



**Member Handbook
2026 - 2027**

Table of Contents:

Who We Are & Co-op Leadership.....	Page 3
How to join HCS & Fees.....	Page 4

Policies & Procedures

Membership, Calendar Format, Attendance, Age Groupings, Teaching/Teams.....	Page 5
Payment Policy, Mandatory Parent Meeting/Orientation, Field Trips.....	Page 6
Group Days, Children Behavior Policy.....	Page 7
Discipline Policy, Check-In & Check Out.....	Page 8
Safety Policy.....	Page 9
Dismissal Policy, Who is/is not allowed on Campus.....	Page 10
Parent Responsibilities.....	Page 11

Required Signature Forms

Discipline Policy Agreement.....	Page 12
Policies and Procedures Agreement.....	Page 14
Liability Release Form.....	Page 15
Medical Release Form	Page 16
Photograph Release Form.....	Page 17

Extra Forms

Safety Policy Form.....	Page 18
-------------------------	---------

Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals
Meeting Location: 2701 Florence Blvd.
Florence, Al 35630
Website: HCSHoals.com
Email: HCSHoals@gmail.com

Who We Are

We strive to provide a fun and inviting atmosphere where our children can feel ownership over their community. Our co-op is designed to give our families consistent friendships and engaging activities together!

Our classes are extracurricular focusing on projects, activities, arts, engineering, science, unit studies and a lot of creativity. Our classes do not overlap with the core curriculum you've chosen to use at home and no homework assignments are given. We have found success in maximizing the collaborative nature of group learning and hands-on creating.

As a true cooperative, you'll find that the more you're able to attend regularly, contribute and help - the more you, as an adult, will form friendships as well! It may be a co-op for our homeschoolers, but we as homeschooling parents benefit from having a support system to talk through our day to day homeschooling experience with.

Co-op Leadership

Please understand that all leadership positions are volunteer positions, so when you reach out to them please do so with the understanding that the work they do is a labor of love for the community we have built and the children that are served within that community. Our co-op is made of a non-profit Board, co-op Admin roles, and Team Leads. Additionally, parents volunteer to lead events or additional sub groups. Should you have any questions or concerns, you may direct them to any of our group's board members or our email HCSHoals@gmail.com

Brooke King - 256-710-7017 Communications and Co-Op Operations

LaNelle Simons - 803-543-9055 Reimbursements and Co-Op Fees/Payments

Lindsey Black - 256-762-0043 Background Checks, Handbooks, and Legal Forms

Sarah Jones - 256-762-8036 Building Management and Supplies

Jessica Kyles - 256-366-4775 New Member Organization

How to join HCS

Step 1: Read through our handbook for specific information and policies to make sure we are a match for what you are looking for.

Step 2: Submit an application on our website: HCSHoals.com

Step 3: Schedule a Tour or Meet & Greet *you must submit an application*

Step 4: If your family has been approved, you will be notified and 4 things are required of you. (1) your membership payment, (2) complete a background check (3) sign a physical copy of the Member Handbook in its entirety to hand in on our first co-op date in August and (4) complete any digital forms sent for the purpose of organizing our schedule and volunteer roles.

Step 5: Members of our co-op are added to a closed facebook group where communication and coordination takes place. Any helpful orientations planned for new families to feel supported and ready to participate will be communicated directly.

Who can apply

1. Homeschooling families can apply.
2. Families with at least one child that is 5 years old or older.
3. Applications are filled out on a single household basis. In the event a parent needs to register any children beyond their own, communicate this with a committee member beforehand.

Fees

Family Membership: \$135

Each family must register separately and pay their own family fee. This covers your family's membership for the entire co-op year from August - May. Every parent is a volunteer, so this fee covers expenses like the building rent, group supplies, administrative costs, the beginning of the year party and the end of the year party.

Class Costs

These expenses are collected in August for the fall semester and again in November for the spring semester.

- Children nursery - 4 years old: **\$15 per semester**
- Each child ages 5-18 year olds: **\$40 per semester**

****Payments are nonrefundable regardless of withdrawal, dismissal, schedule conflicts, or dissatisfaction.**

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Membership

Registration for new families is held once per year, in the spring. Returning members can renew their membership yearly by:

1. Signing the Membership Handbook and all connected forms/releases.
2. Pay yearly membership fee.
3. Submit any organizing forms leadership posts.
4. *New families must complete a background check/every co-op member must have one on file.

Calendar Format

Meeting every other Friday, each co-op year will follow this format:

Kick Off Party	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Field Day Party
1 week	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	1 week

Attendance

The maximum number of absences a family can have in a single semester is 3. If a family misses more than this, the committee reserves the right to dismiss this family's membership. Attendance records are reset after the end of the 2nd quarter.

An absence is considered missing the entire class period of one of the 16 co-op days scheduled during our 4 quarters.

Age Groupings

After registration is complete, the official age groupings will be determined for the upcoming year's schedule. Children are typically grouped within a few years of each other. Children will remain in their age group class for the co-op year. Children cannot change classes without the leadership's approval.

Teaching/Teams

All parents will be placed into a team assigned to teach an age group. These teams will meet and discuss their age group's class schedule for the year. It will be their responsibility to collectively pick class subjects, activities, games, crafts, projects, and materials. Every parent needs to be prepared to contribute to this schedule. We have found this method creates a quality schedule, provides a positive way to get involved, offers support for new parents, and allows everyone to contribute according to their strengths and interests. This teamwork approach ensures a balanced, engaging learning experience for the children while fostering a strong co-op community.

All Team Leads will reach out via text/ for a check-in with their team prior to each co-op day. Parents are expected to respond to the check-ins and report any conflicts or expected absences.

Payment Policy

HCS is a voluntary group of families who contribute their time and money together in order to plan and fund a year of classes and activities. This contribution happens once at the beginning of the year, paying for the year as a whole. Class fees are collected twice a year in August and November. If a family decides to withdraw their membership, they may do so by communicating to the co-op committee with the understanding all payments are nonrefundable. Payments are nonrefundable regardless of withdrawal, dismissal, schedule conflicts, or dissatisfaction

Annual Parent & Orientation Meeting: Mandatory

Before the school year begins, all registered parents are required to attend our Annual Parent & Orientation meeting.

This meeting is an important part of starting the co-op year prepared and connected. During this time, parents will:

- Receive important information for the upcoming year
- Review expectations, procedures, and communication systems
- Meet the parents who will be serving on their child's age-group team
- Connect with other co-op families
- Learn next steps for classes, events, and volunteer roles

Because our co-op operates through parent participation and teamwork, attendance is expected from every family. If a serious conflict prevents attendance, arrangements must be made with leadership in advance.

Field Trips

Adding field trips to our calendar is done voluntarily by **any** parent by posting within our Facebook group. Share the date, details, and cost in your post, and create a Facebook Event for it. If you start this post, you lead the whole process from start to finish. Parents are encouraged to organize field trips as this leads to more time together for the kids and is a great way to build relationships for parents.

****Any additional field trips, parties, events, group days, etc are outside of co-op oversight and are optional and may cost extra. Parents are solely responsible for their children for the entire trip and participation is at your own risk and discretion.***

Group Days

Getting together for parties, events, fairs, and other gatherings is an essential way our community thrives. Each January, our co-op creates an Events Committee where parents come together to decide which events should be included for the year. All parents are welcome and encouraged to join this committee. After the calendar of events is complete, a **volunteer form is then sent out for all parents** to choose which events they'd like to help organize. Every parent who intends on attending these events should sign up for at least one or two specific events they can help with. Every parent helping with an event must be prepared to respond to texts, attend planning meet ups, and fulfill their volunteer part.

Some events may have an extra cost associated with them. When money is left over from class budgets from the previous school year, however, it is specifically set aside to help fund these future group days. These funds can be used to cover gym rental fees, purchase equipment, rent necessary items, or buy decorations and supplies to enhance our events and create memorable experiences for the children.

Children Behavior Policy

1. Listen respectfully to instructors and volunteers.
2. Follow directions promptly.
3. Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves. No hitting, either another child or an adult.
4. Use respectful language—no name-calling, yelling, or inappropriate words.
5. Stay engaged in the activity and not disrupt learning for others..
6. All children are to remain within their groups or class for the duration of the time that they are at co-op.
7. Electronic devices, toys, or distracting items are not permitted during class time.
8. Possession and use of tobacco and weapons are not allowed at co-op.
9. Inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing, cuddling, or sexual activity/discussions are not permitted at co-op.
10. Refrain from behavior that endangers you or the group.
11. Please wear co-op appropriate clothes that are respectful of others, that you can move around in, and get dirt or paint on.
12. Parents or guardians are responsible for any property damage caused by any child and that child may be asked to not return.

Discipline Policy

To maintain a respectful, safe, and productive learning environment, our co-op has established a Discipline Policy that outlines behavior expectations and simple but clear consequences. This policy ensures that all children can learn and participate without unnecessary disruptions while providing clear guidelines for volunteer parents to correct behavior when needed.

Every parent and child must read, agree to, and sign this policy before participating in co-op activities. By signing, families acknowledge their responsibility to uphold these standards and work together to create a positive and supportive community. During a class day, the parents leading a classroom may remind children of these rules in an effort to encourage positive classroom behavior. We've seen beautiful results from simply repeating the expectations at the start of class day together.

Check-in And Check-Out

In order to provide a safe environment for our children to gather, every family follows the check-in and check-out procedures. **Parents are solely responsible for their children before check-in and after check-out.**

Check-in Procedure

- Please arrive promptly between 9:15-9:30 a.m.
- Adult check-in table is in the entrance hallway. All parents, guests, and adults are required to wear their lanyard for the duration of a co-op day, this quickly identifies who should be in the building.
- Walk each of your children to their classrooms. A classroom adult will check-in your child in the binder and give them a child-lanyard to wear until pick-up.

Check-Out Procedure

- At the end of the co-op day, the parent/guardian must collect their child(ren) from their classrooms.
- Parent lanyards serve as “proof” for children being released to the parent.
- Each child’s lanyard will then be removed and kept in the classroom binder. Once a child’s lanyard has been removed during check-out, they are solely their parent’s responsibility.
- Parents will keep their lanyard on until they pick up their last child. When collecting their last child, your parent-lanyard will be turned into that child’s check-out adult, regardless of what room that is.

Safety Policies

- This is not a drop-off co-op, no child may be left at any activity or co-op day without a parent or guardian present.
- No adult is permitted to be alone with a single child at any time.
- All new families accepted into the co-op must consent to a background check.
- At least two adults are assigned to assist with every group of children.
- Always follow the Rule of 3 during co-op hours, this includes in the hallway, classroom, restrooms. No child should be sent off alone to the restroom or anywhere.
 - “The Rule of 3” is where a minimum of 3 people, either 1 adult is with at least 2 children, or 2 adults are required when there is only 1 child. If this occurs in the classroom, the door must be open during these moments.
- Ensure that no child is ever unattended in the facility. All children will remain in their classroom, or with their class group.
- When a child needs to use the restroom, follow the “Rule of 3” (minimum of 3, with at least one adult). Escort the children to and from the bathrooms; wait outside the door, but children will need to be self-sufficient in entering/using the bathroom. If more help is needed, the parent will need to accompany their child to the bathroom. At any time we reserve the right to enforce a “one in, one out” bathroom policy.
- While following the Rule of 3, the Nursery and Toddler Classes are encouraged to take scheduled group bathroom breaks when possible. Adults may assist children with buttons, zippers, or reaching the sink if needed. On our first class day, parents will sign in the binder if they grant permission to the leaders to change diapers and help in the restroom, or if they'd like to take care of that themselves, as the parents.
- Diaper changing will happen in the nursery classroom at a diaper changing station in the presence of two adults. A diapering preference sheet will be available for parents to sign if they prefer to change their own child's diaper.
- All children will be treated with gentleness and respect.
- All classrooms will have a view window or open door at all times. It is the responsibility of all adults on site to be aware and report suspicious/inappropriate behavior or activity to a committee member immediately.
- Appropriate touch: High fives, Fist Bumps, Side Hugs, Pats on Back, Handshakes
- Inappropriate Touch: Children above nursery age should not be seated in anyone's lap (neither an adult's nor another child's). Never touch a child in anger or disgust. Never touch children in private areas. Never touch a child in a way that could be considered sexually suggestive.

- A child's preference to not be touched should ALWAYS be respected. All parent volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
- In the event of any incident/accident/injury to a child(ren), a team leader will inform the parent/guardian of the child(ren) involved and a member of leadership.
- Any violation of safety policies may result in immediate removal from the co-op.

Dismissal Policy

Our co-op is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all families. While we strive for open communication and conflict resolution, and leadership will make careful consideration over any conflicts, violations and concerns. However, co-op leadership reserves the right to dismiss a family at any time for violation of policies or disruption to the community. All dismissal decisions are final and not subject to appeal. No refunds for any associated fees will be given for dismissal. By joining the co-op, all families acknowledge and accept this policy as part of their participation agreement.

Who Is Allowed On Campus

1. Parent/Guardian - the primary parent who filled out the application and will be bringing the children to co-op each week.
2. "Registered Adults"
 - a. A second parent/guardian that will be attending regularly - listed on the application.
 - b. "Fill-in adults"- in the event the primary parent needs to send a substitute, these adults must be listed on the application.
3. "Co-op Children" - children (0-17) years old, registered specifically on the application.
4. "Guests" - any adult invited to participate in a co-op class as a teacher or presenter. They should get a guest lanyard and let the check-in staff know what class they're attending for the day.

Who Is Not Allowed On Campus

1. "Extra Adults" - We limit the amount of adults per family to 2 adults on co-op day. Communicate with the co-op committee if there is a case in which you need to bring more than two adults with you on co-op day.
2. "Non-registered children" - we do not allow unregistered children to attend co-op.

Parent Responsibilities

Every registered parent agrees to uphold their responsibilities. This covers communication, team responsibility, attendance, teaching each year, and following the parent behavior expectations.

- **Communication:** Communication for co-op related dates, events, news, updates and information will occur on 1) Facebook 2) group messaging 3) Tuesday Group Text from the Team Lead
 - Parents must join our closed facebook group “HCS Families” where information and coordination takes place. We need parents to check this Facebook group at least weekly, read the information, and respond when needed.
 - It is mandatory that every parent respond to the Tuesday Group Text check-in from your Team Lead about that week’s co-op days.
- **Age Group Team/Teaching:** Every parent will be assigned an Age Group Team of parents, usually about 5 parents or so. This is how you will contribute to our co-op’s schedule. Each Age Group Team has a Lead parent who will guide and support their parents and help them succeed. It is your responsibility to respond to this team’s messages, meet to develop the schedule, follow through with any teaching or responsibilities agreed on.
- **Behavior:** An ideal co-op parent actively contributes to the group, demonstrating a commitment to its success and fostering a positive environment. Parents are encouraged to offer assistance, invest in the group’s goals, maintain open communication, and facilitate friendships among members. Understanding the importance of working together, taking turns, and fulfilling responsibilities is essential to the smooth functioning of our co-op.

We expect all parents to exhibit cooperative, respectful behavior toward one another. Behavior that disrupts the group, including disrespect, abrasive attitudes, and failure to fulfill responsibilities without prior communication, will not be tolerated. Concerns should be addressed privately with the Team Lead or a member of the Board.

HCS Discipline Agreement

Purpose

To create a respectful, safe, and productive learning environment where all children can thrive. This policy outlines behavior expectations and the steps volunteer parents can take to correct behavior, including the removal of students who are repeatedly disruptive.

Behavior Expectations

All students are expected to:

- Listen respectfully to instructors and volunteers.
- Follow directions promptly.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves.
- Use respectful language—no name-calling, yelling, or inappropriate words.
- Stay engaged in the activity and not disrupt learning for others.

Discipline Procedure

Step 1: Verbally Address and Redirection

- The volunteer parent addresses the behavior with a **clear and calm** reminder of expectations.
- Example: *“Please keep your hands to yourself. If this happens again, you will have a consequence.”*
- Move the child to a different seat.
- Give them a short break to re-focus (2-5 minutes)

Step 2: Temporary Removal

If the behavior continues, the volunteer parent may:

- Remove a privilege related to the activity
- If disruptions continue after 1-2 reminders, the child will be removed from class and guided to a designated **“cool down area”** for 10 minutes with a supervising parent.
- The student may return if they are ready to follow expectations.

Step 3: Removal From Class for the Day

- If a child refuses to cooperate after multiple attempts to redirect behavior, they will be **sent to their parent** for the remainder of the class. Should this be necessary, asking this child's parent to remain in class to help them be successful in the classroom setting is an option we like to use.

Serious Infractions

The following behaviors will result in **immediate removal** from the classroom and parent notification:

- Physical aggression (hitting, pushing, kicking, etc.).
- Extreme disrespect toward an adult or another student.
- Repeated defiance that disrupts the class.

If a child has been removed from class **more than two times in a semester**, a meeting with co-op leadership and the parent will be required to determine further action.

Parental Support

- Parents agree to reinforce behavior expectations.
- Parents may be required to remain with or assist their child for the remainder of the day if behavior continues to disrupt the class environment.
- A courtesy text will be sent out to the parents of any children consistently struggling with behavior in the classroom so we can better work together to help them succeed.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals - Handbook Policies and Procedures Agreement

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the HCS Policies and Procedures of the Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals (HCS) for 2026-2027.

I have read these policies and procedures and understand them. If I ever have any questions about them, I will contact a member of the HCS Board and ask for clarification.

I further understand that these policies and procedures may be revised or updated from time to time and that, if (when) they are, I will be notified of those changes.

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to abide by all policies outlined in this handbook, including but not limited to attendance, behavior expectations, discipline procedures, safety policies, parent responsibilities, payment policies, and dismissal policies. I understand that failure to comply may result in dismissal without refund.

Required Signature #1

Signature

Date

Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals Liability Release Form

I, the undersigned parent or legal guardian of (registered children listed on my application), do hereby grant my permission and consent for the said child to attend and participate in the events and activities of Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals from August 2026 - July 2027.

I agree not to hold Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals, Florence, AL or any of its volunteers, Board Members or Director responsible for any accident that may occur on the way to, from, or during participation in a co-op day or event. I indemnify, defend and hold harmless Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals for all claims made and liabilities assessed against them as a result of any event or activity. I release Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals and all medical providers from liability in acting on my behalf and rendering any medical treatment when necessary (see Medical Release). I acknowledge that participation in co-op activities involves inherent risks and assume the risk and financial responsibility for any injury resulting from any event or activity.

Furthermore, I understand and assume the expenses of any property damage caused by my child. Should it be necessary that my child be asked to leave due to disciplinary action or illness I agree to abide by the decisions of the leaders of Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals and will transport my child and assume the cost of transportation (in light of a medical emergency). If three or more such incidents occur I understand that my child may be asked to quit the program. I understand that it is my responsibility to provide a current contact number in order for Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals to contact me at any time while my child is attending an event. I understand that without prior agreement with leaders, only people who bring my child in for the day may leave with my child from any event.

By signing below, I am acknowledging that I have read through and understand the above statements.

Required Signature #2

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals Medical Release Form
August 2026 - July 2027

My child may participate in events hosted by Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals, including travel during the event via appointed adult volunteers over the age of 21. I give permission for my child to receive emergency medical care if necessary. I give the adult volunteer the authority to act on my behalf with respect to my child's own health and safety while at the event, with the understanding that I will be contacted as soon as possible should the need arise. I accept full responsibility for any expenses for medical treatment for my child. I release Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals and its representatives from liability in the event of accidental injury or illness.

Required Signature #3

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Photograph Release:

I understand that photographs and/or videos are taken during many of our gatherings. I give permission for co-op members to take and post photographs to our closed Facebook member group page and in our yearbook.

Required Signature #4

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Photograph Publication Release: Optional

I understand that photographs and/or videos are taken during many of our gatherings. I give permission for my child's photograph to be used for things such as flyers, websites, newsletters, and social media.

Optional Signature #5

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

*Additional forms may be required for specific events

** There is an additional form for any 4-H classes

Safety Policies Agreement

(For adults who are not the primary co-op parent)

Safety Policies

- **Parents are solely responsible for their children before check-in and after check-out.**
- This is not a drop-off co-op, no child may be left at any activity or co-op day without a parent or guardian present.
- No adult is permitted to be alone with a single child at any time.
- In the event only 1 adult is in the classroom, they must follow the “Rule of 3” and the door must remain open.
 - “The Rule of 3” is where a minimum of 3 people, either 1 adult is with at least 2 children, or 2 adults are required when there is only 1 child. The door must be open during these moments.
- Ensure that no child is ever unattended in the facility. All children will remain in their classroom, or with their class group.
- When a child needs to use the restroom, follow the “Rule of 3” (minimum of 3, with at least one adult).
- Diaper changing will happen in the nursery classroom at a diaper changing station in the presence of two adults.
- All children will be treated with gentleness and respect.
- All classrooms will have a view window or open door at all times. It is the responsibility of all adults on site to be aware and report suspicious/inappropriate behavior or activity to a committee member immediately.
- Appropriate touch: High fives, Fist Bumps, Side Hugs, Pats on Back, Handshakes
- Inappropriate Touch: Children above nursery age should not be seated in anyone’s lap (neither an adult’s nor another child’s). Never touch a child in anger or disgust. Never touch children in private areas. Never touch a child in a way that could be considered sexually suggestive.
- A child’s preference to not be touched should ALWAYS be respected. All parent volunteers are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate touching by others.
- In the event of any incident/accident/injury to a child(ren), a team leader will inform the parent/guardian of the child(ren) involved and a committee member.

I have read these policies and agree to abide by them. If I ever have any questions about them, I will contact a member of the HCS Committee Board and ask for clarification.

Signature / Date