



## **Heartland Homeschool Association Policy & Procedure Handbook**

The Board will use this Policy & Procedure Handbook as a means to guide the organization in the day-to-day operations of Heartland Homeschool Association (HHA). The Board appreciates that new issues will arise and these unforeseen circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. After receiving input from appropriate teachers, parents, and families, the final decision will rest with the Board.

**Purpose, Mission, and Statement of Faith** can be found in the Heartland Homeschool Association By-Laws

### **Legal Notices and Liability**

- As a condition of membership in HHA, all member families must sign a waiver of liability and agree to hold harmless all parties connected with the operation of HHA from any claim of or for injury or loss which might result from participation, by any or all of the members, and in any of the meetings, activities, or events.
- HHA does not serve the purpose of counselor or social worker.
- HHA does not give legal protection or legal assistance, and is not obligated to testify regarding a member's homeschool validity, authenticity, or effectiveness to legal authorities or in court.
- The name Heartland Homeschool Association and HHA, along with the organization's logo, shall only be used with the approval of the Board.
- HHA is intended to supplement, not replace, the required education of member's children.

### **Membership**

- Membership fee must be paid prior to any class registrations. Any family that finds the family membership fee to be a financial hardship may submit a request for a payment plan and the Board will respond within 1 week.
- Registration will close 1 week prior to the start of classes each semester.

- The annual membership fee may be pro-rated to no less than half if joining in the second semester.
- All members must pay for a background check performed by HHA through an outside agency. This background check will be good for a period of 5 years. See the Background Check Policy for more information.
- Members shall hold all information in confidence. No part of the Membership Directory, dates, or events from the website are allowed to be distributed to any non-member or non-member organization without prior consent of the Board.
- Members are expected to show respect for doctrinal differences in Biblical belief, backgrounds, and methods of homeschooling.
- All members are expected to attend the annual Member Meeting.
- Discussions of topics sensitive in nature (i.e. sex education, discussion or viewing of private areas of the body) should be avoided between adults and children, and between the children themselves, as to respect the personal views and convictions of each family.
- HHA is an organization based on volunteering. All members should volunteer for an available position or indicate a way in which they will contribute. See the Parent Responsibilities section for more detail.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

- Upon arriving at our host facility, stop by the Check-In table to record your family's attendance and check for important documents.
- It is important that children attend their classes as most classes have space limits. Persistent attendance problems will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Read, understand, and enforce all building policies and adhere to proper codes of conduct and behavior while at our class location.
- Parents are expected to make sure all attending children understand and agree to follow the Student Responsibility portion of this Policy Handbook.
- All attending parents are volunteers who are to serve at least 2 of the 3 hours of classes in a teacher or helper position. Be willing to serve as a substitute when needed.
- Parents are expected to remain in the building while children are participating in classes. If you must leave for any reason, you must designate another parent to be responsible for your child/children and record this on the parent sign-out sheet at the Check-In Table. The designated parent **must also sign** the sign-out sheet showing they agree to be responsible for your child/children.
- Students may not attend field trips without a parent present.

- Children should not be permitted outside the building AT ANY TIME without adult supervision.
- Once registration is closed, no class changes will be made to student schedules. Exceptions will be made by the Board for extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.
- We encourage each student to participate in all classes. If the student chooses to not participate, they must remain with their parent.

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- All teachers are required to provide a class description. The Board may ask for additional information regarding information being presented in your class.
- In the event that you need to be absent, contact the designated Board Member to let them know you will be absent.
- For the safety of the students, the teachers, and the organization, it is a requirement that all classes have 2 adults present. If you arrive at your class and find your helper is not there, inform a Board Member to let them know so a helper can be sent to your room.
- Teachers should support and encourage student participation. Teachers should not punish a child for lack of participation.
- If a student is being disruptive, the Teacher may ask that the student leave the classroom. The student will then remain with their parent for the duration of the class.
- Classes are to be dismissed no earlier than 5 minutes before the hour.
- Should you choose to take your students off campus, permission slips are required to be signed prior to leaving for the field trip.
- All teachers are expected to familiarize themselves with the emergency procedures and evacuation maps in the event of an emergency.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Be on time to each class and remain in your class until dismissed.
- **Walk** in the halls; absolutely no running or yelling.
- Be respectful of others and their property. Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Be respectful of the host facility property. Failure to respect the host facility can result in discipline from the Board and possible dismissal.

- Complete class requirements and cooperate with teachers at all times.
- Students are expected to have self-control and respond appropriately to the teacher’s instructions.
- Students are expected to refrain from any affectionate contact during classes and all HHA events.
- No name calling or destructive comments toward one another will be tolerated.
- Students who disregard any behavior expectation will be dealt with immediately.
- Students understand that if a teacher asks them to leave the room, they will be required to sit with the attending parent.
- Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by all policies of this Handbook.

### **Little Homeschoolers/Toddler Nursery/Baby Nursery**

Toddler Nursery is for children that are walking but not 3-years-old, while Little Homeschoolers is for children 3-years-old to Kindergarten. Children must turn 3 years old on or before October 1st for the Fall Semester and April 1st for the Spring Semester. If your child turns 3 during September or March, you will have a “special registration” to enroll them.

- Only the adults assigned to the classroom(s) and the parents of the children in the classroom(s) be allowed in the room.
- For security, you will be required to sign-in/sign-out your child. No one, other than yourself or the designated pick-up person, will be allowed to pick up your child.
- To help maintain safety, all parents and siblings should remain outside the classroom door/gate until the teacher dismisses your child to you.
- If your child is not toilet trained, they may not participate in Little Homeschoolers.
- You are responsible for supplying a stocked diaper bag for any child in Baby or Toddler Nursery.

### **Abuse Policy**

Under Missouri state law, anyone who is responsible for the care of children is mandated by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. All members are compelled by law to report to appropriate person(s) if there is reasonable suspicion that a child has been abused or neglected. If any member is aware of or suspect abuse taking place, they must immediately report it to a board member or to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-3738.

### **Illness Policy**

Participants should not attend weekly classes or any group field trip if they are sick or are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Colored mucus
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or nausea (within the last 24 hours)

- Eye or ear drainage
- Virus or infection (known to be contagious)
- Rashes (contagious)
- Head lice, bed bugs, or any other parasitic infestation
- Fever (99.5 taken orally, 98.5 under the arm). Participant must be fever free for 24 hours without the help of medication.

In the event that you are aware of an illness in advance, another parent may assume responsibility of your child/children (Little Homeschoolers and older only) on our class days and must notify the Check In table immediately upon arrival.

*In August 2020, this Illness Policy has been amended with the following wording:*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Illness Policy is being extended to include COVID-specific requirements: if you or any of your immediate household have knowingly been exposed to COVID-19, are awaiting COVID-19 test results, or have tested positive for COVID-19, your FAMILY should STAY HOME until such time as you are cleared of any known risk.

### **Allergy Policy**

You should disclose all of your/your child's allergies. Food allergies will be shared with your child's teachers so they can plan snacks/classes appropriately.

### **Discipline Policy**

Disciplinary issues will be handled by the Board with the full involvement of the parent. Each case will be dealt with individually and will be left to the discretion of the Board, depending on the severity of the situation. Appropriate documentation will be maintained by the Board.

Every student is expected to behave in a proper and respectful fashion at all times.

- The teachers may dismiss a student from a class and the student **must** remain with his/her parent for the remainder of the class period.
- The Board reserves the right to suspend or expel a student on a case-by-case basis as a result of a particularly offensive, serious, or ongoing behavior.
- In the event of suspension or expulsion, no fees will be refunded.

If a child is disrupting a class, it will be addressed as such:

1. Teacher will discuss the behavior issue with the student and notify the board.
2. Teacher will discuss the behavior issue with the student's parent and again notify the board.
3. If the behavior does not improve, the board will proceed with further discipline action.

### **Visitor Policy**

We welcome visitors and are happy to have family/friends attend with a minimum of 2 day's advance notice given to the Board. All visitors must sign in/sign out at the Front Desk. Any

visitor that is in attendance for more than 2 consecutive weeks must have a background check completed (please see the Background Check section of this handbook).

### Student Visitor

Any non-registered student who desires to attend a class may do so with prior notification of the Board. The Board will then contact the teacher(s) to assess if having a visitor will be appropriate for that week. If the teacher feels it will not work, the teacher's wishes will be honored. In addition, at least one responsible parent must visit the class with the visiting student(s).

### Facility Tours

When you invite a fellow homeschooler to tour the facility and learn about our organization, a Board Member needs to be notified to verify that it is a good week to offer a tour. If the Board agrees, the fellow homeschooler should arrive during 2<sup>nd</sup> hour.

## **Facility Responsibilities**

Heartland Homeschool Association classes are from 9 AM to 12 PM each Thursday morning at our host facility. The host facility requires:

- While on the premises all members must remain in our designated area.
- Children shall not be left unattended at any time.
- During the time that participants are on the premises, children are under the authority of their own parents.
- Participants are expected to be respectful of the host facility. If you break property that belongs to the church, your family will be responsible for 100% of cost of replacement.
- All members of Heartland Homeschool Association must follow the rules set forth for our group by our host facility. Even if a member of HHA is also a member of the host facility, that member must follow the rules given to our group when attending a Heartland Homeschool function.

### Clean Up

We are responsible for leaving our host facility clean and returned to proper working order.

### Food and Drink

Food and drink are allowed in the classrooms, but any mess created by said food or drink must be cleaned up immediately.

## **Snow Day Policy**

If Cape Girardeau public schools cancel classes for inclement weather, HHA will also cancel classes for that day. It is the responsibility of all members to stay informed of school cancellations and road conditions when there is a possibility of inclement weather.

**Make-up Policy:** If classes are canceled for one week out of the semester, we will attempt to schedule one make up day.

## **Emergency Policy**

Emergency Policies will be discussed at the Annual Meeting based on the current host facility.

- Teachers and Helpers should remain with their class until attendance of the membership has been checked.
- In the event of a fire, tornado, or earthquake, follow emergency guidelines and evacuation routes of the host facility.

## Active Intruder Policy

In the event that an intruder is on the premises during our class days, each teacher is expected to do their best to maintain their classroom in a safe manner. If your door has a lock, please lock it. If your room has a bathroom, get as many children/people into your bathroom as possible, then close and lock the door. As soon as an active intruder has been recognized, any available board member will be contacting authorities to get emergency personnel on the scene.

## **Video Policy**

If a video is unrated or rated above PG, the video must be submitted for approval to the Board a minimum of 7 days prior to the day it is needed in the class.

## **Code of Conduct**

All members and guests are expected to abide by the standards set forth at all HHA functions:

1. No profanity
2. No smoking
3. No drugs or alcohol
4. No fighting
5. No slander
6. No inappropriate messages, pictures, or symbols are to be worn
7. No weapons
8. No physical or verbal insults

## **Dress Code Policy**

All members and guests must wear modest and appropriate attire. Anyone who violates the dress code will be required to change.

- No underwear may show (including bra straps and boxers)
- Skirts must be no shorter than the top of knee cap
- If leggings are worn, the shirt must be long enough to cover bottom
- Shorts must come to fingertips when arms are at the side
- Tops must cover midriff and bust line.

## **Electronic Device Policy**

If electronics are being used by a student without being requested by the teacher, the teacher may ask for the device to be put away.

## **Background Check Policy**

Heartland Homeschool Association, in compliance with our insurance, runs a background check on all new members. Members will pay a fee to cover the cost and it is nonrefundable. The check will remain valid for a period of 5 years. Visitors attending more than 2 consecutive weeks must also have a background check completed.

If a member's background check requires additional fees (international or State mandated) the member will be responsible for the added fee.

Disqualifying charges include, but are not limited to,

1. Felonies
2. Child abuse, neglect, or endangerment
3. Sexual assault or sexual abuse
4. Assault on others
5. Recent drug charges

All other concerns will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the Board.

## **Financial Policy**

Annual Membership fee must be paid prior to class registration. The Annual Membership fee is non-refundable.

### Class Registration Fees

Class registration fees refunds will be prorated based on what has been spent on supplies for that class. After the 6<sup>th</sup> week of classes, no refund will be offered on class fees.

All fees for classes must be paid by the first class, unless payment arrangements have been made. If you are unable to pay for classes, this must be discussed before you sign up. Students will not be allowed to attend classes unless payment arrangements have been made.

At the end of each school year, all remaining class funds will be transferred to the Building Fund and the Insurance Fund (equally).

### Field Trip Fees

All field trip fees must be paid by the stated deadline to attend the field trip.

### Building

We pay our host facility each time we meet at their building. Building fees must be paid prior to class registration. Building fees are only refundable if the family withdraws prior to classes starting for the semester.

### Insurance Fees

Our host requires us to have liability insurance in order to meet and use their facilities. Insurance fees are nonrefundable.

### Checks

Checks may be made out to Heartland Homeschool Association. If a check is returned, the parent will be responsible for the reimbursement to Heartland Homeschool Association for any bank fees incurred.

### Reimbursements

Teachers may be reimbursed with accompanying receipt. Reimbursements will be made based on fees paid for each class. Any amounts spent over the class fund are at the teacher's expense.

### **Photo Policy**

No pictures taken by teachers or parents are allowed to be posted to a public area of the internet (public website, public Facebook page, etc). Photos are only allowed to be shared in the current semester's private group.

### **Conflict Resolution Policy**

Unfortunately, personality conflicts and misunderstandings can happen. We've chosen to base the structure of this policy on Matthew 18:15-20. Many disputes/differences can be properly resolved by overlooking an offense and forgiving the person who has offended.

If you feel the offense must be addressed, you must take the matter to the Board in a timely manner. The Board will consider the matter and their decision will final. Outcomes are to be kept confidential by all parties involved.

***Version 3, June 2021; updated December 2023; updated June 2024***

***Version 2, June 2019; updated August 2020***

***Version 1, June 2017; updated December 2018***