

Policies and Procedures

Memphis Homeschool Enrichment Cooperative

Established 2013

Last updated 7/21/2024

Mission Statement and Programs:

Mission: We are an inclusive, not-for-profit, secular cooperative of homeschooling families with the common endeavor to enrich the education of our children. Our purpose, by combining our abilities as educators, is to provide classes and activities beyond the home that will engage students in a collaborative learning experience.

Programs: We offer semester-long enrichment courses, selected by the students and parents, to students arranged into various age groups. We also coordinate regular educational group activities, such as field trips, talent exhibitions, presentations, and community service projects. The cooperative further serves as the foundation for supplementary support services which are directly related to membership involvement.

General Policies and Membership:

1. The Co-op is comprised of Parent Teachers and the student body, ages 0-18.
2. The Co-op is a private organization, which is secular in nature, but which may involve practices such as the pledge of allegiance in opening exercises. The Co-op is not affiliated with any religion or group. Membership is open to all Memphis-area homeschooling parents and their children who are high school-aged and younger. However, incoming members are admitted per the decision of the Board of Directors, based on the needs of the Co-op as openings become available. When membership limits are reached, a waitlist will begin and incoming members will be notified as positions become open.
3. The Co-op is organized into class groups based on student age. These class groups may change from time to time based on the number and ages of students participating in the Co-op. The current class groups are designated by the names: Tots, Explorers, Adventurers, Creators, Voyagers, Philosophers, Inventors, Mentors, and Scholars.
4. The Co-op meets one day per week for two 60-minute class blocks. Immediately after completing classes, those who are available are welcome to go to Ellendale Park to eat lunch and for the kids to have recess, weather permitting.
5. The Co-op does not profit from any of its activities. Any fees associated with the Co-op go toward rental of a facility, insurance, maintenance of a website, or other Co-op requirements shared by the entire Co-op membership. If there is going to be a fee for a specific class, the fee must be disclosed prior to the vote that determines which classes will be taught.
6. Participants realize that the nature of the cooperative requires working with others who may have different philosophies of education, child-rearing, religion, politics, etc. It is understood the cooperative organization takes no stance on these issues. Members should be courteous and respectful of these differences. Concerns or conflicts needing resolution should be reported to the board.

Parent Teacher Responsibilities:

1. During each semester, three Assembly Day activities will be held, which are organized by committees comprised of Parent Teachers in the Group. Each Parent Teacher is responsible for serving on one Assembly Day committee (or other committee as designated by the Board) per semester.

2. Each Parent Teacher is responsible to teach his/her assigned class block for the entire semester. In the absence of special circumstances, each Parent Teacher will be given the opportunity to vote for which age group he/she would like to teach. Each Parent Teacher will also be able to propose subjects/units that he/she feels comfortable preparing curriculum for. Every effort will be made to accommodate the desires of each Parent Teacher.
3. Once proposed subjects/units are submitted for each age group, the student body of each age group which is of voting age and their parents will decide their class subjects for the semester by popular vote. (Parent Teachers are given one vote for each student in the class, and students are given one vote each.) Currently, Adventurers, Creators, Voyagers, Philosophers, Inventors, Mentors, and Scholars have voting rights. Other age groups will be given voting rights when appropriate.
4. Each Parent Teacher is responsible for preparing appropriate lesson material for his/her assigned class block. The Parent Teacher need not "create" his/her own lesson plans, as many helpful resources are available online and elsewhere. However, Parent Teachers should seek permission from each parent of their students for anything in their class (whether subject matter or methodology) that would reasonably be considered controversial or a safety risk.
5. It is to be understood that Parent Teachers have the responsibility to teach what they can afford. Each Parent Teacher can submit receipts with a reimbursement form once a semester and receive a maximum of \$30 in expenses. Tot and Explorer Parent Teachers can receive up to \$25 in reimbursement with the additional \$5 going toward snack expenses for those two classes. This is designed to eliminate class fees. However, when a Parent Teacher bears an excessive cost for class materials, fee requirements must be disclosed prior to the time of student voting so that families can take the expense into account. Class fees should be negotiated with parents and documented by receipts. All class fees will be collected by the Treasurer and reimbursed to the class instructor based on these receipts. If there is a surplus, reimbursement to parents will be made at the end of the semester.
6. Each Parent Teacher will be assisted by their assigned Helper Teachers during his/her block. At least two Parent Teachers must be in each classroom for the duration of the class.
7. Five minutes before class is over (at the start of class break), Helper Teachers are dismissed from class and go to their next assignment. Teachers stay in the classroom until after the next hour's teacher arrives. This only applies to the break between the first and second hour when we transition from class to class. At the lunch hour and at the end of the day, Helper Teachers stay with the Teacher to help walk students to the appropriate location.
8. Clean-up responsibilities may be assigned to each participating family at the beginning of each semester for group resource areas such as the gym, bathrooms, kitchen, etc. (depending on the facility the Co-op rents). Each Parent Teacher and Helper Teacher is responsible for cleaning up her classroom at the end of class each day. Respect of the facility is vital for a group our size to continue renting at a competitive price.
9. We agree not to post pictures of the students on the internet without parental release, although emailing pictures or exchanging pictures directly is permitted. When pictures are published as in a yearbook, we agree to obtain parental release prior to printing.
10. All Parent Teachers agree to participate in a background check to ensure the safety of our children and to comply with the regulations in place at our current facility. No sensitive information (such as social security numbers) will be collected or stored by the Co-op. Instead, a link to request the background check will be sent to the Parent, all personal information will be submitted by that individual, and the results will be sent to a member of the Board.
11. If a Parent Teacher violates co-op policy and procedure or the co-op hosting facility's policies, the co-op's board reserves the right to take disciplinary action up to the termination of membership privileges.

Decision-Making:

1. Parent Teachers meet as needed, but at least once per semester, to determine the needs of the Co-op. Such meetings will include topics such as: class curriculum, class schedule, location of the Co-op, Co-op fees, discipline issues, membership, etc.
2. The Co-op is intended to be a democratic forum, where everyone is invited to participate openly and equally. The votes of Parent Teachers have equal weight in all decision-making. Additionally, the student body will also have opportunities to vote on Co-op matters, including, but not limited to the vote for their class subjects each year.
3. Each school year, at least five volunteer Co-Leaders (Board Members) will be nominated from the Parent Teachers to provide leadership services to the Co-op including: calling meetings, calling for the votes from Parent Teachers for their desired classes and subject matter, calling for the votes from the students to finalize subject matter, overseeing scheduling and building issues, updating the roster, collecting fees, reporting to the IRS, maintaining financial records and budgets, registration of new members, enrollment of student body, making announcements, planning field trips, overseeing Assembly Day committees, maintaining internet resources such as a website or Slack group, and generally being the main contact persons for the Co-op as inquiries and needs arise.
4. Elections of those nominated (excluding any nominations who opt themselves out) will be determined by a majority vote of Parent Teachers. Whenever possible, Board nominations should be Parent Teachers who have been enrolled in the Group for at least one year.
5. Minutes will be taken at each Parent Teacher meeting and at each Board Meeting.
6. Official communication from the Co-op and notice of meetings will occur via email and Slack and will be posted on the Co-op website. When urgent communication is necessary, such as in the case of a last-minute cancellation, a text message will also be sent.
7. Additional committees and Board member positions may be formed at the request of the Board.

Payment of Fees

1. Fees may be paid by cash or check and must be *received* by midnight on the day of the Parent Meeting each semester.
2. Late fees will apply for any payments received after this time according to the following schedule. Beginning at 12:01am on the day following the parent meeting, a \$10 late fee will be assessed. At 12:01am on *each* of the following two weeks, an additional \$10 fee will be added to unpaid balances. If payment has not been received by midnight on the third week following the Parent Meeting, the co-op member will forfeit her spot in the Cooperative for the coming semester. Her name will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list for consideration in future semesters, but she may not participate in Co-op the coming semester.
3. There will be a one-time registration fee for each new family.
4. If a Parent Teacher has a financial hardship and cannot make payment, she is encouraged to contact the Board for a scholarship application. All such applications for assistance must be received a minimum of two weeks prior to the Parent Meeting.
5. No dues will be refunded in the event a family withdraws from co-op.
6. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a refund will be considered by the Board if requested at least 30 days before the beginning of the semester.

Attendance and Sickness:

1. **Please be on time.**
2. Any teacher or student who is sick or has been contagious in the 24-hour period prior to Co-op should not attend Co-op.

3. "Sick" is defined as having had a fever, having thrown up, having a productive cough, or having brightly colored mucus within the last 24-hours.
4. **Parent Teachers and students are responsible for being in attendance for the entire duration of Co-op** and Parent Teachers are responsible for being prepared with appropriate lesson plans for their assigned class period.
5. If a Parent Teacher is unable to attend, due to extenuating circumstances, he/she is responsible for securing a substitute Parent Teacher, as well as providing a lesson outline and supplies for his/her assigned class period. Helper Teachers are usually, but not necessarily, the first resource for substitutes, as they will know the current status of the class. In addition to securing a substitute, absent Parent Teachers should also notify any other teachers for whom they are Helpers and the Education Director that they will be gone.
6. If a Parent Teacher is unable to attend, his/her children should not attend in his/her absence. Rare exceptions may be made if the students are independent *and* an adult is designated to be responsible for them.
7. The maximum number of absences for Parent Teachers or students is 4 per semester. We encourage members to discuss attendance problems with a board member.
8. Every Parent Teacher is required to attend the mandatory Parent Teacher meeting once each semester.
9. **Snacks should be pre-approved by parents.** Check the Roster for allergies and double-check with parents.
10. We ask that families who are not meeting their responsibilities will please bow out of the Co-op or consider taking a semester off.

Student Behavior:

1. If severe behavior issues arise (threatening the safety of the student or other students or significantly impacting classroom learning), which requires remediation of some sort, an explanatory note should be sent and copied to the board from the Parent Teacher to the student's parent detailing the problem and any disciplinary action taken. Repeat behavior problems become a matter for a meeting between the Parent Teacher(s), Parent, and the Board. Please discuss what discipline works best for your children with their teachers at the beginning of the semester.
2. Physical violence will not be tolerated. When such an event occurs, Parent teachers will determine the severity of the situation. In the event a parent teacher deems the incident to require remedial attention, the parent teacher will inform the board of the incident in a timely manner. Once the board has been informed, they will schedule a meeting with the involved student(s) and student(s) parents. An incident report will be filled out at this time. Copies will be given to parents of the students involved.
 If warranted the student(s) will be removed from the class for the following two active weeks of co-op and placed in their parents' care for the following classes.
 If a second incident occurs with the same student(s), the board will set up a meeting with the parents of the student(s). At this time, the board will discuss possible resolutions. It will be up to the board's discretion which resolution is adopted. This is including but not limited to termination of the families participation in MHEC, if no other resolution is agreed upon, resulting in forfeiture of all fees paid.
3. Study hall, or the right to opt out of class, may be employed for self-directed independent students, given parent permission.
4. Students should go to the bathroom with a buddy—never alone.
5. Students should walk orderly through the hallways—no running.
6. If we notice that the facility or the property therein has been damaged, we are to notify the facility administration, *even if we have not caused the damage.*

7. Students should stay with their parents at all times except during classes and not exit the building unattended. At times, parents may specifically designate other adults to supervise their child/ren, but students should never be unsupervised.

Homework:

1. Parent Teachers should be respectful of their student's schedules and other responsibilities if assigning homework. They should also make sure the homework expectations are age-appropriate. (Please see KSAO document.)
2. Homework is up to the discretion of the teacher first, and up to the discretion of the child second. Therefore the student will be expected to complete their assignment[s], but if they decide to opt out, they should send a note or email to the Parent Teacher.
3. When proposing a class idea to the student body, it should be disclosed whether homework will be expected.
4. Parent Teachers should keep parents informed of assignments via Slack, our website, or email.

Board of Directors: Descriptions and Responsibilities:

1. The Board is responsible for maintaining the overall policy and direction of the organization. They shall delegate responsibilities to the Parent Teachers. All board members will work together for the purpose of supporting the cooperative and ensuring its success. Regular Board meetings (of which there will be at least one per semester) may be held at such places and times as shall be designated by the Board. Board members shall receive no compensation (other than reasonable expenses) for their service on the Board. Board Members will serve one-year terms, and may not be re-nominated more than once (resulting in a two-year term) without a break. Any Board member may be removed from office by the vote of the Board. Any Board member may resign at any time by giving notice to the organization. The Directors of the Board shall be: Education Director, Membership Director, Treasurer, Assembly and Field Trip Director, and Website Administrator. Other positions may be developed as needed, such as Publicity Chair, Secretary, etc. The Board may create committees as needed. Specific duties may be transferred from one position to another as needed.
 1. Education Director: This board member is responsible for the class schedule each semester and the student voting. This would include asking parent teachers their preference of age group, helping to provide ideas for classes, conducting the parent meeting about the schedule and keeping appropriate records. They are the go-to person for any changes in Parent Teacher helping and roving assignments.
 2. Membership Director: This board member is responsible for all membership records, including the student roster and waiting list. This would include taking care of class transfers for students, enrollment, recruitment, and ensuring a full membership. New families may be invited to join when there is an opening. This board member will act as secretary for all meetings.
 3. Treasurer: This board member is responsible for collecting tuition and class fees from members. They are also the facility liaison which includes making rent payments to the facility, reserving our rooms, assigning cleaning duties, and coordinating arrangements with the facility such as storage space. When applicable, they reimburse teachers for approved supplies. Receipts are expected for class supplies. The Treasurer is responsible for all record keeping of fees and payments. Any additional Group costs not listed elsewhere in this document will also be managed by this board member. This board member reports annually to the IRS (Form 990-N and 1023-EZ).

4. Assembly and Field Trip Director: This board member is responsible for assisting the Assembly Day committees in planning and executing Assembly events involving the entire group. Responsibilities may be delegated to committee chairs. They are responsible for proposing ideas at the Parent Teacher meetings for assembly days. In addition, they will also organize supplemental field trip activities to enhance education and strengthen social ties. These activities may involve the whole Group, or just a select portion of it. Attendance by members to the supplemental field trips is optional. Any costs will be paid by those attending, and not by the general budget. This board member will coordinate t-shirt and yearbook orders along with any other co-op fundraisers.
5. Website Administrator: This board member is responsible for designing and maintaining online content (such as a website or social media group) for the purposes of recruitment, registration, and communication. They will make every effort to keep the calendar, schedule, files, and announcements up to date.

Amendments

1. These bylaws may be amended when deemed necessary by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.