



MEMBER HANDBOOK

Village Co-op Philosophy

- We are a co-op designed to facilitate community, support, and enrichment for homeschooling families. We partner with individual tutors and educational organizations to provide multiple class opportunities in one convenient location.
- Though our classes are taught by a combination of professional educators and talented homeschool parents, we define our group as a co-op because we know the participation of our families and the relationships we maintain are the most important element to our success.
- We do not discriminate in administration of educational and admissions policies on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, disability or special needs.
- Our classes provide educational experiences on a weekly basis in hopes to enrich and expand the homeschool experience.
- We operate from a secular perspective and welcome families of all religious and spiritual backgrounds.
- Our classes for grades K-12 offer both elective and academic subjects.
- We meet once a week from August through May.
- Our leadership consists of a group of founding organizers and volunteers from our participating members.
- Our teachers are all highly qualified and/or gifted in their areas of expertise.
- Our organizers strive to maintain an atmosphere promoting inclusivity.
- Participation in our organization includes:
 - Classes that offer the opportunity to enhance the students' educational experience.
 - Valuable participation in a group-learning environment.
 - Weekly connection with other area homeschooled students and families.
 - Opportunities requiring groups such as clubs, summer activities, drama productions, field trips, social events, and community outreach.

Policies

A. Registration Policies

Please thoroughly read **Philosophy and Policies** (available on the website and in this handbook) before registering. A parent or guardian must sign the enrollment agreement to verify that they have read and will abide by all the policies. The registration form, enrollment agreement, and release of liability forms are found in the Registration Packet. Print the Registration Checklist, and check off all items before attending your registration meeting. If forms, checks, signatures, or background checks are incomplete, your student(s) may not attend classes until they are completed. The final step of registration is signing up for your volunteer hour(s). After the open registration period, new registrations will be accepted as space allows.

Special Needs/Accommodations: During the registration process, parents should communicate any special needs their children may have. Please also explain any special accommodations children may require while at co-op. This will help us to facilitate the best possible experience for your family. **Special needs include, but are not limited to service aides, service dogs, vision or hearing impairments, autism, ADD/ADHD, and food allergies or other medical requirements.

Registration Costs:

1. **Annual Family Fee:** This fee pays for expenses including but not limited to insurance, supplies, rent, and administrative costs.
2. **Boys & Girls Club Registration:** Paid directly to the B&GC.
3. **Materials Fees:** Each class requires half of the materials fee in fall and half for spring semester. For those registering in spring semester materials fees may be reduced.
4. **Tuition:** This fee is paid directly to the tutor by post-dated checks.
5. **Background Check Fee:** This fee is paid directly to the background check agency.

Family fee, registration fee(s), materials fees and tuition must be submitted along with the completed paperwork at time of registration. These fees are nonrefundable UNLESS the class is canceled.

Waitlists: Classes that reach their maximum enrollment during registration will have a waitlist. If a drop occurs, parents will be notified and students from the waitlist can move into the class.

Schedule Changes: No classes may be dropped after registration. After registration, any requests for schedule changes and/or class adds should be submitted by email and will be handled on a case by case basis.

Needs Assessment: Every year in late January/early February, we hope to collect information to predict class needs for the next year.

Registration Exceptions: Families may request age exceptions for children who are advanced or who have learning delays. Tutors thoughtfully set the intended grade level for classes, but because homeschooling families do not strictly follow grade levels, each class has a range of minimum and maximum grades as a guideline.

Staggered Scheduling: Organizers, Tutors, and Returning families will have the opportunity to register early for the following co-op year before the open registration period.

B. Tuition Policies

Tuition: As independent contractors, tutors and organizers participate in setting tuition for their classes based on the tutor's experience and the level of academic difficulty.

Tuition Collection: Tuition is a yearly fee collected by check and post dated monthly or semester checks at registration. Please see the Registration Packet for fees and payment instructions.

Late Tuition: If circumstances affect tuition payment, please communicate with organizers promptly and arrange payment as soon as possible. Families will be asked to pay any bank fees associated with bank-returned checks. If there is a pattern of bank-returned checks, families may be asked to pay the remainder of the tuition with a cashier's check (in the case of returned checks), or forfeit membership.

Tuition Checks: Checks (no cash please, as it confuses record-keeping) should be made out to tutors or contracted organizations and will be collected at the time of registration. Tuition is based the number of weeks in each semester.

Tuition is a Co-op Year Obligation: Organizers and tutors trust that families will fulfill their enrollment contract for the entire co-op year. In order to serve the organizers, tutors, and families, the following policies apply to all members:

- Please register conservatively. You may add classes later if there are open spots but after registration, fees are non refundable. This is in order to ensure that we can sustain tutors.
 - Fees are due at registration and are non-refundable.
 - Tuition *will be* refunded to parents for the remainder of the year if a tutor drops a class.
 - If a student/family is dismissed from co-op due to disciplinary reasons, tuition is forfeited.

C. Volunteer Requirement

Our community is a cooperation of families who work together for the benefit of enhancing our children's educations. We are grateful for the commitment of all those who give their time to keep the co-op running smoothly and safely. Parents are responsible for their children throughout their classes and activities at co-op. Volunteer hours help to fulfill our commitment to the safety of our children and are important to the existence and quality of our organization.

Volunteer Hours: The number of hours varies from year to year based on the needs of the co-op. Positions include but are not limited to tutor's assistants, check-in table, set up and clean up. Some parents may fulfill a portion of their volunteer requirement organizing events or field trips, or leading a club.

Who Serves and Where? At least one adult (parent or relative) with a background check from each family. Please sign the volunteer sheet at the sign-in table on co-op days.

May I Bring My Children? Yes; however, finding alternate arrangements for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers for some positions may be beneficial. This can include arranging with other co-op parents to take responsibility for small children during volunteer hours.

What If I Have a Conflict? If a conflict (including illness) prevents fulfilling a volunteer shift, the parent is responsible for switching with another qualified parent and notifying the organizer who oversees volunteer hours. A qualified parent is one who has completed a background check procedure. If you cannot find a substitute, please email the organizers as soon as possible.

May I Volunteer to Cover Extra Service Shifts? Absolutely! Contact an organizer if you are available to work extra shifts (or available to cover for those who need subs).

D. Background Check Policy

At least one parent, guardian, or relative (whoever will complete volunteer hours at co-op) must undergo a background check as part of each family's membership to help ensure the safety of the children.

FAQ:

- 1) How often will Background Checks be conducted? Every year.
- 2) How much will they cost? About \$35.00 per person.
- 3) Who should have one completed? Any adult (parent or relative) who plans to stay on-site. Your family may want to consider having background checks on both parents so that either one is eligible to do volunteer hours.
- 4) How will they be conducted? Background Checks appointment(s) must be made by the family using the co-op account information. Detailed instructions can be found in the registration packet.
- 5) Who will see the results? Co-op leadership only.
- 6) What if I already know I have a red flag regarding working with children? Another parent, relative or guardian must complete a background check, supervise the student at co-op and fulfill the family volunteer hours on-site.

E. Supervision and Discipline Policies

Sign-In: Upon arrival, a parent or designated responsible adult must sign each student in at the Sign-In Table.

Drop-Off: We do not offer a drop off option at this time, however; parents and guardians are welcomed and encouraged to work with other co-op members to supervise students when one of them cannot be on location.

Parking Lot: Please drive with extreme caution in the parking lots.

Free Periods: Students may not have a class each period. During any free period, students should be supervised by a parent or a designated responsible adult. Students should not be outside unless he or she is supervised by a parent or adult.

Leaving the Premises: No student may leave the property unless accompanied by his or her parent or designated adult.

Discipline Policy: We ask all families to exhibit thoughtful and positive behavior at co-op. Students and families are accountable for their behavior. Please no profanity, verbal or physical harassment or intentional damage to the location.

If an adult corrects a student, and the student responds respectfully and returns to appropriate behavior, no further action may be needed. If a student responds disrespectfully and/or does not return to appropriate behavior, or if behavior is repeatedly disruptive, or if the offense is considered serious by the observant adult, the incident will be documented by a tutor or organizer, and the following actions may be implemented:

- **First offense:** The parent is contacted by the tutor for in-class offenses, by an organizer for out-of-class offenses.
- **Second offense:** The student may be asked to leave class for the day and returned to parent on site. This policy ensures that tutors may proceed with class for the benefit of the other students. The parent is contacted by the tutor if the offense was in-class and will be asked to sit with the student in class the following week. If the offense was out-of-class, an organizer will contact the parent to discuss remediation.
- **Third offense:** The student is asked to leave class for the day and returned to parent on site. Both in class and out-of-class offenses will be directed to the organizers to to contact the parent and determine. Some offenses may result in dismissal the class only. Extreme offenses may result in immediate dismissal from co-op entirely. Tuition is non-refundable in cases of dismissal from co-op

due to behavior. Dismissal from a class may make a family ineligible for re-enrollment the following year.

Exception: If any occurrence of behavior jeopardizes the safety of another member the student or family may be dismissed immediately

F. Conduct Policies

It is important that all members demonstrate good behavior toward our peers, our tutors, and for the location we have been allowed to use. Parents should instruct their children that their actions should show respect and support a positive learning environment for everyone.

The following rules of conduct are required as we strive to be a welcoming and positive organization. Though we work together as a group, parents are ultimately responsible for their own behavior and their children's behavior.

These rules apply during classes but also when members are participating in or supporting coop sponsored activities (field trips, outreach, etc).

To show thoughtfulness and respect for our host location:

- Please help to clean up trash, spills, or messes
- No running in the hallways or classrooms.

To show thoughtfulness and respect for our tutors and classes:

- Arrive to class on time and exit promptly to allow the next class to begin on time.
- Respect the tutors' requests.
- Use kind words and appropriate language when talking to tutors and classmates.
- Please keep the hallways quiet while classes are in session.

To show thoughtfulness and respect for all participating families:

- Conduct yourself in a way that helps us maintain a positive community.
- Keep hands to yourself and not use harmful force against other members. Please report any instances of bullying to a tutor or organizer.

- Use kind words and appropriate language when talking to other members.
- Please supervise children during lunch and free periods.
- Fulfill volunteer hours to keep operations running smoothly.
- As we are an inclusive community, please respect the beliefs of others and the secular nature of our classes.

To show thoughtfulness and respect for leadership:

- Bring input and feedback to the organizers in a timely and respectful manner.
- Recognize the leadership as voluntary, and afford volunteers patience completing tasks.
- Recognize leadership are parents and co-op members too. Please extend the same atmosphere of inclusivity to organizers and volunteers.

Illness/Significant Allergies: Please do not bring children who have had a fever or any contagious condition within the last 24 hours. Please do not bring children with head lice, colored mucus, persistent coughing, diarrhea, vomiting or nausea. If children have any significant allergies, please inform the organizers and each of their tutors.

Medicines: Parents are responsible for dispensing their children's prescription or over the counter medicine. If parents determine their children are old enough to self-administer a medication, they may take it with their parent's permission. Parents are responsible for providing emergency medications, such as Epi-Pen injections, inhalers, etc., and for arranging for someone to administer such medications in an emergency. Please contact the organizers for any help needed in making these arrangements. We do not employ an on-sight medical professional.

Visitors: Visitors who are considering enrolling their children are welcome to arrange informational meetings and tours. Visitors are also welcome for the Family Showcase dates.

Inclement Weather: When inclement weather is forecast or schools close, check email and social media pages. We will follow Rutherford County School closings and the make safest possible decisions. We have included a makeup day in the schedule.

Lunch and Snacks: We are a peanut and tree nut and free organization and recognize the serious nature of all food allergies and intolerances. Students may bring a lunch to eat or snacks to eat provided they are peanut and tree nut free. Food should only be

eaten in the designated eating area and not in classes or halls. Children must be supervised by parents or another designated adult during lunch. Because members may have allergies to any food, please do not share food without parental permission. **Please clean up food after eating and wash hands to reduce the spread of other allergens on shared materials.**

Grades: Our class offerings supplement the education provided by parents to their children. Parents are responsible for assigning credits and grades for the classes their children take and maintain all responsibility for their children's education. Parents may ask tutors for grade suggestions, but tutors cannot assume responsibility for record keeping of grades.

Communication: Our primary means of communication is through emailed weekly updates. Any policy revision will be supplied via the weekly updates. Please check email each week for updated information. Social media may also be used as a secondary tool. We will try to ensure our website reflects the most important and updated information.

Tutor and Class Evaluations and General Feedback: We are committed to providing a valuable experience for our students and families. Feedback is always welcome. Parents should feel free to communicate directly to tutors, to leadership, or through the feedback form on our website which can be used anonymously.

Village co-op reserves the right to dismiss members who do not uphold our policies and philosophy.

Please refer to the website for annual registration information, class offerings and descriptions, current fees, and dates.

Please contact the organizers if you have any issue locating answers to any question.