



# MEMBER HANDBOOK

(Updated Feb 2024)

## Village Co-op Philosophy

- Village was designed to facilitate community, support, and enrichment for homeschooling families.
- We partner with teachers, educational organizations, and families to provide multiple class opportunities in one convenient location.
- Though our classes are taught by professional educators, we define our group as a co-op because of the cooperative participation of our families.
- We do not discriminate in the administration of educational and admissions policies on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, expression, disability or special needs. We are inclusive and value diversity.
- Our classes provide educational experiences on a weekly basis in hopes to enrich and expand the homeschool experience.
- Our classes for grades K-12 offer both elective and academic subjects.
- We meet once a week from August until May.
- Our teachers are all highly qualified and/or gifted in their areas of expertise.
- Our organizers and educators strive to maintain an atmosphere promoting inclusivity and respect.
- 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, complete the online Registration forms. Once classes have been confirmed, deliver Background Check Waiver and payments to Village and complete the Background Check. *If forms, checks, signatures, or background checks are incomplete after 14 business days, your student(s) may be released from registration.*

**Special Needs/Accommodations:** During the registration process, parents need to 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 paid to Village is for expenses including but not limited to insurance, supplies, rent, and administrative costs.
2. **Tuition:** This fee is paid directly to the tutor by post-dated checks.
3. **Materials Fees:** This fee pays for class materials. Materials fee will be halved and added to the first payment of each semester.
4. **Background Check Fee:** This fee is paid directly to the background check agency.
5. **Drop Off Fee: *High school students only.*** This fee is paid to the co-op High School Organizer to oversee drop off students.

***Family fee, registration fee(s), tuition, materials fees, and drop off fee if applicable and must be submitted along with the completed paperwork at the***

**time of registration. These fees are nonrefundable UNLESS the class is canceled. See tuition policies for more information.**

**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 payment.* After payment, any requests to add a class 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:** Tuition for classes based on academic level and market rates.

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

**Late Tuition:** If circumstances affect tuition payment, please communicate with organizers promptly and arrange alternate payment method.

**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:** Classes and securement of educators is reliant on our members' financial commitment. Organizers, educators and other members trust that families will fulfill their enrollment contract for the *entire co-op year*. In order to serve and fairness to the organizers, tutors, and families, the following policies apply to all members:

- Fees are due at registration and are non-refundable.
  - Tuition *will be* refunded to parents for the remainder of the year **IF AND ONLY IF a tutor drops a class, if the co-op drops the class, or if the instructor changes.**
  - If a student/family is dismissed from co-op due to disciplinary reasons, tuition is forfeited by the family.
- 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.

### **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 time will be scheduled at the same time as a registered class unless otherwise requested.

**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, we will do our best to schedule members who need in positions where they can bring children; however, finding alternate arrangements for

infants, and toddlers 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 or absence) prevents fulfilling a volunteer shift, please contact 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.
- Students must be registered for Study Hall, Tutoring, or Teen Lounge for any open periods and commit to being in these spaces for their safety and so they may be monitored by the High School Coordinator.
- Families will need to sign a Drop Off Agreement and Liability Release to participate.

**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 coordinators 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. A family may have a substitute parent, guardian, or relative for two class days maximum in case of emergency. If another adult is responsible for the student for three class days or more, they must complete a background check.

### 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 they are 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 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.

## H. HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND PANDEMIC CRISIS POLICIES

**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**

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 severity of the crisis. Village will decide on a course of action that best benefits the community as a whole.

At Village, the health and well-being of our students, families, tutors, and the larger community is our top priority.

We take our responsibility to our community very seriously. We will follow any distancing, face covering, and/or cleaning recommendations set forth by health agencies or requested by our location.

Members need to be aware of our position around health and safety issues and be willing to follow safety recommendations if the organizer or location instructs.

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 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-sight medical professional.

## **I. ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**Visitors:** Visitors who are considering enrolling their children are welcome to arrange informational meetings and tours during class days. Visitors are also welcome for the Family Showcase dates. Any other visitor is at the discretion of the organizer.

**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.

**Attendance:** Village does not keep attendance records. All record keeping, attendance included, is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Village has a reusable (dry erase) sign in sheet that is used and erased at the end of the class day.

**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.