to review the policies contained in this document and sign the last page indicating compliance with policy requirements. Members must report known or suspected inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior toward children or youth to appropriate co-op leaders immediately. The leaders are required to then take the matter to the full FHA Board of Directors who have been trained on mandated reporting. According to Georgia law, in the setting of a homeschool group, we are not considered mandatory reporters. However, it is the view of FHA that the organization shall hold itself to those guidelines. In such an instance, a guide and training can be found at <https://oca.georgia.gov/training/mandated-reporting>. Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the organization to be harmful will be immediately suspended from participation in all FHA activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

**DRESS:** All members, to include adults and students, should dress neatly, modestly, and appropriately for the weather during all FHA activities. No offensive writing or graphics are permitted on clothing. Modest shorts are permissible. Shorts must be no shorter than fingertip length. Skirts must be mid-thigh in length. Shorts should be worn under younger girls' skirts. Shirts should cover the midriff, cleavage, and the back. Sleeveless tops are permitted as long as the straps cover bra straps, and the underarm opening does not extend below the chest. Clothing should not be tight. Clothing should not have words specifically across the breasts or buttocks. Jeans are permitted. Boys' pants must be pulled up with no undergarments showing. Shirts are to be worn at all times.

**CO-OP LEAD TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES:** We require that all lead teachers read, understand, and sign the FHA Teacher Responsibility Form. The form is to be signed and turned in to our Co-Op Coordinator, Stephanie Schmidt, before class registration begins. Because our lead teachers have responsibilities outside of the class/co-op setting, such as preparing lessons, grading as needed, communication with parents, etc. they will get a co-op membership discount of 25% for each class taken on as a lead. Throughout the year teachers are required to email families weekly as necessary with updates and homework. Students sometimes forget to tell parents important things! Please be considerate and keep everyone in the loop. All teachers (except nursery – preschool) will turn in one “back-up” assignment and/or lesson plan, each to their classroom helper and the FHA Co-Op Coordinator, to be taught to their class in the event of a teacher absence. Some examples of back-up assignments could include; DVDs, worksheets, games, and workout lists, all with enough materials to include every student in the class. These one at a time, as needed, back-up assignments will be provided to your helper/substitute in the event that you are unable to come to co-op and no fore-planning is possible. This system is to be used ONLY for such events and will not be permitted in any other situation. All “back-up” assignments, to include copies and materials, are due on the first day of the unit in which your class is being taught.

**ABSENCES:** If you must be absent for any reason, please let the FHA Co-Op Coordinator, Stephanie Schmidt, know ASAP by email at [co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org](mailto:co-op@familyhomeschoolalliance.org) or cell phone at 785-250-0834. If you know you will be unavailable for a particular day in advance, please ask someone to fill in and let Stephanie know. If, for some reason you are unable to reach her, you may contact Jessica Wilcox at [info@familyhomeschoolalliance.org](mailto:info@familyhomeschoolalliance.org) or 770-670-8737.



**STUDENT ENROLLMENT:** All children, while on site during classes and clubs, are required to be either enrolled in a class, enrolled in Core Lab, or are to remain with their parent. If a child is not participating in a class and is Kindergarten or older, they will be required to be enrolled in the supervised Core Lab. This will be a quiet area where students can do homework, read, or listen to music with earbuds. Parents will be supervising the area weekly. Core Lab must be quiet at all times. If students are working together on a project, it must be at a volume to where the other students working independently can concentrate. There should be absolutely no children roaming the hallways during class hours.

**NON-CUSTODIAL CHILD/STUDENT POLICY:**

FHA is a group made up of homeschool families, serving homeschool families. We are a parent dependent and parent run program, and so under normal circumstances non-custodial children are not allowed to attend FHA activities without a registered adult family member. Non-custodial children are defined as children who are not residing in the member's home and are not in the legal custody of the member's family.

However, there are a few instances where exceptions can be made. If the grandparent, or other immediate family member is the primary homeschooling entity in the child's regular routine, that family member may register and bring the child/ren.

In any other instances of non-custodial children applying to be on campus, the member family must send a written appeal to the FHA Board of Directors requesting that an exception be made and explaining the circumstances. The Board of Directors will make a decision on a case-by-case basis and decisions will be final. Should the appeal be approved, and the non-custodial child/ren be allowed on campus under a member families care, it is with the following regulations in place:

- The non-custodial child's family **MUST** agree to complete a membership application along with all membership forms, and pay a separate membership fee for their child/ren
- Fill out a Non-Custodial Child/Student Care Agreement & Liability Waiver
- Written appeals must be made, and exceptions approved on an annual basis

**STUDENT GUIDELINES:** We require that all parents and students read, understand, and sign the FHA Student Guidelines Form to be turned in to the Co-Op Coordinator before attending the first day of class, club or event. It is expected that members relay that respectful behavior is mandatory in each and every FHA setting. Respectful behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Listening to and not interrupting the teacher while class or activity is being conducted. This can be very distracting for not only the teacher, but also fellow students.
- Raising a hand to request to speak if open discussion is not part of the current lesson plan for a particular week.
- Participating in class or activity, to the fullest of the student's ability. Teachers work hard to prepare for and impart important information to the students.
- Completing any assigned homework. Some teachers may send students home with work. To get the most out of class we ask that parents ensure it is completed in a timely fashion.



If a student chooses not to participate respectfully or he/she wishes not to continue in a class, for any reason, please notify the teacher and the co-op coordinator as soon as possible. Often, we have waiting lists for the classes or activities and other students will happily fill a student's spot.

**CLASSROOM RATIO REQUIREMENTS:** Two adults in each classroom is the ideal setting. Exceptions can be made for older classes (6th grade and up) but the door must remain open. Teachers can request additional adults as needed. No male volunteers will be allowed to change diapers or help toileting unless the child is their own. Ratio requirements by age are as follows:

- Nursery (birth – 23 months): 1:3 with a max enrollment of 12
- Preschool 2's & 3's: 1:4 with max enrollment of 12
- Preschool 4's & 5's (must be potty trained): 1:5
- K-1st (5-7 years): 1:5
- 2-3rd (7-9 years): 1:6
- 4-6th (9-12 years): 1:8
- 6-12th (11-18 years): 1:12

Minimum class registration for any class will be 4 students unless otherwise noted and approved by the coordinator and teacher. Maximum class size, if not limited by square footage, coordinator, or teacher preference, will be no larger than 16. If a wait list is present at the conclusion of registration, it will be left to the discretion of the coordinator and the teacher, if square footage allows, to then add the students on the waitlist to the active class roster.

If a worker is out of ratio it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the co-op coordinator or other leadership. Diligent efforts will be made to immediately bring ratios into compliance with this policy. In the event that classrooms are combined and ages mixed, the ratios followed will be those in compliance for the youngest children in the room.

**BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE:**

Nursery and Preschool Children

Diapering

- Changing of diapers should be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children must never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded.
- Children should be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- Children should be changed on changing stations only.

Toilet training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- When children are taken into bathrooms the door will be left partially open.
- Young children will never be left unattended in bathrooms.
- Parents should be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with volunteers. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children





in the nursery will be recorded (“Lyla can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go.”).

- Children should be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- “Accidents” should be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers need to be brought in by the parent each week.

#### School age children

- School age children may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, children should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.)
- If a volunteer must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, he/she should open the exterior bathroom door and ask if the child needs assistance. If the child requires assistance, the worker should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities, while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.
- Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

#### Special needs

- Parents will offer instruction to volunteers to change the diapers of special needs individuals. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change all special needs individuals.

**DISCIPLINE:** Members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable to include spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate behaviors by minors. If a minor is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions, the minor’s parent will be contacted and the child may be asked to leave the class. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, members will verbally redirect minors involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the leadership team.

Verbal interactions between adults and minors at any FHA event should be positive and uplifting. Do not talk to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, adult members are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of minors.

**PHYSICAL CONTACT:** A ‘physical contact policy’ is implemented which promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and youth. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed:

- Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between adults and children/youth are important for their development, and are generally suitable in the FHA setting.



- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child/youth, and never be based upon the emotional needs of an adult.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students, and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.
- Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child. A child/youth's preference not to be touched must be respected.

**OUTDOOR FACILITY USE:** Students are permitted to be outside in the back or side of the building **with parental guidance**, before co-op, during the lunch hour, and after co-op. Students may use the playground, tetherball, gaga ball pit, basketball goals, volleyball net and soccer nets with adult supervision. The wooded area, and front parking lot and grassy area of the building are off limits. Parental supervision is for everyone's safety and use of outside facilities will not be permitted otherwise.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Members may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation to non family members. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when volunteers are involved in the transportation of children or youth:

- Children/Youth should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one child in transport.
- Volunteers should avoid physical contact with children/youth while in vehicles.
- There is always to be no less than two adult volunteers in the vehicle

**SNOW/INCLEMENT WEATHER:** FHA will follow the Paulding and Cobb County Public School policy and decision for snow/inclement weather days. Emails will be sent to teachers and families by 7:30a.m. at the latest, on the morning of the scheduled co-op day. If they cancel school for the entire day, then co-op is canceled. Should there be a two-hour delay, we will still have co-op, starting at the normal 9:00 a.m. hour, unless otherwise notified. Of course, we need to allow for some flexibility for this type of situation.

If Paulding or Cobb schools are open or have a two-hour delay and you feel the need to stay home for the safety of your family, please make that decision to do so. You are not expected to travel to and from co-op, if your home lies in a section of the county that has not yet been treated for the weather. Due to the highly varying storm systems and topographical regions within our area, one home might have traversable roads, while others do not. Again, please use your best judgment.

**MAKE-UP DAYS:** We will not be holding make-up days. If we must close due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances the teacher will rework their syllabus when possible to cover the material.



Of course, if the weather causes an unusual amount of canceled meetings, we will revisit this topic and notify you accordingly.

**RESOURCES:** Teachers will provide copies and materials for teaching classes and will not be utilizing Lost Mountain Baptist Church resources. NO supplies of any kind are to be used or removed from the host church. The homeschool co-op will leave each room the same or in better condition after use. Students staying for lunch are responsible for bringing all necessary paper supplies. The co-op will fulfill the needs of cleaning supplies.

**LUNCH:** The lunch hour on co-op and club days will take place in the Main Foyer and outside with parental supervision. On days where it is too cold or wet to be outdoors, lunch will take place upstairs in The Loft. During the lunch hour, the preschool doors are to remain closed and access to the hallways are off limits. Upstairs bathrooms may be used with adult permission, but children are not to be unsupervised in the building and must remain under parent supervision for the duration of the lunch break. There will be a 10 minute break-down time at the end of every lunch hour and all adults and children are responsible for cleaning up after themselves. Please be sure that food and drinks are kept strictly in the lunch areas. Only water-filled closed cover drink containers are permitted elsewhere. This makes everyone's job much easier.

**END OF THE YEAR PROGRAM/FIELD DAY, MATERIAL SALE:** FHA will have a sale/swap on one of the last days of the scheduled year, plan accordingly. There will also be a class expo of projects and performances on or around the final day of the spring semester. It will be followed by field day.

\*\*\*FHA reserves the right to refuse membership to our organization. As an all volunteer group, we may not be able to accommodate all membership requests.\*\*\*

As a member of Family Homeschool Alliance, Inc., I have read, understand, agree, and will adhere to the above rules and policies.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_