

EXPLORERS CO-OP HANDBOOK 2018-2019

Who We Are:

The Explorers Co-op is a weekly Christ-centered, inter-denominational cooperative with the purpose of providing the following classes to homeschooling students:

- primarily science, history, art, and language classes for elementary-age students
- science, language, art, and elective classes for secondary-age students

Leadership Team:

The leadership team is comprised of Ruth Dammann, Rhonda Huffman, DeAnna Jones, Candy Knox, Robin Scharff, Jennifer Schulmeister, Kathy Watson.

Governing Values:

While member families participating in the co-op are not required to agree with every doctrinal point contained in the following value statements, we do ask that they agree not to dispute, challenge, or debate these Governing Values during co-op hours.

The actions and decisions of the Leadership of Explorers Co-op are governed by the following values:

- We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, is God come in the flesh. His death provides substitutionary atonement for our sins. He literally rose bodily from the dead and will literally come to earth again.
- We believe the Bible in its entirety (all 66 books of the Old and New Testament) is the infallible, inspired Word of God.
- We believe in, and accept by faith, the Genesis account of creation.
- We believe man is by nature sinful and is inherently in need of salvation, which is exclusively found by faith alone in Jesus Christ and His shed blood. Personal salvation comes to mankind by grace through faith.
- We believe in a literal heaven and a literal hell.
- We believe the Bible defines marriage as being between one man and one woman.
- We believe that all human life is a sacred gift from God, beginning at conception.

Overview:

Times for classes are as follows:

8:40-9:55	High School Math
10:30-11:30	Includes music, art, drama, sign language and literature (note: High School literature meets from 10:00-11:30)
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:55	Includes art, history, high school electives (Art and Home Economics starts at 11:45)
1:00-1:55	Includes language arts, foreign languages, writing, various electives (High School Spanish meets until 2:15)

1:55-2:15	Snack Break
2:20-3:35	Science classes
3:45-4:30	Science Olympiad

Childcare will be provided in the morning for teachers of morning classes only. Parents are expected to remain on campus during this time if their children are enrolled in classes.

Application Process/Financial Responsibilities:

- Each family must complete an application for the co-op, and once accepted, submit a \$95 co-op fee (payable to Explorers Homeschool Academy) to Candy Knox, 7352 Mullins Cove Road, Whitwell, TN 37397. This co-op fee includes a \$50 facility usage fee and a \$45 general fee.
- Classes will require payment of a class fee to cover supplies for activities. The class fees are listed on the class registration form, which may be filled out once the registration fee has been paid. Payment for the class fees will be due on or before July 1, 2018.
- A Release of Liability and a Statement of Responsibility must be signed by the parents. In addition, Grace Pointe requires both husband and wife to complete a Volunteer Candidate Authorization Form in order to perform background checks. The Volunteer Candidate Authorization Form will be updated every other year.
- Those participating in classes requiring additional fees paid to the teacher (eg. music, art with Mrs. Swann) are expected to pay the annual fee by the first class in September or pay in two installments (due the first class in September and the first class in January). Those paying in two installments will be asked to sign a form acknowledging that the fees are due even if the family withdraws from the class.
- High School Math classes and High School French will meet twice a week, the first being on Tuesdays at co-op, the second later in the week at the teacher’s house. Fees will be paid monthly or per semester directly to the teacher.
- Current co-op families: all outstanding fees (including fees to outside instructors) must be paid before you can confirm your involvement for the upcoming school year.

Parent Responsibilities:

- The heart of Explorers Homeschool Academy is homeschooling, which necessitates parents' involvement in their children's education, classes, and day-to-day experiences to achieve maximum effectiveness. **Therefore, Explorers’ policy requires that a parent or permanent legal guardian remain on campus** the entire time his/her children are at Explorers. Explorers’ students benefit immensely from the presence and influence of our dedicated parents on-site each week. **Sitting in a car, dropping off of children, or leaving campus during free periods is not allowed.** *A teacher who needs to leave campus to obtain time-sensitive supplies for their class may do so with permission from the Leadership Team.
- Parents assume full responsibility for their children at all times while at Explorers and are expected to enforce co-op rules and expectations. This plays a vital role in ensuring a high standard is maintained for conduct, attitude, and safety at our co-op. Parents will be contacted if disciplinary problems arise.

- Everyone’s participation is necessary for our co-op to be successful and function smoothly. If a family is consistently absent, the Leadership Team may have to conclude that Explorers is not a good fit for the family and may have to ask the family not to return the following year.
- Duties include but are not limited to the following:
 - Lead teacher, co-teacher, parent assistant in the classroom
 - Set up/take down of classroom tables/chairs
 - Monitoring study halls/play areas/nursery
 - Substitute in other classes in case of absences
 - Clean up (chore assignments will be posted on the website)
 - Participate in at least one scheduled “work day” held during the summer months
- Parents should be available during each class period they have a child enrolled in a class.
- Our goal is for the parent to be actively involved in no more than two class periods. This will allow at least one free period to visit classes or fellowship with other moms.
- Regularly check e-mail and Canvas for homework assignments, special notices and announcements.
- Please plan to arrive ten minutes early.
- Send a “not-too-messy” snack with your children
- Parents of high school students are expected to remain on campus and be involved in the co-op unless special considerations are approved by the Leadership Team.

Student Responsibilities:

- All elementary students grade 5 and younger should be enrolled in classes while they are on campus. Students grade 6 and older need to be in the supervised study hall in the event they are not enrolled in a class. Some teens may be considered for volunteer positions in a classroom or nursery.
- High school students will assist in setting up classrooms and returning them to their original state at the end of co-op. They should allow an extra 15 minutes for this.
- Explorers Homeschool Academy is NOT an enrichment co-op; it IS an academic coop. As such there will be homework and study requirements for each student. Students are required to complete class requirements and cooperate with teachers at all times.
- Due to the nature of the “once a week” classes, it is imperative that students stay current with their assignments. Students are also responsible for class material missed in the event of an absence. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to contact teachers in the event of a sudden absence to find out about any material missed and catch up with missed material prior to the next meeting date. Most of this information will be available on Canvas.
- Late or missing assignments put extra burdens on the teachers, allow the student to fall behind, and are an inefficient use of the time and energy for both the student and teacher.
- Every student should bring any needed supplies to co-op. Please do not bring liquid glue or markers.
- Dress modestly. If you aren’t sure something is appropriate to wear, please do not wear it.
- Honesty is expected; cheating is considered a serious matter. If it is determined that a student has cheated on an exam or written assignment, the Leadership Team will determine the consequences, which may result in the student being asked to leave the co-op.

- Be quiet in the halls between classes—absolutely no yelling or running.
- Be respectful to teachers, parents, students and other adults and their property.
- If a student or family consistently is unprepared and not participating in class, they will be dealt with according to the rules under “Conflict Resolution.” If the situation remains unresolved, the Leadership Team will meet with the family, and continued involvement in the co-op will be at the discretion of the Leadership Team.
- Science students must follow the procedures as outlined in the lab safety handout.
- We do not anticipate any discipline problems. With science experiments, it is especially important that the students listen carefully to instructions and follow them with no horseplay.

Teacher Responsibilities:

- Lead Teacher, Co-teachers and Assistants should finalize curriculum choices by June 10th.
- Semester/yearly syllabus or syllabus outline should be posted to Canvas by the first day of classes.
- Both lead teachers and assistants should have an active role in teaching the class they are assigned. The assistants should communicate with the lead teacher about the ways in which they can actively help. Assistants must be present during the entire class. The lead teacher and assistant may decide to be co-teachers and switch days of lead teaching or divide class time.
- Substitutes will be contacted by lead teacher or assistant whenever one of them will be absent, so that substitute may step in and assist. Please see Absentee Policy in this handbook for process to follow when absent.
- If a teacher has a discipline problem with a student in their class, they should follow the procedure outlined under “Maintaining Control of the Classroom” in the Conflict Resolution area of this handbook.

Building Use Rules:

- No running.
- No ball playing in or around the building. Children are allowed on the playground only when supervised by an adult or during scheduled PE times.
- No chewing gum permitted.
- Do not hang anything on the wall without permission from the Leadership Team.
- Do not walk around the building eating food. Food consumption is only allowed during snack time.
- Elementary age children must be escorted to the restroom by an adult.
- Elementary age children should remain in the classroom area at all times.
- No children are allowed in the Sanctuary or outside the building unless accompanied by an adult.
- Children are not to touch electronic equipment or musical instruments in the church.
- Only front and rear doors are to be used. Do not use side doors to enter or exit the building. Please do not prop open doors.
- Check several times prior to leaving to ensure that you have all of your family’s belongings, including take home papers.

Please remember that Grace Pointe Assembly of God is our host. We need to behave as guests while using their facility and equipment. If, however, property and/or equipment are damaged intentionally or unintentionally, you as a parent will be held financially responsible for any repair or replacement of such damaged property and/or equipment.

Electronics/Cell Phone Policy:

All parents are asked to have their children refrain from using any electronic devices during co-op hours unless the classroom teacher specifically gives permission for use in class....e.g., using the iPad to display a painting for use in the art class.

If a child must have a phone in his possession, it should be muted and not used unless there is an emergency. If a student is using an electronic device in class without permission from the teacher, the adults in the classroom will ask the student to put it in his/her backpack. If this situation continues to occur, the teacher will collect the device and hold it for the parent to pick up after class. During study hall a student may use a laptop or Kindle for academic purposes, not for entertainment purposes.

Since we need all the bandwidth directed to the teachers streaming videos and using Weebly, parents are asked to minimize their use of the church's Wi-Fi during co-op hours.

Illness/Allergy Policy:

People with the following symptoms should not attend:

- Fever (within the last twenty-four hours)
- Colored mucus
- Diarrhea, vomiting or nausea
- Eye drainage
- Virus or infection (known to be contagious)
- Rashes
- Head lice

This is for the protection of the children and families involved, so we can continue to provide the highest quality program for all children. Please be considerate of others regarding your children and illnesses. Each teacher is expected to address any allergies (such as those to nuts) that the children in their class may have and plan accordingly.

Absences (Student and Parent):

- Absences are discouraged, as classes are built sequentially on the previous week's material. If a child must be absent, please make arrangements for make-up work (reading assignments, handouts, homework) with that child's instructors prior to the absence if at all possible.
- When the parent is absent, please notify the absentee coordinator (DeAnna Jones) and your co-teacher/aide before the beginning of the school day. Our goal this year is to have three parents assigned to each class: a lead teacher, assistant, and then a dedicated substitute. In case of an absence, the assistant should be prepared to step in as lead teacher that day, and the substitute will be able to assist in the class. Lead teachers should provide a quality substitute lesson plan in the event of a planned absence.

- **Besides contacting the assistant teacher and dedicated substitute to take your place during an absence, you must fill out the absentee form on the Explorers website whenever you will be absent.** You must also fill out the absentee form for your child if he/she will be absent, even if you, the parent come to co-op.
- In a situation when the parent or a younger child is ill, you may request permission from the Leadership Team to send siblings 6th grade and older to co-op under the care of another responsible adult. Please complete the online form to ask for permission to do so.

Science Fair:

- All students that are enrolled in a science class at Explorers are strongly encouraged to participate in the science fair.
- Science fair is student-centered and allows children to work on authentic projects that are holistic, relevant, and interesting to them. Students use scientific approaches to complete projects that integrate science with reading, writing, math, statistics, critical thinking, and public speaking skills. Science Fair helps to build the whole child. A science fair project can be self-validating and exciting because it is not just practice. Science fair is about doing science. It may involve real discovery of little known or even unknown information. As students participate for consecutive years from elementary through high school, they become mature, self-confident, skilled, and thoughtful leaders who have career goals and the preparation, discipline, and drive to attain them.
- The Science Fair will be held sometime during the months of January or February (date to be determined by the Leadership Team) so plan accordingly. Many parents find that working on Science Fair during the summer months may relieve some of the assumed stresses of having a big project due.

Class Fees:

- Classes require payment of a class fee, the amount of which covers supplies for activities. These monies are used by the teacher to purchase resources needed for the class, e.g., supplies for science experiments, teacher's manual, cost of copies made, etc. The class fee monies will be invoiced once class registration has taken place and will be due on or before July 1st. Some classes may require a book fee, which will not be included in the class supply fees and which will be due during the summer before co-op begins. Student curriculum is generally not included in class supply fees, unless stated otherwise.
- The IRS requires Explorers to initially retain all collected class fee monies in the co-op checking account. Teachers should retain receipts for any expenditures made. Once a teacher has accumulated receipts totaling \$25 or more, a reimbursement request can be completed and turned in to Candy Knox.
- Curriculum Purchased with Class Fees: Any non-consumable curriculum, such as teacher's manuals and DVDs, purchased with class fees is considered property of Explorers. At the end of the school year, teachers should turn in the curriculum to a member of the Leadership Team so that it can be added to the Explorers Library and used again in subsequent years.
- At the end of the school year any unused class fees will be used in one of three ways as determined by the Leadership Team: held for future classes, used to purchase equipment for the classroom (e.g., microscopes), or refunded to the parents.

Conflict Resolution Policy:

- Maintaining Control of the Classroom
 1. Ask the student to refrain from the disruptive/unnecessary behavior.
 2. If a student repeatedly ignores classroom warnings have the co-teacher or parent in the room take the student to their parent for the remainder of the class.
 3. Talk to the parent after class or co-op about the classroom issue.
 4. If the problem persists, all parties come before at least two members of the leadership team for arbitration.

- Conflict Arising with Your Child's Teacher
 1. Before involving the Leadership Team, you must first talk to your child's teacher about any issue you or your student has, including questions about curriculum and grading.
 2. If your concerns are not addressed to your satisfaction, contact a member of the Leadership Team. **The Leadership Team will not get involved unless you have followed proper procedure and already approached the teacher yourself.
 3. If you wish to change your child's class for any reason, you must talk to the Leadership Team and they will decide if this is possible.

- Reminding a Parent about Co-op Policies
 1. Remind them in person, with an email, or on the phone.
 2. If a disagreement begins that is not quickly resolved, stop the communication.
 3. Acknowledge that the situation needs arbitration.

- Arbitration
 1. Have at least two members of the Leadership Team present.
 2. Begin with prayer.
 3. Read Matthew 18:15-17.
 4. Have each person involved tell their story uninterrupted.
 5. Have the Leadership Team members facilitate a compromise/solution to the problem.
 6. Encourage forgiveness.
 7. Remind everyone involved that the matter is resolved and behind the group.
 8. Read Ephesians 4:31.
 9. End with prayer.

Inclement Weather Policy:

We will make determinations about closings due to weather conditions by 9:00 a.m. on co-op days. Please check your e-mail or the website on co-op days for any special notices about bad weather.

**EXPLORERS CO-OP HANDBOOK
2018-2019**

I have read the above handbook and agree to abide by the rules contained therein.

Parent Name (please print)

Parent Signature

Date

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO ADHERE TO THESE POLICIES AND TO ENFORCE THEM WITH THEIR CHILDREN. THE EXPLORERS BOARD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DENY PARTICIPATION TO ANY FAMILY OR STUDENT. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE POLICIES WILL JEOPARDIZE YOUR FAMILY'S PRIVILEGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CO-OP.