

Southern Chester County Homeschoolers Connections Co-op Policies

CONNECTIONS is an enrichment co-op focusing on arts and sciences, emphasizing community and working together to foster meaningful relationships in a family-friendly environment.

Membership

CONNECTIONS co-op is based on biblical principles and educational topics may be taught from a Christian worldview while welcoming respectful discussion of other worldviews. Members are not required to be Christian or sign a statement of faith. See the beliefs section for more information. We do not discriminate on race, ethnicity, or religion.

Families must officially homeschool at least one student (5 years old as of Sept 1st) in Kindergarten or older following their state's Home Education Law. We do not currently accept students who attend public online charter schools for the co-op.

Communication

All members must join BAND, a free group communication app. The app is accessible on a phone or desktop computer. We use BAND for posts, the event calendar for activities, and chat rooms for smaller groups and individuals. It is the parent's responsibility to check BAND regularly.

Occasionally, we may send important communication or weekly updates to the group via email.

Attendance

The main purpose of the Southern Chester County Homeschoolers - Connections Co-op is to build friendships and community for our families, which are created through shared experiences.

- **Unplanned Absences:** We understand families have times of illness or unforeseen circumstances that prevent them from attending. If you are unable to attend a co-op day, please contact the co-op director through BAND or email before the co-op day you will miss.
- **Planned Absences:** If your family will not be able to attend co-op due to a conflicting commitment (ex. vacations and appointments), please contact the co-op director through BAND or email before the co-op day you will miss.
- **No Show:** An absence without communication to the co-op director informing them of your absence before the start of the co-op day.
- **Excessive Absences:** Regular attendance is vital to our mission to create a community. A family with excessive absences (3 or more per semester) may be withdrawn from activities or the group at the discretion of the SCCH Leadership Team.

Parent Expectations

- We do not require parents to teach to participate in the co-op. However, we need parents willing to teach and lead activities to offer classes each semester. We want parents who feel led to teach to do so and choose a subject that interests them or their children, a talent they have, or a passion of theirs.
- Parents are expected to check BAND and email regularly.
- Parents are expected to collaborate with other parent volunteers. Duties may include setting up before class time, cleaning and resetting the rooms at the end of the day, supervising students, planning, and leading activities. We work together to make the load light!

- Parents are responsible for their children's safety and behavior.
- CONNECTIONS co-op is not a drop-off program. We require a parent or guardian to remain on campus at all times. If a parent can not attend for a day, you may designate another co-op parent to take responsibility for your child(ren) and inform the co-op director.
- If your child has special needs requiring accommodation, please see below.
- Please do not discuss divisive topics, such as politics during co-op time.

Student Expectations

- Be respectful of all adults.
- Be respectful of fellow students. No name-calling, vulgar language, teasing, or rough physical behavior. Respect others' personal space.
- Be aware that we have students of all ages and abilities present & be kind to others.
- Bullying will not be tolerated and is grounds for dismissal.
- Students must remain in an area that is appropriately monitored and may not wander through the church building unsupervised.

We hope that these guidelines will assist parents in helping their children learn to work positively in a group setting, while ensuring the emotional and physical safety of everyone.

Behavior

1. If a student acts in a manner that does not fit within the student expectations, the parent or responsible adult will be asked to remove the child from the situation until they are ready to return.
2. If the parent is not aware of their child's behavior, it is expected that the class leader will notify the parent.
3. If the behavior persists over several instances, a parent conference will be scheduled.
4. If the behavior persists after the parent conference, the student will be dismissed from the co-op.

Character, Conduct, and Conflict

Families are to promote unity within the group through words and conduct. If it is deemed by the Connections Co-op leadership team that a parent's behavior is detrimental to the co-op, the parent will be given a verbal, and then written warning. If the detrimental behavior continues, the family may be dismissed from the co-op at the leadership team's discretion. The leadership team reserves the right to dismiss a family immediately if deemed necessary.

Our families come from different backgrounds and ways of thinking. We need to be respectful of each other. If a conflict arises between members, first discuss the issue privately. If a resolution can not be reached, please ask the leadership team for assistance in mediating.

Special Needs

CONNECTIONS co-op strives to create a welcoming community for families with special needs (and without) so parents can feel supported and kids can create relationships with others. Our classes are taught by parent volunteers who are not trained as special education teachers but we welcome your child with these accommodations:

- If you need to be your child's one-on-one aide due to their disability, you are welcome to do so and are not expected to volunteer in other areas. You may find being a class helper in your child's group a satisfying way to contribute.

- Students with special needs may use the designated special needs room with a parent to take a break when needed.

Health & Sickness

Please do not bring your child to co-op if he or she has experienced any of the following within the past 24 hours:

- Fever (Temperature of 100.4 or over without the use of fever-reducing medication)
- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Rashes that may be infectious or contagious
- Drainage from the eyes or ears
- If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease (strep throat, conjunctivitis/pink eye, or the flu), it is required that you keep him/her home until he/she is no longer contagious. For strep throat, this means 24 hours after the medication has been started.

Food

- **Restrictions:** No peanut products are allowed at co-op.
- **Snacks:** Children may eat snacks when they're hungry. Please have them eat snacks away from the class work area.
- **Classes:** Food is allowed for instructional purposes only if all of the children in the class can consume it or the student's parent can bring an alternative. All team leaders will have a list of food allergies/intolerances for the students in their classes.
- **Parties:** Families are encouraged to bring food in for planned potluck-style parties. SCCH may provide treats for special occasions, making sure there are options for all children.
- **Birthdays:** Please do not bring in a shared treat for all the children in the co-op due to a wide variety of food restrictions. We will sing Happy Birthday at the beginning of each month to all of the children with birthdays that month and then at the end of breaks for birthdays that occurred while we were off.

Building

Our hosts have generously allowed us to use their space and we must treat it with respect. Please remember that church staff members are working while we are there. At the end of the day, leave the rooms as we found them when we arrived.

Inclement Weather

We will follow the local school districts for closing due to inclement weather. Any closure will be announced by 10:00 am on BAND and email.

Fees

Family Registration fees are non-refundable. Student fees are non-refundable as of the first day of each semester, minus any processing charges.

Liability

SCCH carries insurance coverage for co-op activities only. Each family must have a signed Family Release of Liability on file.

Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearances

All parents, grandparents, or guardians who regularly attend co-op more than twice a semester must submit up-to-date clearances. Members who live in MD or DE may submit clearances from their home state.

Beliefs

CONNECTIONS co-op is based on Christian biblical principles.

We believe the Bible is God's inspired Word, through which he exercises his authority in our lives. We believe God is One, revealed to us in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe Jesus Christ is the perfect Son of God in human flesh, who lived, died, and rose again for us, absorbing the just penalty for our sins and opening the way to eternal life for all who trust in him. We believe that we are created in the image and likeness of God, but through our fallible nature, we all sin and fall short of the glory of God. We believe in the future kingdom, when God will remake all of heaven and earth, including our physical bodies, to fully reflect his perfection and glory.

These statements are not inclusive of our beliefs. Members are not required to believe all of our principles or sign a statement of faith to participate in co-op, however should be comfortable with everyday conversations including God, Jesus, and prayer. Likewise, members should be comfortable engaging in respectful discussions of different worldviews. The majority of our co-op classes are not meant to teach theology as our families are from various denominations with diverse doctrinal beliefs. Any classes teaching theology will state it in the description. You are welcome to contact the director for further clarification on this topic.

Participant Groups

We do not group students by homeschool grade level. Instead, since we are enrichment-based and seek to foster relationships, participants will be grouped according to their birthdates to promote social and developmental cohesion. Groups are determined by each participant's age as of September 1st of the given school year. Students may be placed in a group that differs from their age if an agreed-upon decision is made between leadership and parents.

Pre-K: 2-4 years

Group 1: 5-7 years

Group 2: 8-10 years

Group 3: 11-13 years

Group 4: 14+ years

Enrollment: 10-12 students per group.

Groups may be combined depending on enrollment.

Pre-K is only available for younger siblings of participating students.

Children under 2 years old should stay with their parents.

Schedule

Whole Group:

Students will meet together in one place for weekly announcements and celebrations, followed by a short team-building activity.

Small Group Classes:

Students will break into groups for classes.

Whole Group:

Students will meet back together at the end of small group class time for a short presentation of what they did that day.

Free Play:

The first choice is to go outside to the playground, play basketball, gaga ball, or group games on the field. In the case of inclement weather, children play indoors, play board/card games, or socialize quietly.

Teams

Parents will be placed on a team of at least 3-4 adults for each student group based on their preferences on their co-op application. Duties may include setting up before class time, cleaning and resetting the rooms at the end of the day, supervising students, planning, leading, or helping with activities.

There must be 2 non-related adults present with children at all times.

Team Leader

Each group will have a team leader. The team leader's responsibility is to coordinate the parents on their team to make sure there's a plan for each week, that everyone is contributing, and submit the supply order to the director. The job is NOT to lead/teach all the activities or create the whole class plan by themselves.

Nature Program

Our Nature Program is taught by environmental educators. This is not a drop-off program. Parents will help facilitate the program acting as chaperones.
