

Parental Guidelines

2020-21

Eugene Peterson (author of *The Message*) said that "discipleship" is a long obedience in the same direction. We think that raising our children and educating them could be described in the same way, "a long obedience in the same direction." The longer we homeschool, the more we believe that to be obedient, to stay on the "narrow *pathway*" that Jesus described, we need the Lord desperately, and we also need each other. In addition to receiving community support, we can also love each other's children towards the *pathway* that the Lord has for them.

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Statement of Purpose

Our group is a cooperative of Christian families. It is our goal to enhance our children's educational and social experience by providing cooperative learning opportunities while helping our children to adopt a biblical worldview. We will accomplish our goal with weekly co-op meetings, possible field trips, and social activities. It is also our goal to aid parents in their homeschooling by providing support, accountability, fellowship, and encouragement.

Pathway Christian Cooperative is a non-profit organization. Any donations made to the co-op (not supply or operating expense fees) are tax-deductible.

Statement of Faith

It is our intent to provide our children with a distinctly Christian worldview. While we may hold to denominational differences, we agree on a common statement of faith.

1. We believe the Bible, as originally divinely inspired, is the infallible, inerrant Word of God, and it is the supreme and final authority for all matters of faith and life.
2. We believe that there is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This ONE God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. This God is also holy, righteous, good, loving and full of mercy, by character. He is the Creator of all things. He sustains all things.
3. We believe in the perfect deity and perfect humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His sacrificial death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, and His bodily return in power and glory.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but chose to sin and is therefore lost and only those who put their faith in Jesus Christ are saved.
5. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and is received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary death on the cross paid the penalty for man's sin through His shed blood.



6. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of their sin, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for Godly living and service.

7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers through our common faith in Jesus Christ.

8. We believe the Bible defines marriage as the covenantal, exclusive union of one man and one woman intrinsically ordered for procreation and a biological family. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God and has its proper place only within the context of marriage. Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:18-24, Ephesians 5:31-33 We believe that God created mankind in His image: male (man) and female (woman), sexually different but with equal personal dignity. Genesis 1:27

Membership Requirements

Families interested in joining the cooperative should contact the Leadership Team to apply for membership. The basic requirements and expectations of cooperative participants are:

1. Parents and students must agree with our Statement of Faith.
2. Parents and students must agree to our policies and procedures.
3. Parents and students must abide by our standards of behavior.
4. For the protection and safety of our children, a background check is required for all adults working with children at PCC, including teachers, assistants, and leaders.
5. All registering families must have at least one child entering the co-op that is 1st grade level or above.
6. Class placement for nursery & PreK/K will be determined by the child's age as of the 1st day of co-op.
7. All families must use the designated curriculum and must agree to study the curriculum on the same schedule as the rest of the cooperative.



8. Parents will be scheduled to teach and assist for each gathering and are expected to share in the responsibilities to ensure the successful operation of all classes and events.
9. While the depth of study for each particular week is up to the parent, students must be prepared for each co-op class as outlined by the teacher.
10. Our host church is overwhelmingly generous in providing their facility free of charge. This means they incur electricity, water, and gas bills for keeping their building at a comfortable temperature for us, along with wear and tear on their furniture and grounds. Every family will be asked to give a yearly tax-deductible gift of \$100 to the church. Feel free to prayerfully consider this and give more than the required amount.
11. All members will be mindful that we are sharing our space with church employees and staff and make every effort to consider them as we conduct our weekly meeting.
12. Prospective new families are required to visit the co-op with their children before joining the co-op.
13. Time Commitments:

A. **Mandatory Summer Meeting** - In an effort to help our members connect with one another, answer any questions, and provide the basic workings of the co-op to ensure a smooth start in August, we have scheduled a mandatory meeting in May. It would be helpful if each teacher would look over their teaching materials before the meeting as this would be a great time to ask questions and address issues. The Leadership Team may want to meet with you at a later date to discuss additional information about your particular class.

B. **The co-op is not a drop-off.** At least one parent agrees to remain at co-op throughout the co-op day. If a parent would like to leave the premise during their "off" hour, they will be sure to sign the check-out sheet detailing their cell phone number, what mom is aware of their departure, and the location of that mom. This is to help in the case of an emergency with your child. It is important to be back on campus with enough time to perform your teaching or assisting jobs.

C. **Start time**— The core day for the co-op begins at 8:45 a.m. Classes begin promptly at 9:00. There will be a lunch from 12:00 to 1:00 for the elementary and middle school students, and then classes will resume until 2:00 p.m. An optional Elective class for middle school and for elementary will end at 3:00.

D. **Promptness** – Devotions allow us to begin our day with prayer, focus on the things that matter most, and seek God’s guidance and blessing throughout the day. “On time” means arriving 10 minutes earlier than the 8:45 a.m. start time so we can begin our day together with prayer and devotion to the Lord. Thus, an arrival after 8:35 is a late arrival. All members are expected to arrive on time. The devotional time will always begin at the designated time. Repeated late arrivals reflect disrespect for other co-op members and are even more pronounced when they disrupt this group devotional time.

Late arrivals truly put a student at a disadvantage and cause disruption to the class. A later arrival means missing the beginning of a classroom discussion and affects a student’s ability to participate and benefit fully from the group discussion. Additionally, late parents are not able to provide their service to the group causing others to have to fill in. Because our group is small by design, each member’s contribution is vital.

E. **10-week commitment** – Families commit to the co-op for a minimum of one 10-week period. For the 2020-2021 school year, the 10-week mark is October 30th.

F. **2-week notice** – If after the 10-week commitment period a family decides that this co-op is not a good fit for them a two-week notice must be given. This notice is important so that classes may continue uninterrupted for the rest of the group. If you choose to leave, unfortunately, your **supply fee is non-refundable**. At that point, a budget will have already been created and many supplies purchased.

G. **Commitment for the remainder of the year** – Families who continue past the first 10 weeks commit to the co-op for the rest of the year.

14. Members will pay supply fees for each child.

Supply Fees & Class Costs

We have an online registration system. We will receive payments via Paypal. Within five days of submitting your online registration, you will receive an email invoice with directions on how to pay. Your registration will be considered complete once we have received payment.



Elementary & Middle School Supply Fees

These fees cover teachers' copy and supply costs, paper towels, soap, cleaning supplies, dry erase markers, craft supplies, and science experiment costs. Teachers will save their receipts and seek reimbursement from the co-op treasurer. These supply fees are non-refundable. There may be additional fees for elective classes.

Operating Expense Fee - In addition to the student supply fees, there is a non-refundable operating expense fee charge of \$50 *per family*. Our co-op is a non-profit organization for tax and legal purposes. This fee covers the costs associated with maintaining our non-profit status, accounting, and insurance.

Leadership Team

It is the Leadership Team's desire to hear the needs of the families in our group and respond with solutions that best serve the group as a whole. The Leadership Team is approachable. Please do not hesitate to directly contact us via email or phone call. We covet your prayers.

Co-op Teaching & Assisting Logistics

"Many hands make light work!"

In our co-op, each mom is asked to **teach** in ONE class and **assist** in TWO. This ensures that the students have a wonderful variety in their teachers, the labor is distributed nicely, and the load is not too big of a burden for any mom. If you are new to homeschooling or don't feel comfortable teaching, please don't be overwhelmed by this requirement. We will be happy to help in any way we can. Assistants serve as built-in substitute teachers when the teacher has to be absent.

Parental Responsibilities (in addition to teaching)

Additional Tasks



Each member will possibly share in other tasks necessary to ensure the successful operation of all classes including serving as lunchtime supervisors on a rotating basis as needed, afternoon clean-up, or morning set-up.

Academics

This co-op is an academically rigorous co-op. Any hands-on or interactive activities will be designed to reinforce the academic material students are studying.

This co-op is an **adjunct** to the family homeschool, with a focus on providing those interactions and activities for which a group is necessary. **Parents must NOT depend on the co-op to be the instructor of any core subject. That is not the intent of the co-op, and *our co-op goals/vision cannot be fulfilled unless parents at home act as the teacher of every subject.***

Older students, of course, are often learning many subjects independently and are their own primary teacher, but it is assumed that the parent is providing enough supervision to know whether or not their student is generally keeping up with the material.

It is not the **goal of the co-op class** to teach the material, but to enhance the material, inspire critical thinking about that material, and to help students make connections in the material through discussion and other group activities. These activities cannot take place unless they've done their work at home. Students must come to co-op class with knowledge already acquired in order to be able to use it and apply it in class.

Writing is an exception to the above. While writing lessons will be taught by co-op teachers, parents will need to interact with and support their students in these lessons at home, especially at the younger ages.

Dress Code

Leigh Bortins (founder of Classical Conversations) says, "There will always be a dress code in any situation; it will either be established by the children and the culture or by mature adults, but it will be there. So let's set one in a way that honors our Father in Heaven. That means dressing to please Him and to make others comfortable around us. We are to honor the body of Christ and not our personal desires. A good way to be sure we do this is for daughters to ask their earthly father if they are dressed modestly and not provocatively and for sons to ask their mothers if they are dressed neatly and honorably." Good advice. Of course, we recognize that many, perhaps all, of our young men and women will already have reached a level of maturity that makes this reminder unnecessary.

Ladies/girls will not wear shirts that show off their bellies (sometimes those shirts can be tricky when the arms are raised!). Also, please no short shorts/skirts or spaghetti-strapped shirts, and please no cleavage. For boys, pants should fit properly or be secured at the waist.

Sick Children

Sometimes it can be a tough call to decide whether to bring a child that is not feeling well to group on any given morning. Let's try to err on the side of not spreading the germs to other families. Of course in a large group like this, there could be germs and sicknesses spread that may be out of anyone's control. But, for the times when something can be done, let's do the most courteous thing and stay home with the sick child. We can use the "24 hour rule." If within 24 hours, your child has had a fever, vomited, or started antibiotics, it is best that they stay home. Many of us have multiple children, and when a bug travels through a family it can take weeks for it to make the rounds.

These classes are not a drop-off program. However, if you don't want your other children to miss out on class when you have a sick one, it would be fine to work with another mom to bring your well child/ren while you stay home with the sick one. Please follow the **Absence Protocol** listed below. Thank you for being sensitive to this issue!

Absences

The co-op is designed to function with all members in attendance, it is understood that life happens and unexpected circumstances arise. We ask that to the best of your ability you will make it a priority to fulfill your weekly commitment. Missing co-op day should be the exception not the rule. This allows consistency to the program.

Absence Protocol

If it is a **planned absence** (you know ahead of time), please have your assistant fill your main teaching job. Also, please find replacements for your assistant jobs.

If it is an **unplanned absence** (you or one of your children are sick the night before or morning of), don't worry about filling your assisting jobs. Please just communicate with your assistant to fill your main teaching job.

As an assistant, if you are called upon to teach a class at the last minute, and you feel your class needs an extra set of hands, feel free to call upon someone that has a free hour to help you.

Email Procedures

As a co-op, we send out a weekly newsletter with important announcements and rotation reminders. We also send additional important or time sensitive emails relating to the co-op as the need arises. Our goal is to limit the amount of emails coming through the PCC group email, so that the ones we do send are read and viewed as important. On occasion, co-op members will REPLY ALL to a group email with an important family prayer request, and we are happy to share in those types of situations. However, because our co-op's niche is to support families in their academic endeavors by providing basic core classes we ask that members not send out general information emails, etc. For social events, including fieldtrips and get-togethers, and for the sharing of information please use the Pathway Christian Cooperative Facebook page. This is a closed group for Pathway Cooperative members only.

Technology Policy

We ask that students turn off their cell phones or any other electronic device/s while they are in class. We ask that they tuck them away in their backpack/bag etc. Use of tech policy: If what your child is playing or viewing can't be seen by everyone then it should not be seen at co-op.

Classroom Management and Interpersonal Relationships

It is our desire that all of us

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

~Romans 12:10-12.

The standard for behavior in classes and on the grounds will be that each of us, whether teacher, parent, helper, or student, honor one another and treat each other with respect and love. Honoring one another means among many other things that one refrains from speaking while s/he is speaking, that one looks directly at the speaker or what s/he is presenting unless taking notes, and in general that one pays attention while another is talking. Each person should strive to treat others as they would like to be



treated. If an offense occurs in class, immediately take the opportunity to encourage the offender to sincerely repent and apologize, as well as the offended to be forgiving.

Let's deal privately (if possible) with the offense and move on. If a student refuses to repent or change their conduct in the class session, the parent will be made aware of the situation.

We are all striving to raise up students who are kind, sensitive to one another's needs, inclusive and encouraging to one another in all their interactions. **Teasing, "put-downs," and picking on or not including others have no place in the body of Christ.** We will not conform to the pattern of this world, but will be transformed by the renewing of our minds in Christ Jesus. One of our co-op goals is to provide a safe place where every participant feels valued and respected as a unique and special creation of our Father in Heaven and as a member of the group, as well as to provide an environment in which our children learn how to love one another in action and word.

If a co-op member is unhappy with something— how a class or situation is being conducted or how another has behaved for example— he or she (teacher, parent, or student) will **not** voice their complaint to others, but, in love and prayer, will go directly to the person involved in order to seek unity. He or she will use the procedure laid out for us in Matthew 18:15-17 as a guide to work through these types of situations. If we are approached with such a concern, we will listen in humility and love and without defensiveness as we join with the initiator to seek unity. If unable to resolve their concerns/differences, the initiator and other party will seek the input of their group representative and/or co-op coordinator. **There is no place for gossip, dissension, or unresolved feelings among followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

The Leadership Team's desire is to allow every member time to transition and to lead with a spirit of grace. In the event that a member has not met the guidelines and expectations of the PCC Co-op after a reasonable amount of time has been afforded, the Leadership Team will meet with the individual. The intention of this meeting is to open the lines of communicate in hopes of rectifying the situation. This meeting will be followed up with an email detailing the discussion. Should the situation not improve after a discussion or two has taken place and guidelines have been outlined, the Leadership Team will prayerful consider how to move forward with the benefit of the whole group in mind. In extremely rare cases, a member may be asked to leave the co-op.

Adjustment Period

Every family should be aware that many experience an adjustment period during the first month or two of co-op, particularly if this is the first co-op you have participated in. This can be characterized by feeling somewhat overwhelmed, by not being quite sure



what one is doing, and by struggling to figure out how to make it all work in one's own homeschool. If you are among the majority who experience this at first, knowing that there have been many before you who have experienced the same things can be comforting. Just relax and know that you **will** get a handle on it. Also please let others know how it is going for you....this is definitely an area others can help you in. You will have much support.