



LOVE FIRST

Homeschool Inc.

**Co-op
Participant Handbook**

2024 - 2025

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Who We Are

Mission

The mission of Love First Homeschool Inc. is to support and encourage families in the homeschool community to foster academic, emotional, and spiritual growth from a biblical perspective, so children become self-directed learners and servant leaders who understand that, as Christ followers, we must love first.

1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.

Statement of Faith and Community

We are a body of homeschoolers from various Christian traditions, believing in one triune God—the Father, His Son and Our Savior, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We are comfortable praying together, discussing God, and sharing scripture. As parents, we prayerfully and joyfully accept the responsibility of educating our children. Our instruction reflects a Christian worldview solidly rooted in the values and teachings of Jesus. We acknowledge that denominational differences exist. We choose to concentrate on our spiritual unity as believers through our common faith in Jesus Christ and will not allow doctrinal differences to hinder our cooperation as Christian home educators.

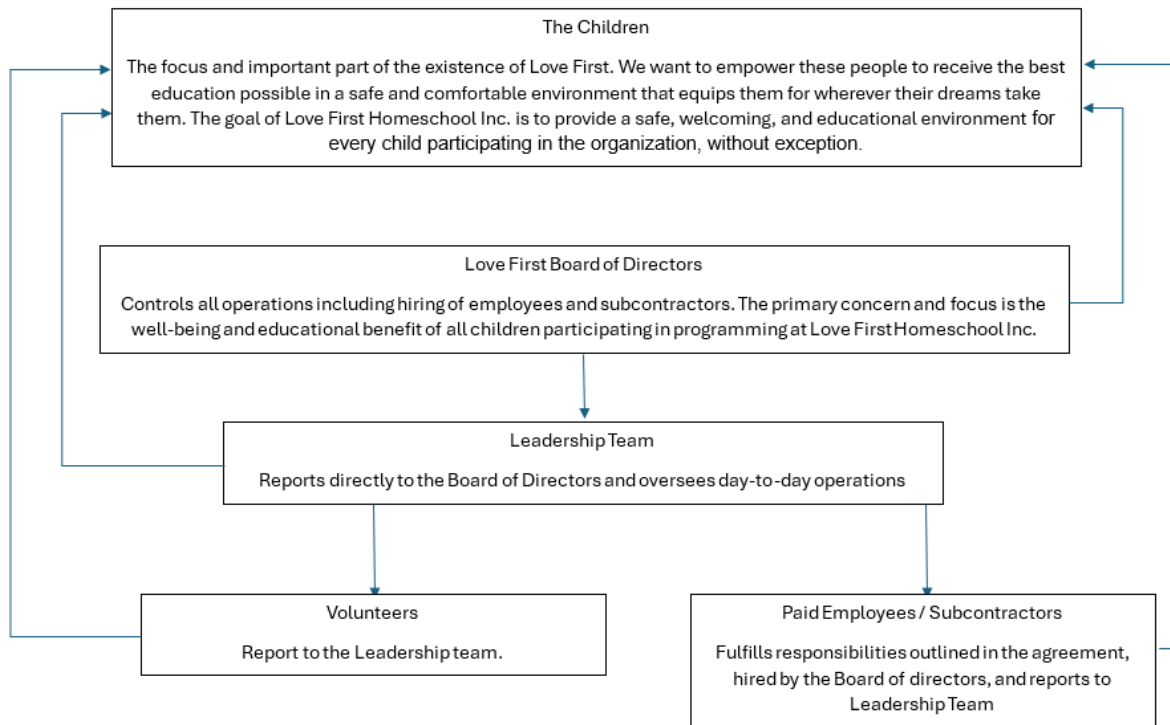
Purpose

Love First Homeschool Inc. is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Leadership Team

Melody Gowman, melody.lovefirst@gmail.com
Kara Strouth, kara.lovefirst@gmail.com
Brenda DiEugenio, brenda.lovefirst@gmail.com
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Shannon Chilcote, shannon.lovefirst@gmail.com

Organization Flowchart



Anti-Discrimination Policy

Love First Homeschool Inc. is committed to fulfilling its mission without discrimination, including discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability or handicap, veteran status, economic status, or religion.

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy

Love First Homeschool Inc. is committed to providing all members with a safe and supportive environment. Members are expected to treat each other with respect. Learning coaches and other attending adults are expected to teach and to demonstrate by example that all members of the community are entitled to respect. Harassment or bullying of any member, adult or child, is a violation of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment or bullying based on political preferences, political beliefs, socioeconomic status, race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability or handicap, veteran status, economic status, or religion.

Examples of harassment / bullying by any person, adult or child, may include, but are not limited to:

Verbal Bullying

- Direct Bullying: Taunting, teasing, name calling, put downs, racial remarks, threats
- Indirect Bullying: Spreading rumors, gossiping

Physical Bullying

- Direct Bullying: Hitting, kicking, tripping, punching, using any sort of violence and any unwanted physical contact, theft of property or taking anything that does not belong to you without permission
- Indirect Bullying: Enlisting a friend to assault someone

Nonverbal/Non-physical Bullying

- Direct Bullying: Threatening or obscene gestures
- Indirect Bullying: Being deliberately unkind, excluding others from a group, manipulation of friendships, threatening email, setting someone up to be humiliated

Cyberbullying

- Direct Bullying: Cyberbullying occurs through the use of technology. This can include the use of any electronic devices using social networks, text messaging, instant messaging, websites, e-mail or other electronic means. A person participates in direct cyberbullying if he or she directly carries out the behavior.
- Indirect Bullying: Indirect cyberbullying is carried out by those who assist, encourage, or fail to report the bullying behavior in any way. It is often the virtual bystanders who are responsible for the repeated humiliation felt by victims.

Any person who believes he or she has been subject to harassment, bullying (including verbal, physical, nonverbal/nonphysical, and cyber) or a hostile environment, or has observed this conduct based on one or more of the characteristics noted above— whether such harassment, bullying or hostile environment is created by a fellow student, learning coach, or parent/guardian—is encouraged to report the conduct to the leadership team. If a person is found to have engaged in acts of bullying, harassment or other acts that create a hostile environment, the person may be subject to discipline, including but not limited to removal from the organization without refund or, in extreme cases, legal action may be taken.

Membership Availability

Membership will be available to families who are current in the payment of all required fees and who have satisfied such other duties and responsibilities as have been set by the Participant Handbook. Membership is valid July 1 - June 30; grade advancements in the organization occur at this time.

Membership may be revoked at the discretion of the leadership team when the duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Participant Handbook are deemed not compliant.

When membership capacity has been reached, applicants will be placed on a waiting list for consideration by the leadership team.

Grades 9-12 Drop-Off Option

In an effort to meet the needs of homeschooling families, we will offer a limited number of students in grades 9-12 the option to be dropped off at co-op. With this option, these students will be under the supervision of and report to the leadership team. The cost for this drop-off option is a non-refundable \$200 per semester due before the first class of each semester. This fee is in addition to all other costs outlined in this handbook. Like all students and families, students dropping off should thoroughly read the participant handbook to be very familiar with all policies and procedures. This drop-off privilege is at the sole discretion of the leadership team and may be suspended at any time without refund as deemed necessary by the leadership team.

Attendance

No-Shows

A no-show is an absence without any communication. Except in an emergency situation, like a car accident, no-shows are unacceptable, as they create chaos and disruption to the children's activities, and may result in a loss of membership without refund.

Withdrawals

Please let the leadership team know if your plans change and you will no longer be attending. Because fees are paid in order to have a spot in the organization and pay for expenses, like class materials, all fees paid are nonrefundable. Withdrawals that result in failure to uphold commitments, like teaching a class, may prohibit future participation in the organization for the family.

Co-op Membership Attendance

Attendance is an important part of your commitment; the organization cannot function properly without all members present. The program is structured on the premise that everyone is present and working together; if a member/family is absent, it puts more work on the other members. This organization is for the whole family, therefore one adult is required to attend with their children and remain on the premises for the duration of the day.

Morning Arrival

We look forward to seeing each family as they arrive together in the morning. A parent or guardian must accompany your children into the building. Parents may not drop children off, even briefly, except those high schoolers who are preapproved for drop-off. The welcome desk is located inside the main entrance of the building where you will sign your family in. You can find name tags in family mailboxes to help us familiarize ourselves with some of the new families, which we will use for the first few sessions. Please arrive no later than 9:05 am. After checking in with your family, please remain and gather in the Sanctuary for the morning opening. Everyone will be dismissed in time for classes to begin promptly at 9:15. Keep your children with you until the learning coach or helper of your children's first classes is present. Children should not be left in classrooms unattended.

Leaving the Premises During Class Hours

The program is designed with the understanding that parents stay on the premises with their children at all times. If you must step out briefly with one of your own children, you need to sign yourself and your child out and designate another parent to be responsible for any of your children who remain. This cannot be a regular, ongoing occurrence. Please communicate with the leadership team if there is some special, extenuating circumstance that needs to be discussed.

Sibling Attendance

We realize that many of our families choose a variety of schooling options within their family and that not every family strictly homeschools. As such, occasions may arise when the sibling of a member is off from school, due to a school holiday for example, which may impact the ability of the member and his/her parent to attend. Therefore, the family may need to request for the sibling to attend. Please communicate this need in advance. Attendance of the sibling is at the

sole discretion of the leadership team and will be considered on a case-by-case basis and only with pre-approval.

Absences

The co-op program is structured to be a truly cooperative effort including the teaching of classes, cleaning and caring for our space, and planning special events and field trips. While the goal is to support families as best as possible, it is responsible to recognize that there are limits to the ways that we can support families with special circumstances. The established policies and procedures must be maintained to allow the group as a whole to function in a healthy manner.

In order to remain an active co-op member, families must consistently attend. If a student or family has accumulated more than two absences in the first semester, they will be notified and reminded of the attendance policies. Four or more absences through the school year may result in a loss of "member in good standing" status and will disqualify the family from registering for the following year. (This does not include extended illnesses, births, deaths, or other extenuating circumstances. In order to remain a member in good standing, please communicate with the leadership team if you have extenuating circumstances.)

We ask that every potential member seriously consider current schedules and commitments to assess if there is space in your family for the commitment that being a co-op member requires. Please consider that membership at Love First Homeschool Inc. Co-op is a year-long commitment.

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent:

1. Find a replacement for your classes. Contact the learning coach (if you are a helper) or helpers (if you are the learning coach) personally by phone or text, not social media.
2. Find a replacement for any other responsibilities you have that week. (i.e. cleaning, etc.)
3. Email attendance@lovefirsthomeschool.org with reason for absence and who will be covering your classes/responsibilities.

If you need to be absent due to a last minute emergency:

1. Text Kara Strouth, or email attendance@lovefirsthomeschool.org. Kara will take care of last minute replacements and scheduling.

Member Requirements and Expectations

Cleaning

- Every family is responsible to help clean and find someone to fill in for them if they will be absent.

- The cleaning schedule will be posted on the website and emailed in the weekly newsletter. The cleaning schedule will also include a reminder of cleaning requirements for each room.
- Cleaning is a great opportunity to encourage your child to help in the organization and teach them to be servant leaders. We want to respect our host location and leave it better than when we came. Children should not be unsupervised during this time.
- As a requirement and expectation for members, failure to complete cleaning responsibilities may result in loss of member in good standing status.
- Each family should have a plan in place for a fill-in in the event they are absent on their cleaning day. It is solely the responsibility of each family to ensure their responsibilities are completed even in the event of their absence.
- Wipe down all tables and chairs as needed.
- Bathroom toilets must be cleaned and flushed and counters wiped dry.
- Do not leave leftover food and drinks behind. Give away, take home, or throw away.
- Collect, bag all trash, and place it inside the dumpster.
- Any shortages or maintenance issues discovered while using the facility should be reported to a member of the leadership team promptly.

Adult Responsibilities

Teaching/Serving:

- A. We have an all-hands-on-deck approach, therefore, all adults should expect to serve by teaching, helping, or utilizing their skills to some capacity each class period.
- B. At all times, regardless of responsibilities, all parents/guardians must remain in the building and be available as the need arises.
- C. All adults should be actively involved in their classroom roles whether teaching or helping. Adults should engage with students and class content while limiting leisure talk with other adults to fellowship time during off-periods.
- D. Clearances
 - Child Abuse History Clearance, PA State Police Criminal History Clearance, and FBI Criminal History Clearance (if you have lived outside of PA in the last 10 years) are required for all adults participating in the organization.
 - There is no cost for volunteers to get these clearances.
 - Instructions on obtaining required clearances are on the website.
 - Submit required clearances to Kara Strouth, at kara.lovefirst@gmail.com, provide a hard copy in person, or place them in her mailbox.
- E. Attendance at Meetings:
 - There will be a minimum of one meeting per year. This will be in preparation for the school year and take place prior to the start of classes.
 - The parent/guardian who typically attends weekly classes is expected to be present at scheduled meeting(s).
 - Failure to attend this required meeting will count as an absence and be considered in determining member-in-good-standing-status.
- F. Involvement in Your Child's Classes
 - Be involved in your child's classes. Check in with your child to be sure they are completing required work, including high schoolers.
 - Check email at least weekly and read the weekly newsletter to ensure your child has all materials for class.

- Parents/guardians of children in nursery through grade 2 must pick up their child(ren) from class promptly at 12:50. Children in nursery through grade 2 will only be released to a parent/guardian, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Learning Coach.

Child Responsibilities

- A. High School Students (9-12): Secondary students are required to participate in every class period by attending class or being pre-approved by the leadership team to serve in some other way that utilizes their skills, talents, and abilities.
- B. Elementary and Middle School Students (Kindergarten - 8th): Elementary students are required to participate in every class period by attending class.
- C. Younger Siblings: A nursery is available for younger siblings. If separation is difficult during a time you have responsibilities, a quiet baby in a car seat or any child in a carrier such as a sling can join the parent in the classroom. If the child is disruptive or not in a carrier, the child will need to be in the nursery. If this is likely to be an issue, it might be best to sign up for nursery duty until your child is more comfortable.
- D. Any child who brings a phone or any other electronic device must keep it put away in such a manner that it cannot be a distraction to the class. Of course, if the device is required for a particular class, like computer class, it may be used within the parameters set up by the class learning coach.

Payments

Family Registration Fee

There is a \$250 non-refundable yearly registration fee, including those who join mid-year. Registration fees may be paid upfront in one payment or paid in three payments as listed below. For families who join mid-year or after payment due dates, registration fees are due at the time of registration or as outlined below. The registration fee must be paid in full before attendance in the organization is permitted. The registration fee helps cover the cost of renting the facility, liability insurance, website fees, professional fees, etc.

Registration fee schedules are as follows:

Option 1:

- Pay \$250 in full upon registration

Option 2:

- Payment 1: \$50 deposit due immediately upon registering to hold spot in organization
- Payment 2: \$100 due by July 1 prior to the start of the school year. For those who register after July 1, this payment is due immediately.
- Payment 3: \$100 due by August 1. For those who register after August 1, this payment is due immediately.

The Co-op registration fee also covers the Academy and Club/Event level registrations. For example, a Co-op member who wants to join Academy will only pay Academy class fees, not a separate registration fee. Additionally, Co-op members have access to everything within the

Club and Event level membership and do not pay the registration fee for Club/Event membership.

Fundraising

Our group is relying on fundraising participation from each family to help keep costs as low as possible. We will strive to provide a variety of fundraising opportunities so that each family can participate in the group fundraisers. Due to the nonprofit nature of our organization, all funds raised will go toward the benefit of the entire group. Funds raised will help reduce or potentially eliminate fees.

All fundraisers held or endorsed at Love First Homeschool Inc. must be Love First Homeschool Inc. sanctioned fundraisers. No other outside fundraisers, or other business transactions, are permitted unless explicit approval has been given by the leadership team.

Fundraising questions or suggestions can be sent to fundraising@lovefirsthomeschool.org.

Rebate Program

Love First Homeschool Inc. participates in the RaiseRight, formerly Scrip, rebate program. Using this rebate program, families can reduce their fees by purchasing gift cards for stores where they normally shop. Families receive the full amount of the gift card to use at the given store. The company gives a percentage of the purchase back to the purchaser in the form of a rebate which can be applied to the family's Love First account or "cashed out" in the form of a check from Love First. To learn more about RaiseRight, visit <https://www.shopwithscrip.com/how-to-earn>.

Financial Aid

When possible, financial aid is available on a limited basis and is needs-based. Financial aid is at the discretion of the leadership team. Please inquire with leadership if costs prohibit you from participating in the organization.

Co-op Membership Class Supply Fees

Each class has a minimum of a \$10 fee per class per semester. This fee allows the learning coach to purchase quality materials to use with instruction. This fee applies to preschool through twelfth grade. Refunds for class supply fees are at the discretion of the leadership team and will be considered only prior to classes starting and if the learning coach has not already purchased materials. Refunds to class supply fees will not be provided after the start of classes.

We fully recognize that classes may require more than \$10 dollars per student, especially at the secondary level. In order for the learning coach to receive reimbursement, pre-approval must be given by the leadership team for the expense in addition to providing receipts. When a class supply fee is approved for an amount higher than \$10, the fee amount will be changed on the website, adjusting family accounts accordingly. Learning coaches should give a best effort at determining the costs of implementing the materials/program in order to have the most accurate class supply fee possible. The full class supply fee for each class is due even when joining mid-semester; fees are not prorated.

Nursery is available during co-op classes to children who have siblings in kindergarten through grade 12. The nursery fee is a flat fee of \$10 each semester for nursery.

Class supply fees must be paid in full by the first week of classes for each semester in order to remain a member in good standing and continue participation in the organization.

Communication

Website

www.lovefirsthomeschool.org

Our website has a public side and private side that is accessible only through logging in. Information, forms, and schedules are available for you to access on the private side of the website. Sign-ups for events should be done through the website calendar.

Newsletter

A newsletter will be emailed weekly on Friday morning. Please send any information to be included to lovefirsthomeschoolinc@gmail.com by Thursday at noon. Please include “newsletter” in the subject line.

Facebook

There is a private Facebook group for current members only. This group is used to share information and build community, but please keep in mind that it is not the primary source of communication as some members are not a part of Facebook. Facebook should not be used as the only means to inform of absences or important events. Be sure to follow procedures outlined in this handbook.

In-House Mail System

Our mail system is located on or near the welcome table. Co-op members have a file folder labeled with their family name. Please check your mailbox weekly.

Remind App

Text @LFHinc to the number 81010 to be added to the group in Remind. This group will be used to send a text in case of last-minute cancellations or to alert members of an urgent message during a regular meeting day.

Co-op Classes

Class selection and enrollment

- Classes are planned with input from parents/guardians and final class decisions are made by the leadership team.
- Families must register on our website to have their own personal account where they can assign classes to each child.
- Students have until the second week of classes to change their class schedule, if needed.

- Children will be placed in the cohort that best matches their age and grade. However, when considering a child's academic and social abilities, exceptions to this policy can be made by the leadership team on a case by case basis.

Elementary Level (K-5)

- For each class period, students have course options from which they can choose.
- Children stay with the cohort they were assigned at the beginning of the year.
- Classes split into the following grade bands:
 - K - 2 (Kindergarten must be 5 by the start of fall semester)
 - 3 - 5

Secondary Level (Middle and High Schoolers-grades 6-12)

- For each class period, students have course options from which they can choose.
- Classes split into the following grade bands:
 - 6-8 (middle school)
 - 9-12 (high school)
- Classes for grades 6-12 are permitted when educationally appropriate.

Nursery and Young Preschool (ages newborn through 4)

- Children must have at least one older sibling in grades K-12 to attend
- The division of ages will be determined based on how many children under four are enrolled in a given year.

Learning Coach Requirements and Expectations

General Expectations

- Learning Coaches are entrusted with planning, teaching, and guiding students through a class period.
- Ideally, if enrollment permits, learning coaches will teach no more than 2 periods per semester.
- Be prepared for class. Advanced preparation will make all the difference in any class.
- Take attendance in each class or have a helper do this.
- Have an emergency substitute plan to share if needed. Please replace this plan as soon as it has been used.
- Be familiar with the *Gentle Discipline Policy* listed in this Participant Handbook.
- Support any child with special needs in the least restrictive manner so that every class period runs smoothly and provides the maximum learning opportunity possible for every child in the class. Any learning coach or helper needing support in managing an inclusive classroom should promptly communicate that need with the leadership team.
- Do not dismiss students from class early. This can be disruptive to other classes.
- Assign and give feedback to homework promptly.
- All communications to students and their parents should be done through your Classroom Dashboard on the website.

- All adults should be familiar with the fire evacuation route for each location where he/she has responsibilities and know the location of fire extinguishers. A fire drill may be practiced during the school year.

Teaching Elementary Level Classes at Co-op

- Elementary courses should have a general outline of topics covered weekly.
- This outline does not need to be extensive, rather, just a way to clearly communicate expectations.
- See homework policy.
- For pick-up, children in grades K-2 may only be released to their parent/guardian.

Teaching Secondary Level Classes at Co-op

- Provide a syllabus for 6-12 grade classes.
- Be aware of home education supervisor assigning credits and the needs of the families for the class. Ultimately, the determination of credit earned is at the discretion of the parent.

Teaching Nursery/Toddler Preschool

- An adult to child ratio 1:4 must be maintained at all times. Promptly notify the leadership team if the number of children exceeds this ratio.
- Diaper changing and assisting with potty training should be done with another adult present and the door propped open but out of view of other children.
- For pick up, children in the nursery may only be released to their parent/guardian.

Teaching Preschool

- An adult to child ratio 1:6 must be maintained at all times. Promptly notify the leadership team if the number of children exceeds this ratio.
- Diaper changing and assisting with potty training should be done with another adult present and the door propped open but out of view of other children.
- For pick up, children in the preschool may only be released to their parent/guardian.

Class Supply Reimbursement

This reimbursement policy enables best practices for sound bookkeeping, expedited reimbursement, and safeguards volunteers against unintentionally creating taxable income.

- All co-op class learning coaches (Preschool through 12th grade) are allowed to expense class materials up to \$10 per student per class per semester. Costs above this allowance require pre-approval to be reimbursed.
- Children in the co-op nursery have a class supply fee of \$10 per child per semester.
- Reimbursement requests for class supplies and materials must be used for and be relevant to the class. Extra materials become the property of the organization.
- All expenses require a receipt for reimbursement.
- All requests for reimbursement should be submitted through the parent account on the Expense Reimbursement Request tab of the website.
- An option for reimbursement for copies is provided in the online Expense Reimbursement Request at a price of \$.05 per page. Reimbursement for copies is part of the total allotted expense amount.
- Reimbursement requests should be submitted within two months of the purchase date.

- For questions or concerns, email treasurer@lovefirsthomeschool.org.

Helper Responsibilities

The role of the helper is to assist the learning coach however needed including but not limited to helping maintain order, handle disruptions, work with students individually, and check homework so that the learning coach may continue teaching.

Classroom helpers should communicate with the learning coach to find out how to best help the learning coach during the class period and be aware of and know how to access the emergency substitute plan.

The helper must be fully present and committed to the class when helping. Please have access to phones in the event of an emergency Remind App message being sent. Otherwise, adults should not be using their phones during classes.

Subcontractor Responsibilities

At times, the organization may choose to hire a subcontractor to provide a teaching service to students. The following guidelines will apply:

- In addition to the fee charged by the subcontractor, a class supply fee may still apply in order to cover the cost of using the room in our host location and will be determined by the leadership team.
- The subcontractor determines his/her fee for the course.
- The subcontractor may require each child to have/purchase materials/supplies in order to implement course objectives in addition to his/her course fee.
- A service agreement or contract will be set up and signed between the subcontractor and the organization.
- The subcontractor will provide proof of insurance and identification.
- The leadership team will determine:
 - if the fee is collected by the organization and then issued to the subcontractor with the requirement of a W9/1099
 - if each family pays the subcontractor directly, per child
- Subcontractors are required to provide appropriate clearances.
- Subcontractors are required to read Love First Homeschool Inc. Participant Handbook.

Homework Policy

Co-op classes are designed to be elective-type classes. Homework in all grade levels should be minimal to none. For any family using a co-op class for credit, specifically for a high school transcript, it is the responsibility of the homeschool supervisor to ensure his/her requirements for what he/she deems a credit are provided and to supplement the co-op class at home as he/she determines necessary.

Gentle Discipline Policy

Purpose

We believe the best way for all to enjoy their time at Love First Homeschool is for children to be engaged in inviting activities. So the best “discipline” is a well-run class. However, in the event that a child needs assistance with his or her behavior, we have set these guidelines.

Guidelines

Leaders have a menu of options to try. They may try other similar ideas, as well, as long as they are in the same spirit of treating children with respect and guiding them gently towards their best behavior.

1. Leaders are asked to plan their classes well so children are busy (even when self-directed).
2. Leaders are asked to have predictable expectations for behavior and recognizable routines so children know things like when it's time to listen to someone else talk or when it's time to clean up and how to help.
3. If after expectations are explained, a child needs help following them, the child may be:
 - a. First, redirected to the appropriate activity
 - b. Second, asked directly to stop the inappropriate behavior
 - c. Third, given a logical consequence

We believe that in most cases, this is all that will be necessary.

4. However, if a child escalates the behavior to highly disruptive misbehavior after repeated attempts by the leader or assistants to correct the behavior, the child's parent will be called to the room to address the behavior.
5. The purpose of the parent intervention is to obtain the parent's assistance in reinforcing that the leader is in charge and that the child must follow the rules. The goal is to convey to the child that the adults, including the parent, are working as a team in supporting the child's ability to use self-control. We ask that the parent convey this if/when they are called to address their child. The parent may need to consider the option of removing the child for a brief time until he or she is ready to participate in class appropriately.
6. Leaders are to seek restoration when an issue has been addressed. Lovingly welcome the child back into class for a second chance whenever possible.
7. If parental intervention is repeatedly necessary, the parent may be asked to attend the class with the child (and participate as an engaged assistant for all the children).
8. If the child is not able to bring the behavior under control with a parent regularly in the room, the child may be asked to no longer attend the class.
9. If the child is having severe trouble bringing his or her behavior under control in several classes, he or she may be asked not to attend.
10. If a child engages in bullying or any form of verbal abuse, physical fighting, brings a weapon, engages in theft, or willfully destroys property, the child will be subject to disciplinary action.

Unacceptable Corrective Methods

Yelling, humiliating, time out, and physical punishment by any adult are unacceptable at Love First Homeschool.

Conclusion

As children engage in activities that interest them, leaders set up well organized classes, and leaders and assistants use our gentle discipline guidelines if/when necessary, we believe that Love First Homeschool Inc. will continue to be a pleasant, safe place to learn, explore, and grow together.

Children with Special Needs

It is the parent's responsibility to make the learning coach and leadership team aware of any special needs their child may have that would affect their learning or participation in the class. If the student requires consistent individualized assistance, the parent will be assigned as a helper in the child's classes in order to support the child. The goal of Love First Homeschool Inc. is to provide a safe, welcoming, and educational environment for every child participating in the organization, without exception.

Conflict Resolution

We understand that conflict is natural; however, as people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a Christ-honoring way. We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and to grow to be more Christ-like.*

We strive always to maintain an atmosphere of grace and love. Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. (James 1) If possible, be willing to overlook an offense. (Proverbs 19)

We ask that if there is an issue that needs to be addressed that you follow these steps:

1. Go directly to the involved person and address the issue calmly.
2. If the problem is not resolved, seek counsel from the leadership team.

**adapted from Peacemaker® Ministries. <https://peacemakerministries.org>*

Safety and Security

Safety of everyone attending is always the first priority. As such, the following protocols are in place:

- We will enter and exit only through the main entrance.
- Doors will be locked by 9:30 am. Someone will have to let you in if you arrive after this time.
- If you are taking kids outside for any reason, let the leadership team know ahead of time.
- Children must be supervised at all times; no exceptions.

- All participating adults must have valid, required clearances.
- Adults should never be alone with a child who they are not the parent or guardian of.
- Keep classroom doors propped open.
- Adults should not make promises of confidentiality to any children.
- No weapons of any kind (knives, guns, swords, etc.) are permitted in student possession.

Emergency Procedures

We have procedures for two types of emergencies: those requiring students to remain in the classroom until further notice and those requiring the evacuation of the building.

Emergency Hold Plan – this plan will be used if a threatening intruder enters the building or if we need to take a complete head count of the student body, for example, if a student is missing.

1. The Emergency Hold Plan will be indicated by sending a text through the Remind app to alert all attending adults. When appropriate, members of the Leadership team or other appointed adults will also alert classes.
2. Upon receiving the “Emergency Hold” message, all students are to remain in their current classroom. The door should be shut and secured if possible, lights turned off, and students gathered into the safest area of the room.
3. Classrooms should remain secure until a member of the Leadership Team indicates it is safe to resume.

Emergency Evacuation Plan – this plan will be used when complete evacuation of the building is needed for the safety of everyone inside, as in the case of a fire.

Learning coaches/helpers will be expected to locate the rooms where your classes are held and review the quickest way to exit the building in the event of an emergency. An emergency evacuation drill may be held sometime during the year.

In the event that we would need to evacuate the building, the fire alarm will be sounded. In response to this warning, learning coaches/helpers should follow these steps:

1. Gather the children in your class into a line and take a headcount.
2. As you exit the room, turn off lights, and close the classroom door to verify that the room is vacated.
3. Lead the students single-file to the quickest exit available. There should be no talking to allow everyone to hear any instructions that may need to be given.
4. Proceed to the furthest area of the parking lot.
5. Have your class line up and take a count of your students to make sure you have everyone.
6. Keep the students with you until the Leadership Team ensures that all students are present and gives further instructions.

Guests and Visitors

- A. Guest speakers will need to be pre-approved by leadership.
- B. Visitors who are visiting to determine if our organization is a good fit for their family must include at least one parent/guardian with their children. Parents/guardians and students of the organization should welcome visitors. Visitors may attend one time with no charge. Should they choose to join the organization, they will need to pay the required fees, like all other participants, in order to participate.
- C. For safety and insurance purposes, guest students (friends of participants) are not permitted unless pre-approved by leadership.

Cancellations

Organization cancellations, for any reason, will be emailed, texted through the Remind App, and posted on Facebook.

Building

Host church

Our host church, Center Presbyterian Church, has graciously agreed to host our group. Love First Homeschool Inc. is an independently registered nonprofit organization. We exist as our own legal entity upholding and maintaining all requirements of the law.

Cleaning and Care

- Every family is responsible to help clean and respectfully care for the space during our time there. Our goal is to leave the church in better condition than when we got there. See “*Cleaning*” under *Member Expectations and Requirements*.
- Outdoor activities: please protect the landscaping by staying out of the mulch and plantings. Use the sidewalks and grass areas for outdoor activities. Be sure to stay only on church grounds and stay out of neighboring homes’ property.
- Pantry supplies and linens must be washed and returned by the next session.
- Nothing is to be taped, stapled, or tacked to the walls without permission from the leadership team.
- No church equipment can be removed from the church premises for any reason.
- No commercial activity shall be conducted on the premises.
- No alcoholic beverages may be served, consumed, or brought onto the church property.
- Love First Homeschool Inc. is a smoke-free and tobacco-free facility.

Health Policy

Guidelines for Staying Home

You or your child should stay home if exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

- fever of 100.4 or higher
- vomiting or diarrhea
- rash with fever
- other symptoms that would hinder participation:
 - tired, unable to focus
 - uncontrollable coughing or sneezing
 - bad sore throat
 - eye drainage

24 Hour Rule:

- You or your child should be fever free without medication, as well as no vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before attending.
- If you or your child was given an antibiotic, please stay home for at least 24 hours after the first dose.

Please use wisdom when deciding if you should keep your family at home for the day. While your attendance is important, your health and the health of others is the priority. If it is a situation where only one person is ill, please use caution in deciding if the rest of your family will attend.

If you or your child begins to feel unwell after you have arrived, please inform a member of the leadership team prior to leaving for the day.

Guidelines for Incidents and Injuries

1. Care for the injury with proper first aid care and necessary attention. A first aid kit is available at the welcome table.
2. Inform a member of the leadership team of the situation.
3. Fill out an Incident Report form located in the file folder at the welcome table. This completed form needs to be signed by the child's parent/guardian as well as a member of the leadership team.

 **Parent/Guardian Support**

At Love First Homeschool, we strive to support the whole family, including the parents/guardians, and desire to build a network of friends who can encourage and pray for one another. Our group consists of both new and seasoned homeschooling families which provides a great opportunity for growth and reflection. To foster this community building, we have a designated space available for parents/guardians to go during their “off” period.

This lounge area is for parents/guardians only. Please be respectful of this space; exceptions are made for small babies who stay with mom for the day.

A hospitality table will be available to the adults at co-op which consists of coffee and other light snacks. A sign-up sheet will be made available so that each family has the opportunity to contribute.

We encourage relationship building during this time and are hopeful to form lasting, Christ-honoring friendships.