

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 8th Grade at St. Francis of Assisi in Castle Rock, as well as ongoing activities and occasional field trips. *N.B. We 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 not a drop-off program: all families are required to volunteer in some capacity. Volunteer requirements will be determined by total enrollment and your child's placement.

We meet Thursday mornings, 9:30 AM-1:00 PM. Pre-K parents will rotate assistant teaching duties. K-8th grade parents will rotate in assisting the lead teachers in Art, Bible Study, Kindergarten, and PE.

Curriculum:

- Pre-K (ages 3-4) class will participate in storytime & activities supervised by parents.
- The K-8th (ages 5+) classes will study Art, Science, Bible Study, and PE taught by paid instructors.

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 may be placed in the elementary group. Parents of students who turn 5 between August 1 and October 1 may opt to keep their child in the Preschool group.

Elementary classes will be mixed-grade: Kindergarten, 1-2 grade, 3-5, 6-8. However, cut-offs for these groups will be made by age rather than academic grade:

- Students age 5 as of October 1 will be placed in the Kindergarten class
- Students age 6 or 7 as of October 1 will be placed in the 1-2nd grade class
- Students age 8, 9, or 10 as of October 1 will be placed in the 3-5th grade class
- Students age 11 and up as of October 1 will be placed in the 6-8 class

Students with birthdates between August 1 and October 1 may opt to remain in a lower class group where applicable.

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 **set-up/clean-up**

- attending a safe environment training (for parent volunteers)
- passing a background check
- 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 semester long commitment (see Academic Calendar). 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 semester with us if you do not anticipate being able to complete it. Volunteer sign-ups will be made available at least one week before classes begin; slots are first-come, first-serve. Please be courteous to other parents and be flexible to accommodate the needs of other parents when you are able.

Financial Responsibility

Tuition is \$40 per student per class for each semester. Pre-K program is free for families with students enrolled in at least one elementary class. For the Pre-K - only program it is a \$20 charge. There is also a \$10 fee per family per year. We cannot provide a refund for missed classes. However, if more than 3 classes are missed due to illness we will provide a **partial refund credit** for the next semester.

In the event of a family withdrawing completely from the co-op, refunds will not be issued after the first day of classes.

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 preschool room needs a diaper change, volunteers will find and inform his/her mother to change the diaper.

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 may be acceptable if a student's behavior is detracting from the learning environment for others

Conflict Management

If conflicts should arise between members, we will strive to respond in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-16: "If your brother sins [against you], go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won over your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that 'every fact may be established on the testimony of two or three witnesses'."

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 be 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.

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.

Covid Safety

We will abide by all state, local, and parish restrictions regarding masking, distancing, and indoor gathering sizes. As of 8/1/22, masks are not required for students or adult volunteers but this is of course subject to change. We encourage all our members to take appropriate precautions against the spread of disease.

If any member displays COVID-19 SYMPTOMS (loss of taste/smell, fever, dry cough) they shall remain home. If any household member displays COVID-19 SYMPTOMS (loss of taste/smell, fever, dry cough) the *entire family* shall remain home. Asymptomatic family members may return if the sick member receives a *negative* Covid test or has recovered.

If any member TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19:

If asymptomatic: Isolate for 10 days after the first positive test, and may return to co-op if they have shown no symptoms in those 10 days.

If symptomatic: Isolate for at least 10 days after symptom onset AND until you have been fever free without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours (whichever is longer).

If any household member TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19, the entire family should remain home. Other family members may return to co-op 10 days after exposure if they have shown no symptoms during those ten days. Other family members may return to co-op 7 days after exposure if they have displayed no symptoms and also tested negative for Covid.

Per Tri-County regulations masks are RECOMMENDED but NOT REQUIRED indoors for the unvaccinated at this time; this rule is subject to change.

Please remember: We cannot provide a refund for missed classes. However, if more than 3 classes are missed due to illness we will provide a **partial refund credit** for the next semester.

Volunteer Cancellation policy

If you, the parent volunteer, displays any of the above symptoms, the same rules apply.

Please reach out to the group so we can arrange a substitute. Family emergencies may also arise that require a cancellation. Please give as much notice as is possible of a cancellation via TEXT MESSAGE to both Sara (719-238-2134) and Laura (719-429-1142). We will confirm via the same medium that we know about the cancellation.

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 assistant responsibilities that day, normal substitute procedures will apply.

New Members

The decision whether new families can be added after the semester begins will be made on a case-by-case decision in consultation with the teachers and based on class sizes. If we have to limit membership size, Douglas County residents will receive preference over residents of other counties to help foster local community.