

2024-2025 Panhandle Homeschool Connection Handbook



The mission of Panhandle Homeschool Connection is to create community & connection for local homeschool families through co-op classes, field trips, social activities and mentorship groups while upholding a Christian Worldview

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GENERAL INFORMATION

ELIGIBILITY

- Families must be homeschooling according to Nebraska State Home-based Education law (or the state in which they reside), which includes filing a Declaration of Intent to homeschool.
- Attending children must attend with their own parent or legal guardian.
- Parent(s) and teachers, including substitutes, must sign in agreement with the PHC Statement of Faith.
- Primary (attending) Parent & Teachers **must attend** an orientation meeting at the beginning of the year.
- All adults attending co-op in any capacity (more than a 1 time visit) must pass a background check.
 - The cost of a background check for the primary (attending) parent is included in the membership fee.
 - If both parents are attending full time in a teaching/helping capacity, there is no charge for the second background check.
 - If the parent who did not sign up as the attending parent or teacher starts attending co-op, there will be a \$20 background check fee.
 - If the background check precludes a potential member from being eligible to work with children, membership will be denied, and membership fee paid to PHC will be refunded **minus a \$20 background check fee.**

BENEFITS OF PHC MEMBERSHIP

- Field trips
- Seasonal parties
- Field Day
- Science Fair
- Teen Gatherings and Formal Events
- Family Social and Parent Enrichment Events
- Curriculum & Resource Library
- High School Graduation Ceremony
- 24 weeks of Parent & Volunteer led co-op classes for ages 3-18 (and nursery for those volunteering in classrooms) Classes meet 12 times each semester, weekly.
- Membership in the private website (required)
- Membership in the private Facebook group (optional)

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our Board of Directors, Executive Director, Leadership Team, Volunteers, Teachers, Substitutes and Members (including teens) must sign a statement indicating agreement with PHC's Statement of Faith. While it is not required that you be in full agreement with the Statement of Faith to join PHC, by choosing to join, you agree to honor PHC as a Christian organization and to teach or share in conversation nothing in contradiction to these statements.

We believe:

- The Bible is the only inspired, infallible and authoritative Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)
- God has existed from all eternity in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was God come in human flesh being fully God and fully man, except without sin. (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1,2, 14; John 10:30)
- All people are in violation of God's righteous requirements and His holy character both by nature and act. (Romans 3:23 and 5:12)
- The central purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ was to pay the penalty for man's sin through His substitutionary death on the cross, the successful accomplishment of which was attested to by His subsequent bodily resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:3)
- Salvation is offered as a gift, free to the sinner. This gift must be responded to in individual faith, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, but in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ alone. (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9)
- God created two genders, male and female. Gender is no accident, God was purposeful in making each of us, and in giving us the unique soul and body He chose for us. Actions by human hands or choice does not change what God has established. Marriage was designed and ordained by God to be the union of one man and one woman. (Genesis 1:27, 2:24; Psalm 139:13,15; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9)
- God created all human beings in His image. Human life is sacred from conception to its natural end and every person should be treated with love, dignity, and respect. (Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 49:1; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 12:20-21; Galatians 6:10)

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

While each family attending classes at PHC retains the responsibility to homeschool their own children, we also believe students thrive best when parents are involved in their class experiences away from home. To ensure full participation of all families, following are the expectations of all attending parents:

- Read **ALL** materials and communications. **All official communication from PHC is sent by email.**
- Adhere to the expectations and policies in this handbook.
- Parents are expected to show good character and respect for other adults and students, as well as church property. Students learn more from what we do than what we say.
- Make sure your children understand expectations and policies shared in the statement of faith and handbook.
- Attend the mandatory orientation meeting at the beginning of the year.
- Supervise and monitor your children when they are not in class. We are not a school, and we do not provide childcare, unless otherwise specified.
- One parent or approved parent representative must remain on site when children are on site.
- Promptly pick up your nursery and preschool children at the end of their scheduled class. All other children should meet you at your designated family basket parking spot after morning classes and again at the end of the day.
- Provide mindful supervision for your children at ALL PHC activities, especially field trips, parties, and family events.
- Wear a name tag at all times when on campus. Every attending family member will receive one name tag per year. There is a \$5 fee for replacing a lost name tag.
- Complete your parent co-op assignments, including class time assignments.
 - Attending parents will be required to sign up for classroom helper assignments.
 - The number of classroom helper assignments will be determined based on the number of periods attending. Those who attend all periods will receive a free period if at all possible.
 - Each co-op family will choose either a set-up or clean-up card from the chore board each week.
 - Refusal or failure to complete assignments may be grounds for removal.
- Notify the Hall Monitor of your location if you leave the Parent Zone during a free period.
- Arrange for someone to take over each of your classroom helper jobs if you plan to be gone, and report changes to the Assignment Coordinator.
- Notify the Assignment Coordinator of any absences at least one hour prior to arrival time.
- Participate in extracurricular events and programs with the Cooperative spirit in mind, many hands make light work.
- Pay all fees on time.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Parents, please read the handbook (especially the statement of faith and this section) with your children to make sure they understand the following expectations and agree that their conduct, language, dress, music, etc. will be appropriate and in keeping the Statement of Faith while participating in Panhandle Homeschool Connection activities.

GENERAL

- Show respect for all adults and other students. (See last section of statement of Faith)
- Show respect for all property at any meeting location.
- Assist parents with set-up or clean-up jobs.
- Wear your nametag during class days.
- Listen and pay attention during announcements.
- Walk and use quiet voices while changing classes so we're not disruptive to others in the church.
- Follow the dress code.
- Refrain from inappropriate conversation/gestures (including those that would go against the statement of faith), explicit/foul language, aggressive physical contact, bullying, or threatening behavior.
- Do not bring drugs, alcohol, nicotine or weapons to the campus.
- Clean up after yourself in class and at lunch.
- Stay out of the Parent Zone.
- Do not litter on the campus.

CLASS TIME

- Be on time to your classes.
- Remain in the classroom during class time unless you have permission from the teacher to leave the classroom for whatever reason.
- You may use electronics outside of class, in study hall, and if requested by the teacher for class participation. Otherwise, electronics should not be out in class.
- Give your attention to your teachers and participate in class discussions or projects.
- Bring all required materials to class each week.
- Complete all assigned homework and bring it with you to class.

TEACHERS

At PHC, teachers are volunteers whose supply costs are paid by the parents of students in the class(es) they teach. References may be requested for all non-parent teachers

QUALIFICATIONS

- Complete a background check.
- Sign and agree with the Statement of Faith. All teachers agree not to teach or share in conversation, anything contrary to the Statement of Faith.
- Attend any teacher training or special meetings called by the Leadership Team.

EXPECTATIONS

- Submit a class application for each class you are offering to teach.
 - Make your class descriptions and expectations clear. Adhere to them throughout the semester.
 - Use the homework policy from this handbook to include homework expectations on your class application.
- Submit a full supply list to the leadership team or purchasing committee.
- Once the class list is published, teachers who vacate a position for any reason must forward all fees and/or supplies to the replacement teacher.
- Maintain clear communication with the parents of your students through the Classroom Dashboard.
- **Provide at least one substitute lesson plan to be kept on site throughout the year.**
- Communicate with your helper(s) regarding what they can do to help you in class.
- Teach with kindness. Harsh or unkind treatment of students will not be tolerated.

CO-TEACHING

Some teachers may benefit from sharing knowledge, teaching responsibilities, and prep time with another teacher. If both teachers are willing to work together to develop and teach a class, co-teaching is an option when the following guidelines are followed:

- Both teachers should participate in developing and planning the class.
- Both teachers will be listed as teachers on the class list. co-teachers decide together how to divide the fees received from students.
- Both teachers must agree on a plan for the class (i.e., who teaches each week, what subjects will be included, etc.) before submitting the class application.
- Co-Teachers are given registration priority.

CLASSROOM HELPERS

Every member will serve as a Classroom Helper (CH). Some members will also teach as a substitute in the event of a teacher absence. Below are the expectations of the CHs. Refer to the teacher expectations if substituting in a teacher's absence.

- Actively participate in your assigned class(es).
- Ask the teacher what you can do to help each week.
- Communicate absences to Hall Monitor when they come for attendance.
- If you are filling in as a substitute, obtain the substitute lesson plan from the information center or from the teacher.
- In some cases, you will only be needed to monitor the class as an accountability partner with the teacher. In those cases, you may sit back and observe the class so you have an idea of the structure and subject should you need to act as a substitute for the teacher.
- Help with kindness. Harsh or unkind treatment of students will not be tolerated.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Below are the procedures teachers and substitutes (CH and otherwise) must follow for each class period:

- The classroom folder or binder in each room will contain emergency procedures, room set-up and tear-down and cleaning instructions.
- Begin class on time.
- Only registered students may be in classes unless special permission has been given. This includes children registered for nursery.
- If any students are missing after the CH reports attendance, the CH will tell the hall monitor during the attendance check after class begins.
- Two adults are required in each classroom **at all times**. If one adult needs to leave the room for any reason, request a hall monitor to step in until the teacher or CH returns.
- Husband/Wife teaching teams are only allowed with another approved adult in the classroom.
- If class is messy, end class 5 minutes early to leave time to keep your classroom clean and ready for the next teacher to set up in.
- In case of a minor injury, see the hall monitor station for basic supplies. If there is a life-threatening injury or situation, call 9-1-1 and notify a member of the Leadership Team. In all cases of personal emergency or injury, notify the parent as soon as possible.
- If there is a building emergency, notify a member of the leadership team and consult the emergency procedure chart on the classroom wall (or in the classroom binder in main floor classrooms).

CLASS REGISTRATION

For the 24-25 school year, classes will be assigned based on grade-age group for grades K-6. Each grade-age group will remain together for the full year as they move through their assigned classes. Grades 7-12 will have open registration with 3-4 class options per class period. The “Priority” and “Class Change” descriptions below are only applicable to grades 7-12. Class registration will take place at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester. The class schedule and descriptions will be posted on the PHC website.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Each family must register for a minimum of the full morning session, if not registering for the full day.**
- Prices for PK-6th grade are the same regardless of if you attend just the morning session or full day.
- Upon registration class registration, members are responsible for all supply/resource fees even if attendance plans change.

PRIORITY

- Classes often hit their max capacity before everyone has a chance to register, therefore families will be placed in priority order for class registration according to the positions the parents hold (including leadership, leadership support members, committee coordinators, and teachers), seniority of membership, class attendance record as well as mandatory parent meeting attendance from the previous year.

CLASS CHANGES

- Within the first three weeks of a semester, students may transfer to another class if:
 - there is space
 - Contact the Leadership Team for full details. No refunds will be given for dropped classes. Resource fees will be due for the new class.

CLASS DAYS

BEGINNING OF DAY

- Check your family file and get name tags for all family members.
- Choose a chore card off the board.
- Complete your set-up assignment (if assigned). Children are to remain with their parent until classes begin.
- Attend the Morning Collective Assembly prior to classes.

LUNCH/RECESS

- Parents must supervise their children during lunch.
- Each family must clean up after themselves.
- The Hungry Window is available during lunch.
- The Lunch/Recess Coordinator will announce plans for recess towards the end of lunch. If weather permits, students will be released, and recess monitors will be stationed outside. If there is inclement weather, the Lunch/Recess Coordinator will announce an alternative.
- Students should make every effort to clean their shoes prior to re-entering the facility.

END OF DAY

- Gather nursery through preschool-age children promptly after the last period of the day, and prior to completing any clean-up assignments.
- All students will be dismissed from classrooms.
- Students should meet parent(s) at their family basket parking spot.
- All family baskets are to be taken to your vehicle right away so that clean-up can happen without extra items in the hallway.
- Complete your clean-up assignment. Students are to remain with their parent during clean-up. All students are encouraged to help.
- Write your last name and date on the back of the chore card so we know who completed the chore, and place your card in the “completed” section of the chore board.
- Check the family file and hang up name tags.
- Check the lost-and-found basket under the information center table.

BELONGINGS

- Mark all items with family or student name.
- Bring a rolling cart, tote, basket, or box for your family’s backpacks, lunch bags, and blanket.
- There is a lost-and-found box at the information center.
- PHC is not responsible for lost or unclaimed items. Items not claimed will be periodically donated.

POLICIES (A-Z)

ABSENCES

- Absences must be submitted on absence google form to the Attendance Coordinator no later than one hour before classes begin each week. Unreported absence will negatively affect registration priority or force removal of membership.
- For planned absences, notify the Attendance Coordinator as early as possible.
- Families are allowed two absences (excluding illness absences) per semester for class registration priority.

DISCLAIMERS

- PHC reserves the right to substitute a teacher, cancel/substitute a class and/or request reimbursement of class supply fees if any teacher fails to fulfill teaching commitment.
- The beliefs, doctrines, or policies of facilities used by PHC are not necessarily upheld by the PHC Board of Directors or its members. This includes the host church, field trip venues, meeting or event space, etc.
- PHC reserves the right to deny participation to anyone at any time.

DISCIPLINE

High behavioral standards and mindful parenting are expected at Co-op and during all PHC events.

- You are responsible for disciplining your own child.
- If there is a discipline issue during class, a verbal warning may be given by the teacher or CH.
- If the verbal warning goes ignored or the issue continues, the Teacher, CH or Hall Monitor will remove the child from the classroom immediately and bring the child to the parent. If the child isn't cooperative, the CH or Hall Monitor will go find the child's parent. After the parent and child work this out, the child can be returned to the classroom.
- If this is a continuing problem, you will be asked to sit and supervise your child in their classes, possibly for the rest of the year.
- If the issue isn't resolved with parent involvement, the leadership team will become involved to discuss further action.
- If all efforts to resolve the problem fail, or an incident serious in nature occurs, expulsion may be considered at the discretion of the leadership team.
- No child is to be without adult supervision on the church premises.

DRESS CODE

The dress code applies to all adults and students. Clothing is expected to be clean, modest and appropriate, in keeping with the statement of faith.

A note about Modesty: Modesty is defined as "an attitude of humility and decency in dress, grooming, language, and behavior. An attitude of modesty does not draw undue attention to oneself. Instead, it seeks to 'glorify God in your body, and in your spirit' (1 Corinthians 6:20; see also verse 19)."

- Clothing should cover undergarments and conceal private areas (including midriff).
- Leggings or form-fitting yoga pants should be worn with longer tops.
- Shorts and skirts should conceal to around fingertip length.
- Holes in pants should be mid-thigh and below, unless layered
- Clothing with inappropriate (Drug/alcohol/profanity/etc.) slogans, words, or pictures is not allowed..
- Tops or Dresses should have necklines that do not reveal cleavage.
- For special events, exceptions or special instructions may be given.

HOMEWORK

- PHC has three levels of homework expectations, which are indicated in the description for each class.
 - None
 - Optional
 - Required: Completion of homework is required and vital for class. Parents will be contacted if homework is not complete. If this is an ongoing problem, the student may be moved to study hall for the remainder of the semester upon approval.

PARENT ZONE

- The Parent Zone - AKA Chew & Chat room - is for adults only. Infants are allowed during a parent's free time.
- Parent/PHC provided coffee and snacks are for adults only.

PARTICIPATION

- Our desire is to each year help build community and foster long lasting relationships, by organizing community events throughout the school year like field trips, park days, social events, dances, service projects, mom's enrichment events, a science fair, fundraisers, etc.
- A large part of the vision of Panhandle Homeschool Connection is creating a safe, healthy socially vibrant homeschool community for our families. Lots of time and effort are put into not just co-op classes but our events, and we are intentional about planning opportunities for relationships to build and grow. Choosing to be part of PHC does mean that you choose to come alongside our vision in this area. We ask that all families try their best to attend as many events and outings as they are able to, as well as share in the efforts of set up, clean up, running or organizing events and fundraising. **If social events, community opportunities, outings, and relationship building are not what you are interested in for you and your kids and you don't expect to make that effort, then PHC may not be a good fit for your family. Please strongly consider this before joining.**

REFUND POLICY

- All fees paid to PHC are non-refundable.
- Upon registration for classes, members are responsible for all supply/resource fees regardless of class placement or if attendance plans change. Class Supply/Resource fees are non-refundable.
- If the background check precludes a potential member from being eligible to work with children, membership will be denied. In that instance, the membership fee paid to PHC will be refunded. (Minus a \$20 background check fee)

RESTROOM PROTOCOL

- No adult can assist a child that is not their own. If a student needs help in the restroom, the attending parent will be notified.
- Nursery or toddler workers may only change diapers in the nursery, not in the restroom. If you do not want a teacher or helper changing your child's diaper, indicate and include your whereabouts on the nursery/toddler name tag.

SAFETY

- For the safety of our members, we take the following measures:
 - All adults & students on site must wear a nametag or a visitor's badge.
 - All adults on site have completed a background check.
 - Hall monitors check each classroom after class begins, and periodically through the class period, to ensure that all students are safely in class.
- Emergency procedure charts are on the classroom wall (or in the classroom binder in main floor classrooms), and at the information center.
- Students or parents with medical conditions will be identified with a distinguishing nametag. The parent's phone number is on the back of all student name tags in case of a student emergency.

TARDINESS

- PHC allows five minutes between classes. After classes begin, the hall monitors will check attendance of children and adults. Adults who are late to class disrupt the students' class time and compromise our two-adult policy. Frequent tardiness to class or facility jobs will affect priority for registration purposes.

VISITORS

- Potential new members may schedule a tour with the Leadership Team. Children are welcome, but may be required to stay with their parent(s) during the tour.
- One time visits are allowed from adult family members not listed as the primary or secondary parent. However they are not allowed to serve as one of the required adults in class, a substitute or parent representative without a background check.
- Upon arrival, all visitors must check in at the information center and obtain a visitor badge.

WEATHER

- For snow days or other weather-related delays, check email in the morning to confirm if classes will be delayed, canceled, or remain on schedule. You can assume “no news is good news”, **we will always email if we have to cancel classes for the day.**

WELLNESS

Do not allow any family member to attend classes or activities with any of the following symptoms:

- Feeling sick
- Contagious stage of illness
- Communicable disease (head lice, chicken pox, ringworm, etc.)
- Fever including those controlled by medication
- Presence of fever or vomiting in the last 24 hours
- If any of the above symptoms are visibly present while on campus, at an activity, or during an event, members will be asked to leave for the day.
- Notify the Leadership Team if any communicable illness/disease is contracted within 24 hours after attending classes.

The Panhandle Homeschool Connection Board of Directors has the overall policy-making authority. Working alongside the Executive Director or Leadership Team, the Board of Directors approves policies that direct the management and delegates the operational authority to the Executive Director or Leadership Team. If an Individual or Family breaks the agreement to abide by the PHC Statement of Faith and/or the guidelines laid out in this handbook, membership may be permanently revoked.