



MEMBER HANDBOOK

(Updated Feb 2022)

Village Co-op Philosophy

- Village was designed to facilitate community, support, and enrichment for home educating families.
- We partner with individual tutors and educational organizations to facilitate multiple class opportunities in one convenient location.
- Though we are most accurately described as a partnership, we define our group as a co-op because we feel the cooperative participation of our community is of the utmost importance 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 April.
- Our leadership consists of 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.
- We exist as a service to the homeschool community at large in Middle Tennessee and beyond and are happy to help any family on their homeschool journey.

Policies

A. Registration Policies

Please thoroughly read Philosophy and Policies 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.

After meeting with an organizer, print the Registration Checklist, and complete all items. If forms, checks, signatures, or background checks are incomplete, your student(s) may not attend classes until they are completed.

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. This will help us to facilitate the best possible experience for your family. Special needs include, but are not limited to service aides, vision or hearing impairments, Autism, ADD/ADHD, 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. **Materials Fees:** This fee pays for class materials. Materials fee will be paid half the first month of fall and half the first month of spring semester.
4. **Tuition:** This fee is paid directly to the tutor by post-dated checks.
5. **Drop Off Fee: *High school students only.*** This fee is paid to the High School Coordinator directly who will oversee drop off students.
6. **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 the 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 a student from the waitlist can move into the class.

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

Feedback: Every year in late January/early February, we collect feedback on class needs for the next year.

Registration Grade Exceptions: Families may request exceptions for children who are advanced or who have learning delays. Tutors and organizers set the intended grade level for classes, but know homeschooling families do not strictly follow grade levels.

Staggered Registration: 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 classes based on the level of academic difficulty or organizational costs.

Tuition Collection: Tuition is a yearly fee collected by check and post dated monthly 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.

Returned Checks: Families will be notified if any payment is returned. Families will be responsible for bank fees associated with returned checks to Village Co-op or tutors. 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 should be made out to tutors or contracted organizations and will be collected at the time of registration. Tuition is based on the number of weeks in each semester.

Tuition is a Full 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 and classes.

- 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, or the instructor changes.
- If a student/family is dismissed from co-op due to disciplinary reasons, tuition is forfeited.

C. Volunteer Requirement

Our community depends on the cooperation of families who work together for the benefit of enhancing our children’s education. We are grateful for the commitment of all those who give their time to keep the co-op running smoothly and safely. 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. Parents may fulfill their volunteer requirement organizing events or field trips, or leading a club. Adults may or may not be placed in their students’ classes depending on the co-ops’ needs and/or special needs of the student or other students in class. Please communicate requests at registration.

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, please email the organizers.

D. High School Drop Off Program

Village acknowledges that as students progress, their needs and the needs of their families may change. To assist high school students and families foster independence and responsibility, Village offers a drop off program for students in grades 9-12 **only.**

Cost and Usage of Fee: The drop off fee is determined year to year and included in registration information. The drop off fee is non-refundable and will be forfeited if drop off is revoked due to student behavior.

Expectations of the Drop off Student and Family: High School Drop Off students must be signed in and out by their parent or guardian. Students must check in with the HSC upon arrival and before leaving and are expected to be in class, in the community room, or designated social area only. Students must be dropped off 5 minutes before their first class begins and must be picked up no more than 10 minutes after their last class ends. Families must meet with the High School Coordinator, sign a Drop Off Agreement and Liability Release to participate.

Volunteer Shift: At least once, no more than twice, per semester (max 4 times a year) Drop Off parents are required to volunteer as the lunch period high school monitor. Dates are first come first served and can be served sequentially or spread out over the semester.

Behavior: Drop Off students are responsible for their behavior and will be held to the standards of the Discipline and Conduct Policies. **Drop off is a privilege and can be revoked if these policies are violated.**

Drop Off and Special Needs: Village Co-op is inclusive of students with special needs, however; students who require assistance and guidance above and beyond the ability of the High School Coordinator or reasonable accommodations of Village Co-op may require a parent on site. Needs of students and eligibility for the Drop Off Program will be discussed with families and decided case by case.

E. Background Check Policy

The parent, guardian, or relative who will complete volunteer hours 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.

F. Supervision and Discipline Policies

PARENTS ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY for their students' behavior and safety.

Sign-In: Upon arrival, a parent or designated responsible adult must sign in at the Sign-In Table. This is asked for safety purposes.

Drop-Off: Village offers drop off for high school students only. We do not offer a drop off option at this time for students in Pre-K through 8th grade, 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 must 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. *While outdoors the student must be viewable by the supervising adult at all times and may not leave the designated outdoor space.*

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, 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 the guardian 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 may 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 the guardian on site. Both in class and out-of-class offenses will be directed to the organizers to contact the parent and determine the course of action. Some offenses may result in dismissal from the one class only. Extreme offenses may result in immediate dismissal from class or 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.

G. Conduct/Other 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 and 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.
- Please respect the building, furniture, and location materials.
- No running in the hallways or classrooms.

To show thoughtfulness and respect for our tutors and classes:

- Arrive 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 force or 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. Please do not attend co-op if you have been advised to quarantine. If children have any significant allergies, please inform the organizers and each of their tutors.

A Message to our Village about Covid-19 and our General Crisis Plan

At Village, the health and well-being of our students, families, tutors, and the larger community is our top priority. We understand the concern around the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. We are constantly monitoring the latest news and advice from various sources on how best to protect our members.

We take our responsibility to our community very seriously.

If for any reason at any time during the year, if information points to significant danger, we will follow any social distancing, face covering, and/or cleaning recommendations set forth by health agencies. We may also, in case of crisis, pivot to online classes.

Our month-to-month payments, and simple processes make it possible for us to pause or refund class fees as needed around moving from in-person to online or vice versa.

Members need to be aware of our position around Covid and around health crisis in general and be willing to observe safety policies and/or attend classes online if the organizer or location deems the safety of our community is in jeopardy.

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-site 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 make the safest possible decisions. We have included a makeup day in the schedule.

Natural Disaster, Pandemic, or other Crisis: In the case of natural disaster, pandemic, or other unforeseen, uncontrollable crisis, Village may choose to change the calendar, shorten the school year, or move classes to an online format depending on the length and severity of the crisis. Village may also require face masks or other safety protocols depending on local and federal guides and suggestions. Village will decide on a course of action that best benefits the community as a whole.

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 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 classes. Parents may ask tutors for grade suggestions, but tutors do not 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 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, anytime.

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 class dates. Please contact the organizer(s) if you have any issue locating answers to any question.