



St. Michael the Archangel Homeschool Co-op Handbook 2024-2025

Updated 9-3-2024

Mission: St. Michael the Archangel Homeschool Co-op is dedicated to the principle of excellence in Catholic homeschool instruction through the utilization of a co-op approach. While open to all students regardless of creed, we operate under the guidance of and obedience to the traditions, doctrines, and authority of the Catholic Church.

History and Catholic Identity: Our Co-op began in the fall of 2011. We began as part of the St. Thomas Aquinas Co-op in Spokane. As the Spokane Co-op grew, we decided to start a Co-op in Idaho. After meeting in the hall of St. Stanislaus Parish in Rathdrum for seven years, we moved and began meeting in the halls of both the St. Pius and St. Thomas parishes for three years. Currently, we gather at St. Pius Parish hall in Coeur d'Alene.

While most of our members are Catholics, we welcome all homeschool families who are respectful of Catholic teachings and who are not opposed to them. Within the curriculum of our classes, we solely present ideas that are consistent with and not contrary to the teachings of the Church in regard to faith and morality. We often pray together in community, and we learn facts and discuss matters related to the Catholic faith in culture and history.

Co-op Board of Directors: Leadership for the SMAC Co-Op consists of a Board made up of unpaid volunteers who meet and consult on a regular basis. The Board members have volunteered to make decisions for the Co-op and to organize the classes, activities, and communication. Decisions are reached by a consensus of the Board. If you direct any questions or requests to the Board, **please allow at least one week for a response so that the Board will have an opportunity to discuss the matter.** Questions that require an individual response should be directed to the board email board@stmichaelcoop.org. This allows for any board member to respond; also, please give 48-72 hours for a response from the board email to matters that do not require a board consensus.

The following is a list of our current Board Members and their contact information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the appropriate Board Member according to the primary areas of responsibility listed below. Please note, however, that Board Members do not have authority to act unilaterally to address any concern you may have, unless it requires immediate action. In all other matters, as mentioned above, issues will be brought to the Board by the corresponding Board Member for full deliberation by the Board as a whole:

Board Members:

Amanda Gette 860-514-5060 amgette@gmail.com (Chair) (Student discipline, student or parent absences or tardiness, guardian designation, email, schedule issues).

Keely Lowman 509-869-5506 keymama@gmail.com (Vice Chair)

Sevrina Ryan 509-993-1398 Sevrina.Ryan@gmail.com (Secretary)

Ariana Lederhos 208-946-0321 ariana.lederhos@gmail.com (Committee director)

AnneMarie Gilmor, annemariegilmor@gmail.com 208-704-3207 (Inquiries contact, Fund Raising, Read2Ride)

IT Consultant:

Andrew Adams, andyadamscp@gmail.com

Kale Lowman, kale@anchor49.com

Thomas Gette, tgette@gmail.com

Barbara Grinstead, biggemama@gmail.com 509- 991-8747 (Treasurer)

Safe Environment Trainer:

Amy Perry, vaperry@frontier.com 714-305-9140(Safe Environment questions).

Responsibilities and Requirements

Parental Obligations and Responsibility: The Co-op is not a school, but a cooperative of parents. Accordingly, while all instructors and classroom parent-teachers are expected to assist in the effective operation of the classes that are offered, each parent retains primary and full responsibility for the attendance, performance, and comportment of their own child or children. Consistent with this principle, aside from direct classroom instruction, classroom discipline, and general supervision, parents and teachers should respectfully accord to the parents of any child the right to deal directly with matters related to their own children. The parent members of the Co-op do not assume authority or responsibility for any child other than their own or those for whom they have agreed to act as a temporary guardian.

For high school classes that meet more than once a week, it is understandable that some of the students may be driving themselves. However, in keeping with the co-op model, it is still the parent's responsibility to designate and authorize an adult guardian in their absence. Therefore, a rotating schedule for parental supervision will be drawn up.

Attendance Policy: At least one parent (or guardian) is expected to attend with their children, regardless of age. If a parent cannot attend or is not present during the school day while their children are present, it is the parent's responsibility to designate and authorize an adult guardian in attendance for the period of absence, and to inform the appropriate Board Member of who will act in that capacity. However, ***we respectfully request that students at the Beginner, Explorer, or Nursery level are kept home if the parent will be absent.***

The high school courses require more time to complete; for students to receive credit so as to include it on their transcripts a certain number of hours must be attained. In keeping with the co-op model, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure that their child is attending class regularly. It will be left up to the discretion of the teacher as to how absences will affect each student's grade.

Safe Environment: Since we meet in the St Pius Parish classrooms, we as members of the co-op, are required to follow the Safe Environment Recommendations of the Diocese of Boise. This means each parent who is around any child(ren) needs to take a face-to-face safe environment class, go through a background check, and keep their account up to date yearly. If you have done all this in another state, there is no reciprocity for the Diocese, we apologize for any inconvenience.

Absenteeism: The success of our Co-op relies heavily on regular parent and student participation on each day that we meet. Please let the appropriate Board Member know if you cannot attend the Co-op for any reason and work to secure substitutes for your responsibilities. ***It is the responsibility of the high school students to approach their teachers to receive any make-up work that may be missed in the case of an absence.***

Dropping Classes: If a class needs to be dropped during the semester, it is the parents' responsibility to communicate directly with the teacher(s) as to why. Our teachers willingly choose to help educate your children; consequently, if you need to pull your child out of a class it would be in the norms of Christian charity to provide the teacher with an explanation of why and/or give feedback if needed.

Class Pricing: If a class is canceled or the teacher is not able to attend and the expectation of fees is based on a per class fee, it is between the parent(s) and instructor(s) to decide on a pricing adjustment. Teachers and instructors set their own pricing therefore the co-op does not request pricing changes if one or more classes are canceled on a co-op day.

Service Commitment: Because we are a co-op, every parent is expected to contribute. During the school year and the school day, jobs of various natures will be assigned to the parent, these may include: teaching and assisting, nursery supervision, end-of-day clean-up, yard supervision, record-keeping, etc. We will consider personal preferences if they are submitted before assignments are given and will make special allowances for mothers with infants. ***We welcome new ideas and time contributions from the parents.***

High school students will also be expected to assist their parent(s) with after lunch and end-of-day clean-up. High school students will be expected to help with keeping the facility we use for the extended high school schedule ***clean and better than we found it.*** There will be a designated rotating chore list.

Housekeeping: It is essential that ***every*** family participate in required set up and clean up duties. Schedules of housekeeping duties are sent out to each family. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding a substitute for your duties.

Pets: Family pets are NOT ALLOWED at the co-op. If wishing to bring an animal for class purposes, please contact a **Board Member** for permission prior today of arrival for class.

Communication: Co-op participants must have a valid email address and access to a computer and printer to receive all important Co-op related communication. Periodic updates, schedules, class information, and homework are generally sent out via email. Families are expected to check their communications regularly. As well the Co-op has a Signal Group set up based on active families per semester. This is used for closure information as well as chat related to Co-op only.

Sick Policy

The Co-op sick policy is based on common sense understanding and charity that no student comes to co-op with fever, throwing up, diarrhea or any other known contagious condition of cold, flu, rash or virus. The final decision is left to the family. Should a student, parent or nursery attendee be sick with any of the above mentioned, please keep the child home so as not to spread to other families. Thank you.

Payment Policy

Building Use Fees/Insurance: Each family is asked to pay a minimum of \$110 per semester. This covers a non-refundable donation fee to help with the costs of our use of the facilities prior to enrolling in Co-op classes, website, supplies, and insurance premiums.

Class Fees: Class fees are set by the teachers and paid *directly* to the teachers. It is the responsibility of each family to pay the teachers. *There is a no refund policy for fees after the first day of classes; however, individual teachers may exercise discretion in this regard, particularly in cases of hardship.*

Student Conduct

Dress Code: While we do not have an official dress code, **we do expect dress to be modest, tasteful, clean, and non-disruptive.** Concerns regarding inappropriate dress should be addressed directly to the parent of the child in question or to a Board member. We encourage parents to be receptive and to accept responsibility for enforcing the appropriate dress for their children out of consideration for others.

Cell Phones: We are a screen free co-op. Students are only allowed to use their cell phones with permission from an adult. This is only to call a parent or for other emergencies. Otherwise, **phones are to remain "off" and in their backpacks while they are at co-op.**

Behavior Expectations: Parents are responsible for enforcing their children's good behavior. Additionally, teachers have authority for enforcing good behavior for any child under their supervision. If disruptive classroom behavior persists, parents may be asked to attend classes with their child. Concerns regarding inappropriate behavior can be verbally addressed directly to the child by any adult witnessing the behavior, but any other discipline should be referred to the child's parent. We encourage parents to be receptive to and accept responsibility for enforcing the appropriate behavior of their children.

Off-Campus Policy: The Co-op Board is not responsible for monitoring the whereabouts of any Co-op students. ***Any student who leaves the premises is expected to obtain the permission of his or her parent or guardian directly,*** and it is that parent or guardian's responsibility to safeguard the safety of his or her child or children whether on or off campus. **Only the parent or authorized guardian may allow any student to leave the premises.**

Injuries: Anyone injured on the premises, whether adult or student, during Co-op hours, must report the incident as soon as possible to the Board, and include a list of all those witnessing the incident. The Board may require all those involved to submit a report for insurance purposes.

Use of St. Pius Hall

St. Pius Parish has graciously permitted our Co-op to use their space. Our continued use of the buildings, therefore, depends upon how well we respect the facilities and others who use the facilities for other purposes.

Pope St. Pius X Parish is a parish of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Boise. The parish is in line with the authority and apostolicity of the Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis, and his successors and the local Ordinary, Bishop Peter Christensen, and his successors. The parish ministers to its members following the long-standing Tradition of the Catholic Church expressed in its celebration of the Sacraments, its dogmatic heritage and in the Church's work of justice. Cognizant that not all members of the St. Michael the Archangel Co-op share our faith, the parish, nevertheless, asks respect and appreciation for who She is and that this respect and appreciation be manifested in the treatment of parish property, in particular the sacred space. Furthermore, the parish asks that this respect and appreciation be expressed in the language used about the Catholic Church while members are present for homeschooling activities. While co-op members are on parish property for co-op activities the parish will not allow protests of the Catholic Church, complaints or criticisms

of the Catholic Church, proselytizing of other religions or any immoral or unlawful activities.

The following rules apply to all parents and children who attend the Co-op:

- Do not disturb the parish offices.
- Children are not allowed to partake of any of the food supplied for parishioners, unless specifically offered to them by parish members.
- Children should avoid tracking in mud, dirt, or snow from outside into the hall, to the extent practicable.
- Parents, teachers, and students may not use church supplies or other materials kept in the classrooms for the use of the church and its members; Co-op teachers, parents, and students must bring their own supplies and make their own copies.
- No food is allowed in the classroom areas.
- No nails, tacks, or tape may be used on the walls.
- Co-op members, both parents and students, are responsible for cleaning up the facility after each day of use.
- Students are required to be in a classroom with an adult supervisor at all times; no student shall wander in or around the facility during class time;
- Students must be supervised by an adult, whether inside or outside the facility.
- Children are required to always obey and respect adult supervisors.
- All families are required to participate in a service project for the parish, as a thank-you for the use of the facility;
- Two parents should be outside as supervisors when children are outside.
- At St. Pius children are permitted to play in the grass area on the side of the hall; however, they are not to play behind the buildings, by the columbarium, in the parking lot, or on the street.
- Children must not disrupt or disturb the neighbors, or trespass onto their property or play on their property or fences.
- Children are not allowed in the kitchen unless supervised by an adult.

Co-op members must also agree and understand that, in the event of any occurrence which may result in injury, damage, harm, or death while participating in any Co-op activity during the use of the St. Pius X facility, fixture, or appliance, neither the Church, nor its trustees, representatives, employees, and agents may be held liable in any way, and they must further agree to save and hold harmless the Church, its trustees, employees, agents, or representatives from any claim arising out of participation in any form or fashion in any Co-op activity. **Co-op members must hereby agree to authorize the members of the Co-op board to sign on their behalf a contractual arrangement with each church stating the above.**

Academics

Homework Expectations: Homework requirements are usually stated clearly in class descriptions. Please take into consideration these requirements when placing your children in classes at the appropriate levels so that they can perform the required work.

Study Hall: A formal Study Hall is offered for all students who have a free period. Students at the facility who have a free period are required to spend their free time doing class work, either for Co-op classes or home-based classes in Study Hall. **Students may not use their free time simply to socialize and will come prepared with course work**, or they will be assigned an essay.

Enrollment Options: We offer full or partial day enrollment options to minimize the necessity of study hall and to meet each family's academic and scheduling needs.

Classroom Placement: Generally, students are placed in levels based roughly on grade level. The following are the basic guidelines for academic levels/age group:

- High school – 9th grade and higher
- Advanced – 6th through 8th grade
- Intermediate – 4th to 5th grade
- Beginner – 3rd – 4th grade
- Explorer – Kindergarten to 2nd grade
- Preschooler - 3-4 years
- Nursery – 2 years and younger (non-academic)

Together with the parents, the Co-op Board and class teachers will collaborate to ensure proper placement of students, taking into consideration both academic and social skills. Our Co-op offers several classes which require a substantial amount of homework; therefore, please consider this carefully when choosing the number of classes and the class level when enrolling your children.

Grades/Evaluations: Refer to class descriptions for whether grading and evaluation is provided by the teacher. Generally, grades or evaluations have greater emphasis in higher level classes. Ultimately, parents are responsible for providing a final grade and for ensuring state academic requirements are met, if desired.

Showcase: Our Semester Showcase is a great opportunity for students to participate at the end of the semester/year. The Showcase allows students to display their academic work, to perform, and otherwise to show what they have accomplished over the semester. **Friends and family are always invited.**

Community Building

Along with offering academic and enrichment classes, we strive to build a community of faith and fellowship by providing various opportunities to come together which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Field trips.
- Parties and potlucks.
- Community Service and Service Projects.
- Network of Prayer Support.

Handbook Acknowledgment and Receipt Form

(Please remove this form from the back of the handbook, sign it, and submit it to a Board Member)

I acknowledge that I have received the 2024-2025 St. Michael the Archangel Homeschool Co-op Handbook. I agree on behalf of myself and my children, to abide by the terms set out in the handbook, and understand that failure to comply with the terms set out in the handbook may result in removal from the Co-op.

I further acknowledge that I understand that the SMAC is a co-operative arrangement among all the Co-op member families, and that:

- I retain primary responsibility for the safety and welfare of myself and my children while they are attending the Co-op and Co-op sponsored activities.
- Board members are appointed solely for the purpose of making decisions regarding the operation of the Co-op, and do not assume responsibility for the safety or welfare of myself or my children.
- I authorize the members of the Co-op board to sign on my behalf a Church Facility Usage and Hold Harmless Agreement.
- Teachers are not employees of the Board but are hired individually by each parent to instruct their child(ren).

Accordingly, to the extent permitted by law, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless Board members, other Co-op member families, or Co-op teachers, and/or the Church, its trustees, representatives, employees, and agents should injury, death, or illness occur, through negligence or otherwise, resulting from participation in this Co-op.

Signed _____

Print Name _____

Date _____