



DOUGLAS COUNTY  
**CATHOLIC**  
HOME EDUCATORS

**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

# CHARTER

## Who We Are

We are a group of Catholic families in Douglas County educating our children at home. We represent a variety of homeschooling styles and philosophies but are united in a desire to cultivate a love of learning. We lead a weekly co-op for Pre-K through 2nd Grade at St. Francis of Assisi in Castle Rock, as well as ongoing activities and occasional field trips. *N.B. are not an independent school or umbrella program.*

## Purpose & Structure

This co-op exists to enrich its students academically and socially through instruction and play. We seek to build community by sharing in the common work of educating our children, rather than by simple fellowship for adults. We are a parent-run enrichment program, not a drop-off program. All families are required to volunteer in some capacity and commit to fully participating each week for the academic year.

We meet Thursday mornings, 9:15 AM-12:00 PM.

### Curriculum:

- Pre-K (ages 3-4) class: Children aged **3 years or older by October 1st** are eligible to join our Pre-K class. This class focuses on Letter of the Week, songs, and stories. In addition, students will spend about half of the morning exploring in Learning Centers and getting outside.
- The Kindergarten & Elementary. Students who are **5 years old by October 1st** are eligible to join the Kindergarten class. Children who will be five but whose birthdays fall between June 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> have the option of remaining in the Pre-K class. Our academic year is divided into four quarters. Each quarter, we will offer two different electives to the elementary students - both an arts/humanities and science-focused elective.
- The group will take field trips and hold two liturgical parties. Attendance is not mandatory; RSVP is required if you intend to participate.

## Age Requirements

We understand that every family will introduce subjects at their own pace, and that many students of similar ages may be at different academic levels. However, we will define "grade" according to Colorado State guidelines: students age 3 or 4 as of October 1 will be considered Pre-K, and those 5 and up as of October 1 will be placed in the elementary group.

## Commitment

Participating in this co-op means that each family commits to

- regular class attendance for children
- fulfilling volunteer roles in the weekly functioning of the co-op: each family/parent must take on a share of **classroom** responsibility as well as a role in **activity planning**
- periodically assisting with set-up and clean-up
- attending a Safe Environment Training (for parent volunteers)
- completing a volunteer application for St. Francis of Assisi Parish
- substituting for others according to availability & need

- respecting St. Francis campus and remaining in approved areas of the church
- attending occasional planning meetings throughout the year

We consider enrollment to be a year long commitment (Sept 5 - April 30). We do understand that unforeseen events may arise and your family may need to withdraw before the year is up, but we ask that you not begin the year with us if you do not anticipate being able to complete it. We will ask you to report your "no serve" dates at the beginning of each semester, which we will take into account when drawing up our teaching schedule; however, we ask that your family not have more than 3 *planned* absences.

We take our children's safety seriously. In compliance with diocesan policy we require that all volunteers participate in a Safe Environment Training prior to teaching. This training must be conducted in the diocese of Colorado Springs and completed before the first day of teaching. Any full-time volunteers who fail to complete this training by the first day of class will be removed immediately from the full-time volunteer list.

### **Financial Responsibility**

Supply fee is \$50 per family per year. In addition, each family/parent must take on a share of classroom, childcare, or floater responsibilities. Part-time volunteers (helping with 2 quarters) will pay an additional fee of \$175. While we cannot guarantee you work in the area you choose, we will try to be as accommodating as possible. Preschool Supplies will be purchased in advance, and elective teachers will have a small budget to supply their class. Consumables will be replenished, but any additional supplies needed for any particular lesson will be purchased by the teacher.

Refunds:

The \$50 supply fee is non-refundable after the first day of class (September 12). The tuition fee of \$175 paid by part time volunteers is refundable until October 1. After October 1, \$88 will be refunded (half of tuition payment.)

In the event of a family withdrawing from the co-op, refunds will not be issued after October 1.

### **Code of Conduct**

We are teaching the children good behavior and want them to understand that actions have consequences. We hope to teach them to:

- participate in each activity to the extent they are able
- share and take turns
- be respectful of others' bodies and feelings
- apologize when they hurt others
- tell the truth
- be a good steward by respecting the host's belongings and helping with clean-up
- Say "please" and "thank-you"
- raise their hands when they wish to speak
- respect the teacher in charge that day and address her as Mrs\_\_\_\_\_
- respect areas of worship and work around the St Francis campus

### *Bathroom and Diaper Changing Policy*

All students needing to use the restroom will be escorted by an adult to the restrooms as according to Safe Environment Training, but that adult will not enter the stall with the child. If a child in the childcare room needs a diaper change, the childcare volunteers will find and inform his/her mother to change the diaper. Pre-K students must be fully potty trained. If your child is prone to occasional accidents, please have them in a pull-up.

### **Discipline**

When necessary, we will implement consistent discipline. This means:

- We will practice positive discipline when possible, making our expectations clear and praising the children for a job well done
- We will strive to enforcing the code of conduct fairly
- Children should always be encouraged to make amends by apologizing, helping clean up, etc
- Time outs are acceptable when necessary

### **Conflict Management**

If conflicts should arise between members, we will strive to respond in the spirit of Matthew 18:15.

### **Sick Policy**

**FEVER:** Children should remain home if their temperature is 100.0 or higher. Children must be free of fever (any temperature above 99 degrees) for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

**RASH:** Children should remain home if they develop any rash other than a common diaper rash or skin irritation. Children may return to co-op once they are rash-free, or with a clearance from a doctor that it is not contagious.

**Conjunctivitis (PINK EYE):** Children should remain home if there appears to be an unusual amount of discharge from or irritation to their eye(s).

If the diagnosis is BACTERIAL CONJUNCTIVITIS children must have received at least 24 hours of treatment before coming to co-op.

If the diagnosis is VIRAL CONJUNCTIVITIS your child may return AS LONG AS THERE IS NO DISCHARGE.

**Thick White, Green or Yellow NASAL DISCHARGE:** Children should remain home if they appear to have any thick white, green or yellow discharge, since this is often indicative of an infection. If in fact they do not have an infection, but the discharge remains, we request a doctor's clearance that it is nothing contagious. The Department of Health and most doctors are of the opinion that once on antibiotics for 24 hours, the discharge is no longer contagious even though it may persist for weeks.

**DIARRHEA:** Children should remain home if they have three or more loose bowel movements in one day. Before returning to co-op children must be free from diarrhea for 24 hours with at least 1 regular bowel movement.

**VOMITING:** If a child vomits while at co-op (even if it appears to be from excitement rather than illness), we will call the mother in question to request that he/she be picked up early.

Children must symptom free with no vomiting for at least 24 hours before coming to co-op.

**Persistent HACKING COUGH:** Children should remain home if they have a persistent hacking cough, unless they have had an evaluation and diagnosis from their doctor and at

least 24 hours of treatment. If in fact they do not require any treatment we request a clearance from a doctor that it is not contagious.

LICE: Children should remain home until 24 hours after treatment and must be nit free to come to co-op.

COMMON COLD: Children suffering from a common cold can be assessed on an individual basis.

If your child has a mild runny nose (clear discharge) but is displaying their normal energy level and is not coughing/sneezing, they may likely come to co-op. If your child can generally keep his/her hands and mouth to himself, then the spread of germs may be kept down. An exception to this rule may be made by the host, however, if she feels for any reason that she would prefer not to risk infection to those in her house (there may be a newborn, etc).

MEDICATIONS: We will not administer medications at co-op. We ask that parents of children requiring regular medications remain on site for the duration of class day. Children with severe allergies should bring an epi-pen.

### **Teacher/Class Leader Cancellation policy**

If the designated teacher in any section displays any of the above symptoms, the same rules apply and a designated substitute will fill in. Family emergencies may also arise that require a cancellation. Please give as much notice as possible of a cancellation via EMAIL prior to Thursday/class day or TEXT MESSAGE on the morning of. We will confirm via the same medium that we know about the cancellation. Children/Siblings not displaying symptoms may still attend class.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of inclement weather, the co-op will cancel if Douglas County High School (Castle Rock) has a snow day. If DCHS is in session but the weather is significantly worse at your home (such that you would be snowed in or facing an unsafe drive), please contact us; if you have teaching responsibilities that day, normal substitute procedures will apply.

### **New Members**

New members must meet with admins before their application will be accepted. New families will not be added once the school year has begun, unless co-op members are in agreement with adding a new family mid-year.

### **Community Support & Fellowship**

#### *Non-solicitation*

This group exists as an opportunity for enrichment and fellowship for our children. It is also a valuable resource for us mothers to gain and share wisdom and support each other on our homeschool journey. We do not allow regular advertising of personal businesses to the members of this group. This group is not an opportunity to grow personal businesses.

#### *County of Residence*

Families who live outside of Douglas County are welcome to join the co-op. However, the organizers will give Douglas County residents preference. Logistically, it can be harder for "long-distance" families to meet their volunteer commitment. In addition, the co-op can be a springboard for additional fellowship in our homes. It is harder to have a community when members are geographically dispersed.

## Pre-K

Our pre-K classes will work on building virtue and learning readiness in our children through play-based instruction, using a provided script based on *Catholic ABC's*.

### Goals

Our aim is to prepare our children for kindergarten. This co-op, however, is meant to enrich the work we do at home with our children, not replace it. Bearing that in mind, we will plan activities in particular to promote our children's abilities in the following areas:

- know their own name, their parents phone number, and address
- follow a routine
- socialize with peers by playing cooperatively, taking turns, and standing up for themselves
- take care of personal needs such as hand washing & toilet use
- basic safety: crossing the street, etc
- be able to focus on a single activity for ten minutes or more
- Know some letters & make letter-sound matches
- understand that writing carries a message
- enjoy listening to storybooks; be able to ask and answer questions related to a story
- Understand that we read English from left to right, top to bottom
- speak clearly and understandably
- label and express feelings and emotions
- identify basic body parts
- draw a vertical & horizontal line
- use scissors safely
- hold a pencil correctly
- understand the idea of numbers; count to twenty
- understand the days of the week
- identify basic colors
- be able to group items according to form, color, and use

As a faith-based group, we also hope to teach the children to:

- know that God is a person who loves them
- have some understanding of the saints and liturgical seasons
- practice the Golden Rule

We hope to see our pre-schoolers observe the same code of conduct as their older siblings, but we will also not try to rush the children into displaying maturity beyond their years. We will accept that the children are still learning the above skills, and we won't sweat 'normal' pre-schooler behaviors such as:

- fidgeting
- messes/getting dirty (within limits)
- showing independence
- asking awkward questions

## **Elementary**

### **Activities**

Early elementary students will participate in a program designed for academic enrichment and social development, with rotating electives in Science & Exploration and the Arts. Their day will also incorporate basic ecclesiastical Latin, prayers, and virtue-based character education.

Cost of supplies will be covered by tuition. Each student will need an apron or smock (old, oversized t-shirt works great) and will occasionally be asked to bring household items for certain projects (e.g. newspapers, rolling pin, cotton balls, floss, etc.) At least two weeks notice will be given when special supplies are required.

### **Goals & Expectations**

Through instruction and play we intend to:

- foster warm friendships and community
- promote each child's personal well-being and their unique developing personality
- teach our children to be considerate and cooperative with both peers and teachers
- build age-appropriate autonomy

# 2019-2020 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

*All the days listed are Thursdays, except where noted. Field trips, parties and 3rd Quarter activities are open to all families, not just members. RSVP is required.*

## **1st Quarter**

September 5 - Park Day Kick Off  
September 12 - Class Day 1  
September 19 - Class Day 2  
September 26 - Class Day 3  
October 3 - Class Day 4  
October 10 - Class Day 5  
October 17 - Class Day 6  
October 24 - Field Trip/Fall Break

## **2nd Quarter**

October 31 - Class Day 1  
**(Friday)** November 1 - All Saints Party  
November 7 - Class Day 2  
November 14 - Class Day 3  
November 21 - Class Day 4  
November 28 - BREAK - Thanksgiving  
December 5 - Class Day 5  
December 12 - Class Day 6  
December 19 - BREAK  
December 26 - BREAK

January 2 - BREAK  
January 9 - BREAK  
January 16 - BREAK

## **3rd Quarter\*\***

January 23 - *Learning Lunch*  
January 30 - *Learning Lunch*  
February 6 - *Learning Lunch*  
February 13 - Valentine's Making & Lunch  
February 20 - Mardi Gras Party  
February 27 - *Learning Lunch*  
March 5 - SPRING BREAK

## **4th Quarter**

March 12 - Class Day 1  
March 19 - Class Day 2  
March 26 - Class Day 3  
April 2 - Class Day 4  
April 9 - HOLY WEEK BREAK  
April 16 - EASTER BREAK  
April 23 - Class 5  
April 30 - Class 6

~Start field trips and park days~

## **\*\*3rd Quarter: Learning Lunches**

We will have a "lite" quarter with educational presentations or activities led by community organizations followed by lunch together. We are likely to schedule the following:

- Fire engine and/or police officer visit
- Priest/Deacon led tour of sacristy, vestments, etc.
- Nature's Educators or similar organization
- Castle Rock Museum