

## Chapel Hill Homeschoolers Code of Common Courtesy

In order for our CHH community to thrive and for everyone to have a good experience, we ask that our members follow the simple rules of common courtesy outlined in this Code of Common Courtesy.

- Remember we all are volunteers. All of us are volunteers, including the CHH Advisory Board Members, the CHH Enrichment Coordinator, the CHH Activities Coordinator, the Support Group Coordinator, and all the parents who step forward to lead activities, field trips, etc. These volunteers are juggling their coordination responsibilities along with their own workload of homeschooling their children.
- Remember we are all different in one way or another. CHH is a supportive – yet diverse -- community. We expect every member to model tolerance, demonstrate respect to each other, and focus energy on supporting each other in our homeschooling efforts.
- Help us keep our programs going by complying with the rules set by any of the facilities we rent or use for CHH activities.
- Parents are responsible for their own children at all CHH events (including, but not limited to Friday Enrichment, field trips, social events, etc.), unless prearranged with other adult(s). (The term “parents” refers to the child’s primary caregiver or primary homeschool instructor.)
- The CHH e-mail loop is meant to be a homeschooling resource. The e-mail loop is essential for getting word out to our members about all the terrific opportunities, resources, and ideas that will make our homeschooling experiences solid, rewarding, and fun. The loop is there for all of us to use, but please post only those items that are relevant to homeschooling. In general, e-mails of a political nature or regarding commercial activities unrelated to learning should not be posted on the loop. Also, we should remember that we have chosen to be a community together and that to be a healthy, sustainable community we must be circumspect in how we word e-mails expressing our dissatisfaction with CHH, a CHH activity or event, or another CHH member or group of members. (Please see below under “Working our way through frustrating issues and conflicts” to find out what to do if you are upset about a CHH issue. Posting an e-mail to vent about a frustration is not the most productive manner in resolving it.) If a CHH e-mail user’s posts are upsetting to other users, the CHH Advisory Board has a procedure for addressing this issue.
- CHH activities should be a positive experience for all. CHH Coordinators (Enrichment, Social, Conversations) work hard to provide great opportunities for our members. To ensure that these opportunities are positive experiences for all involved (including the Coordinators), we ask that our members remember to

follow directions related to the activity, including student age range limits, the start time for the activity, etc. Also we ask that members use common courtesy when participating in these events, including: giving the Coordinator advance notice if you cannot attend an event for which you signed up; making sure your student knows to be quiet in presentations/classes when the presenter/tour guide/etc. is talking; being polite to the presenter/tour guide/etc.; and making sure that most of the questions asked during the presentations are asked by the students, not the parent teachers. Coordinators have the responsibility to let members know if their actions are disruptive and impairing the ability of others to get the most out of the event.

- Working our way through frustrating issues and conflicts. CHH is a large, diverse community full of busy, hardworking teacher parents and energetic, wonderful students. But with a group this large there are bound to be misunderstandings, frustrations, and concerns. If you are upset about a CHH issue, please contact the appropriate CHH Coordinator or Advisory Board member directly. If you feel that is not an option, please contact any CHH Advisory Board member and ask that the issue be brought before the Advisory Board. Talking with a Board member might be enough to help resolve the issue. But if not, the Board does have a Conflict Resolution procedure that it can activate.

**Chapel Hill Homeschoolers**  
**Operations Policy Manual (OPM)**  
**Conflict Resolution**  
**Approved, Nov. 5, 2008**

- I. Personal responsibility
  - A. Every effort should be made for individual members to resolve any disagreements they might have in a timely manner.
  
  - B. It is highly recommended that this process take place in person, or at least by phone; e-mail is not recommended as the primary source of communication, due to the possibility of misunderstandings that could make the situation worse.
  
- II. Conflict Resolution Committee (CRC)
  - A. If members are unable to resolve a particular problem they may ask the Co-leaders or another member of the Board of Directors to get them assistance from the Conflict Resolution Committee.
  
  - B. The Conflict Resolution Committee will be composed of three members who are not members of the Board of Directors plus one alternate. The members of the committee will be randomly selected from a list of volunteers and approved by the Board. They shall serve on an as-needed, case-by-case basis. The CRC will operate under a set of written Guidelines established by the Board of Directors.
  
  - C. The parties in disagreement agree to abide by the decision of the CRC.
  
- III. Board of Directors
  - A. If the Conflict Resolution Committee is unable to resolve the issue they may send it to the Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The CRC may also send to the Board any matter that it thinks extends beyond the parties involved and applies to all members.
  
  - B. The Board may choose to:
    - a. take no action on the matter
    - b. issue a warning for violation(s) of the Operations Policy Manual
    - c. revoke membership for severe or repeated abuses of the Operations Policy Manual.
    - d. If the Board of Directors decides that either a change in policy or the by-laws is required to resolve a matter or that additional membership input is necessary it may:
      - i. set up an online forum so members can discuss the matter
      - ii. set up a committee to address the matter, or
      - iii. bring the matter before either the next regularly scheduled Annual Membership meeting or a special meeting called for just that purpose.

**Chapel Hill Homeschoolers  
Operations Policy Manual (OPM)  
General Policies  
Approved Nov. 5, 2008**

I. General

- A. Chapel Hill Homeschoolers is an inclusive and diverse group of families, brought together by the common pursuit of homeschooling. This Operations Policy Manual is intended to support and encourage that diversity while reducing conflicts within the group resulting from misunderstandings. To do this, we expect every member to model tolerance, demonstrate respect to each other, and focus energy on supporting each other in our homeschooling efforts.
- B. The Operations Policy Manual is written in accordance with our current By-laws and may be subject to change by either the Board of Directors or at an annual or special membership meeting by the membership.
- C. All potential new members will be provided with access to a current electronic copy of the OPM prior to joining the organization. Current members will be able to access the OPM electronically on the Yahoo group and/or CHH websites. Notice of changes to the OPM will be announced on the general interest e-mail loop.
- D. The activities and announcements of CHH reflect the diversity of our membership but do not reflect an official position of CHH as a corporation, unless specifically indicated as such, and they almost certainly do not reflect the opinions of all members. Individual members are not expected to respond to or attend all such events.
- E. All members must comply with the rules set by any of the facilities we rent or use for CHH activities.
- F. Parents are responsible for their own children at all CHH events (including, but not limited to, Friday Enrichment, field trips, and social events), unless prearranged with other adult(s). (The term “parents” in this document refers to the child’s primary caregiver or primary homeschool instructor.)
- G. To ensure that CHH events and activities provide a safe and supportive environments for families, we will not allow abusive, obscene, threatening or illegal behavior or language at any CHH activity.
- H. The CHH directory is for CHH members’ personal use only and is not to be copied or forwarded to any non-member or used for commercial or political mailings, emails, or telephone calls. Members who wish to have some or all of their information (except their name) withheld from the directory can contact

the Membership coordinator to “opt-out”. Names of all members will appear in the directory.

## II. Enrichment & Social Activities

- A. Enrichment & social activities may be either CHH-sponsored or private among group members.
- B. CHH-sponsored activities may be either open to all members or just a particular subset; any members who meet the requirements of that subset are allowed to participate (i.e. if an activity had an age range indicated, then anyone within that age range would be allowed to participate). Some activities may have limits on the number of participants.
- C. CHH-sponsored activities may use CHH funds if approved during the budget process by the Board of Directors; private groups may not use CHH funds, but can use the CHH website/e-mail loops or other communications methods to organize the activity.
- D. CHH may co-sponsor activities with other homeschool groups or sponsors and use CHH funds for this purpose. The same behavior expectations and limitations as for CHH-sponsored activities will apply, unless otherwise indicated.
- E. The rules of each enrichment or social activity will be established by the event or activity coordinator(s). For CHH-sponsored activities, rules must be open to input from the membership and reflect the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. In many cases there will also be rules established by the facility at which the activity takes place.
- F. In the event that a participant repeatedly engages in disruptive conduct at a group-sponsored event, the activity coordinator may ask him/her to step aside so the group can continue the program without interruption. If the participant continually violates requests to behave in a manner suitable for group learning, the activity coordinator may ask a parent to accompany the participant to insure appropriate conduct.
- G. For safety, participants may not bring knives or other weapons to group functions, except when a knife or weapon is a required part of the activity and where the event coordinator has instructed participants that it is acceptable to bring their own (examples – a woodcarving class or a field trip to an archery range).

H. **The following are recommendation**, intended to support our ability to have a variety of activities, which depends on how well we communicate with each other, on our reputation in the broader community, and other factors.

1. Coordinators should provide information about age-appropriateness and any specific philosophical, political, or sectarian content they expect to be included when announcing any field trip or activity. This is intended to allow members to make informed decisions about activities they feel are right for their families.
2. Coordinators should inform participants of any special rules of the facility or location (for example, if a pool prohibits glass containers.)
3. For events that require collection of money for admission, have a fixed start time (such as for a live performance), or involve the services of paid or volunteer instructors, members should arrive on time. Coordinators should note in their announcements if this is important for a given event, and they may exclude members who arrive late. (See II.E.)
4. Support group meetings, workshops, field trips and other activities may be restricted to adults only. Coordinators for any such activity should clearly indicate that it is for adults only.
5. Members should personally thank any tour guide, instructor, etc., and event coordinators should follow with a thank you note or e-mail.

#### I. Friday Enrichment

1. Each year the Board of Directors will choose volunteers to be the coordinators for Friday Enrichment. The Board may choose to offer a stipend for this service.
2. The rules of Friday Enrichment will be established by the coordinators with input from the membership and the advice and consent of the Board of Directors; these may be published separately from this OPM document.
3. Participation in Friday Enrichment is not guaranteed. Priority enrollment for the children of instructors, coordinators, and other volunteers that help in the operation of the program may be established by the FE coordinators.

**Chapel Hill Homeschoolers  
Operations Policy Manual (OPM)  
Web Site and E-Mail Loop Policy  
Approved Nov. 5, 2008**

*Please note, the policies set forth in this document are to be considered in addition to the Yahoogroups policies that users agree to when they join Yahoogroups.*

**A. Purpose**

1. Generally, the website forums/e-mail loops are for homeschool information that is pertinent to our group. For the most part, the email loops are for CHH business, meeting and event announcements, curriculum questions, resource sharing, general homeschool questions and requests for help.
2. The CHH website forums/e-mail loops are not for public use or mass-marketing.

**B. Using the proper forum/e-mail loop**

1. In addition to the main, general interest email loop, several different topic-driven forums or email loops will be available for member participation.
2. Members posting to each of these forums/loops should stay on topic for that forum/loop as much as possible. If a member would like to encourage others to join the discussion on another forum/loop, the member may post a brief invitation to the main loop.

**C. The Main CHH forum/e-mail loop**

The main “General Interest” CHH forum/e-mail loop is the primary method of communication among CHH members. In order to keep it useful and relevant for that purpose, some limitations on its use are necessary. The following kinds of items are acceptable on the main forum/loop.

**1. CHH business**

Announcements of CHH meetings and CHH-sponsored events will be posted to this loop, including membership and board meetings. Also, notices that important files or documents (like meeting minutes) have been posted to our web page or Yahoo files will be on this loop. The board may also use this loop to pass on news and information to the general membership or to seek input from them.

**2. General interest announcements**

Occasional messages of a wider interest, like special events (either live or media-produced), classes, and notices of governmental action that affects home

schools. A respect for the diversity of our group should be shown by including a brief identification of sectarian association (religious, political, philosophical, etc), as it applies. More in-depth information and discussion can take place on a separate forum/ e-mail loop.

### 3. Reviews

Members may post information about their experiences with specific homeschool-related curricula, products or services, including constructive criticism as warranted. Reviews should be as factual as possible, realizing that, in a group as diverse as this one, the very reason a product doesn't work well for one family might make it a perfect fit for another.

### 4. Kudos

Good news about member families is welcome, including achievements like graduations, winning contests, becoming new parents, or being featured in articles.

### 5. Limited commercial messages

Members are allowed to post curricula and other items of interest for sale or desire to purchase. Occasional, off-topic posts seeking recommendations for a certain type of business are also allowed. As an answer to another member's post, it is okay to briefly mention a business you have used, you own, or you work for. However, regular advertising of businesses is not allowed on the general interest forum/e-mail loop.

### 6. Limited political posts

Remember that our membership represents various philosophical and political doctrines, and the main CHH loop is not the appropriate forum for attempting to coerce or influence others to change their beliefs or for pushing a particular agenda. Any posts of a political nature should be kept brief and factual and should respect the diversity in this group

- a. A brief posting about a specific political issue that directly affects homeschooling is allowed.
- b. Brief announcements of a political nature that enhance our homeschooling efforts are allowed on the general interest forum, but should be restricted to the facts.
- c. If a CHH member is running for office, it is okay to post a single announcement of it, but not to use the group forums/e-mail loops for campaigning or fundraising.

### 7. Limited, respectful, on-topic disagreements

Expressing disagreements about CHH issues and other homeschool-related

topics on the e-mail loop or website *is the right of every member* as long as they follow the rules established in these policies.

- a. Disagreements about issues not directly related to CHH or homeschooling should be conducted elsewhere.
- b. Unending disagreements distract us from our mission. So, if 10 or more e-mails have been exchanged on a difficult or potentially emotional issue, the co-leaders or moderators may choose to...
  - i. move further discussion to a separate email loop or forum open to all CHH members
  - ii. request that the Board plan some opportunity for members to discuss the issue face-to-face for better communication
  - iii. refer the parties to a Conflict Resolution Committee
- c. Sometimes we simply need to agree to disagree and then move on.

#### D. Additional Guidelines for use of the E-mail loop or Website forums

##### 1. Netiquette General Reminders

In order to keep the CHH email loop as helpful as possible, the membership will periodically be reminded of the importance of...

- a. Respecting Personal Information -- For security and privacy reasons, members should be discreet about other people's personal information, especially that of children. Each individual should be allowed to decide for themselves how much of their information they will give the group. This also applies to posting pictures of other people and identifying people in posted photographs.
- b. Using meaningful and accurate subject headings -- It makes life so much easier when one needs to find the e-mail later. Purposely misleading subject lines should not be used.
- c. Marking "off-topic" posts with "OT" or "off-topic."
- d. Signing posts -- Many of us have e-mail IDs that are different from our names. Signing our e-mails helps others know who they are from.
- e. Sending digest-friendly e-mails -- Members accessing e-mail through slow connections or in digest form cannot simply delete messages they don't want. Avoid sending messages with large attachments or graphics: use webpage links to point to the material instead. Trim prior messages and remove what is no longer needed when you reply to a post.

- f. Keeping exchanges constructive – The CHH e-mail loop should be a positive, friendly forum. Sometimes members will want to post e-mails expressing their opinion on topics that are appropriate for group discussion. Remember that e-mail discussions on the loop are "public" and meant for constructive exchanges. Also remember that CHH is a diverse group of people with different backgrounds and beliefs.
- g. Remembering the limits of e-mail -- E-mails can be easily misinterpreted because readers cannot hear the author's tone of voice or see the author's face. It is impossible to determine if one's audience will be able to tell the difference between serious statements, satire or sarcasm.
- e. Avoiding or Warning of Age-Inappropriate Material – Some member parents share email addresses with their children, so material inappropriate for children in general should be avoided. (All obscene material is prohibited. See section 3.d.) If a message contains links to websites or discussion of materials that are likely to have content that is inappropriate for some ages, then the subject line and the first line of the e-mail should warn of this.

## 2. Rules for Keeping the E-mail Loop a Beneficial Resource for All

- a. Repeated violations of the rules in this section (2) could lead to enforcement actions as described in Section E.
- b. Ranting e-mails and scathing replies hurt the fabric of our community and should be avoided. "Ranting" is harsh criticism without a constructive offer to help. Ranting e-mails and scathing replies can share some of the same characteristics, including name-calling, belittling others' opinions, and assigning negative motives to others.
- c. Chain letters should not be forwarded to the CHH loop. -- If you receive an email that says "Send this to everyone you know," that is a clear indication that you should NOT forward it to the CHH group. This applies equally to sweet blessings, calls to action, petitions, and photos of allegedly missing children (unless it is your own child or the child of a CHH member who is missing).
- d. Private discussions should move elsewhere. -- If a particular topic begins to go astray and is no longer of general interest to the CHH group, the members may be asked to continue the discussion privately (via each other's personal e-mails) or on a different forum/e-mail loop. Don't be offended by this. CHH is a large homeschool group with

diverse members having equally diverse interests. Private arguments should be kept off the CHH e-mail loop altogether.

### 3. Prohibited on CHH Loop

- a. The prohibitions in this section (3) are meant to protect the CHH members from serious misuse of the CHH e-mail loop. Violations of these prohibitions can lead to temporary or permanent removal from the e-mail loop, website access, and/or membership in CHH.
- b. Verbally attacking or insulting (“flaming”) another CHH member on the e-mail loop is not allowed. As a community of families, we should endeavor to treat each other with respect, even when we disagree strongly on specific issues. This prohibition includes sending private e-mail attacks to other members for any reason. Members who feel that they have been “flamed” can contact the co-leaders by private e-mail or phone.
- c. “Spam” (unsolicited commercial e-mail) is not allowed. Repeat spammers will be unsubscribed and banned immediately, and their messages will be removed from the archives. Additional repeated offenses could mean termination of membership in CHH.
- d. Sending abusive, obscene, vulgar, slanderous or threatening material, or any other material that may violate any applicable laws, is prohibited. Doing so may lead to immediate removal of the member from the e-mail list and termination of the member’s CHH membership.

### E. Website/ E-mail loop Enforcement

1. The co-leaders of CHH are the designated moderators of the CHH Yahoo group. Co-leaders may designate an alternative moderator, who will have the same capabilities to enforce the OPM website/e-mail group rules and guidelines as the co-leaders.
2. Co-leaders or designated moderator(s) may take the following actions:
  - a. inform and remind members of the rules and guidelines presented in this section of the OPM; this may be done generically to the entire group or to specific members in regards to specific posts;
  - b. warn members for repeated offenses;
  - c. temporarily suspend posting privileges for additional offenses committed after a warning or for committing an offense that can lead to a loss of privileges as outlined in this OPM;

- d. remove any member from the CHH yahoo group, with the consent of the Board, for egregious or repeated violations of the OPM;
  - e. ask the Board to revoke the membership of any member for violations of Level 3 rules.
3. Co-leaders or designated loop moderators may NOT censor all or part of a post prior to it being posted on the loop.
  4. Archived posts may be removed as part of any actions taken in E-2d and E-2e above, or to comply with the rules of Yahoo groups or other website hosts, or at the request of the author.
  5. Members who disagree with any of the enforcement actions taken by the co-leaders, or a designated moderator, may appeal to the Board to have the action reversed.