



Member Handbook 2024 - 2025

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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 Committee

Administrator - Julie Chubbuck

Class Coordinator - Jessie Vandagriff

Safety and Check-in/Check-out - Beth Stevens

Bookkeeping - DJ Saucier

Supplies - Chasity Clanton

Each of these roles are important to the function of co-op and we could not function without them. Please understand that they 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.

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: Attend Visitor Day *you must submit an application in order to attend*

Step 4: If your family has been approved, you will be notified and 3 things are required of you. (1) your membership payment, (2) submit one class plan for your teaching requirement and (3) sign the Member Handbook in its entirety to hand in on our first co-op date in August.

Step 5: Members of our co-op are added to a closed facebook group where communication and coordination takes place.

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 December for the spring semester.

- Children 18 months - 3 years old: **\$15 per semester**
- Each child ages 4-16 year olds: **\$40 per semester**

****All payments to Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals are nonrefundable.**

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 one class plan.

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 each semester.

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 committee's approval.

Class Registration

The committee will announce which older age groups will receive a class selection form before the semester begins. These age groups typically choose between 2 or 3 class options per class period. The class selection form link is both posted on our facebook group and emailed to the parents. Selecting classes is on a first come, first served basis. All classes have a minimum and maximum capacity. Your child's schedule will be emailed to you; children may not switch classes. Any exceptions to this will be decided upon by the committee.

Teaching

Every parent is required to teach for one quarter of the year, as a minimum. Families must submit at least one class plan. Ideally, we will need some parents to teach 2 times a year. One class will span across 4 consecutive co-op dates for one age group. Discussions surrounding class topics, ideas, and support can happen in our Facebook group.

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. 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.

Field Trips

Adding field trips to our calendar follows a simple format. Anyone can plan them if they have first gathered enough interest. **Any additional field trips, parties, events, group days, etc will be optional and may cost extra.**

Field Trip Process:

1. Create and label a facebook post "Field Trip Interest Post" and then give the field trip idea, details, dates, costs, etc. in the post. **If you start this interest post - you lead the whole field trip process start to finish.
2. Members show their interest by commenting on the FB post. If the field trip has a minimum of 8 families interested in going - then it becomes an official field trip!
3. Once your post has reached the minimum 8 family number - you can go into our group's "events" and create a new event for this field trip.
4. Details/posts/communication for the field trip will then happen inside the event. You can create a chat for the event if you'd like to, inside the event.

Group Days

A group day is an extra activity that the entire co-op is invited to, planned and prepared by a volunteer parent(s) in the co-op. Examples: science fair, pinewood derby, bingo night, etc. Adding a group day to our calendar follows a similar format to the field trip process.

Group Day Process:

1. Create and label a facebook post "Group Day Interest Post" and then present your idea, details, dates, costs, etc. in the post. **If you start this post, you are volunteering to lead the event from start to finish. You may ask for others to help.

2. Members show their interest by commenting on the FB post. There must be 20 families interested in this event for it to proceed in the process.
3. Once you have at least 20 families on board, you may do two things:
 - Create a FB event, this will be added to the newsletter announcements
 - You may work with the committee on accessing the budget set aside for group days.**

**Money left over from the class budgets after each quarter is set aside specifically to fund extra group days. Ways this money can contribute to group days: pay rent for the gym, spend it on equipment, rentals, decorations, and supplies.

Children Behavior Policy

1. Children should be respectful of each other and the space that we are occupying. No fighting (even play fighting) is encouraged or allowed.
2. Please refrain from inappropriate language, inappropriate topics, hurtful language including cursing and racist speech or behavior.
3. Please refrain from hitting, either another child or an adult.
4. All children are to remain within their groups or class for the duration of the time that they are at co-op.
5. Electronic devices, toys, or distracting items are not permitted during class time.
6. Possession and use of tobacco and weapons are not allowed at co-op.
7. Inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing, cuddling, or sexual activity/discussions are not permitted at co-op.
8. Please refrain from behavior that endangers you or the group.
9. Please wear co-op appropriate clothes that are respectful of others, that you can move around in, and get dirt or paint on.
10. Parents or guardians are responsible for any property damage caused by any child and that child may be asked to not return.

These policies help keep everyone safe and protect the experience of each child. If any of these issues arise the co-op committee will reach out to the parent/guardian.

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.
- At least two adults are assigned to assist with every group of children.
- 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). 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.

- Toddler's bathroom breaks and/or hand-washing trips will be accompanied by no less than two adults. It is encouraged for the Nursery and the Toddler Classes to take scheduled bathroom breaks in groups. For these age groups, the adults will be available to help with buttons, zippers, holding the child up to reach the sink, etc... if the child struggles with those things and needs assistance. Any child not potty-independent will need a parent to help them in the bathroom or the parent will need to indicate on their waiver that they give permission for Nursery/Toddler Class Leaders to help with bathroom trips.
- 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 committee member.

Dismissal Policy

If any HCS policies are continually disregarded after it has been addressed, it may present grounds for membership dismissal at the discretion of the co-op committee.

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 (0-16) 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:** Parents must join our closed facebook group where information and coordination takes place. We need parents to check the group, read the information, and respond when needed. Also, participate in Tuesday Group Text about coordinating co-op days.
- **Teaching:** Every parent will be contacted by our class coordinator about teaching at some point during the year. New families can wait until the second semester if they need time to feel more comfortable. Many parents teach from their hobbies, experiences, or interests, but there is also support for those parents who need help developing a class.
- **Behavior:** An ideal co-op parent is someone who offers to help, invests in the group, communicates, facilitates friendships, understands the nature of functioning as a group and the benefits of taking turns putting in the work. We expect cooperative and respectful behavior towards one another.
- **Be in a Team:** Every parent is a part of a team, led by a team leader. This is where they will contribute for the year. Read the following team instructions to understand what is expected.

Team Instructions

Class Teams

1. **Team Lead:** Responsible for creating the group text for all team members to communicate, conducting the Tuesday Group Text to coordinate co-op days, and then report information on GroupMe.
2. **Roles:** Your team decides how to cover all of the following roles for co-op days. (you can/may have to do more than one):
 - a. **Check-in Adult:** Someone needs to arrive by 9:15 a.m. Pick up the class binder at the check-in table upstairs. As children arrive, mark attendance inside the class binder and give them their lanyard. Make sure every team adult knows the headcount for the day.

- b. **Assisting:** Anyone not actively teaching should be assisting the teacher and/or students during class, cleaning up during/after/between classes as well. Throughout the day all adults count heads/account for children's safety.
 - c. **Teaching/Substituting:** Your team needs to decide who will sub for your team's teacher(s) if they have an emergency. The teacher will hand over class materials/plan but it's up to the team to cover the class.
 - d. **Check-out Adult:** Decide who will stay with the group to check-out kids and collect their lanyards. Check that the parent and child's lanyards match, and stay until the last child is picked up. Return the binder to the check-in table upstairs.
3. **Cleaning:** It is stated in our rental contract to clean. Our building is being split into zones, one for each team. It is up to each team to determine how to handle the cleaning. (All help, pitch in, split up tasks, rotations, etc).
 4. **Tuesday Group Text:** Leads send out a tuesday group text, each team member responds. This is where you coordinate Steps 1 - 3.

Tuesday Group Text Guide: Each team lead will start a text thread. A check-in will be sent every Tuesday before we meet for co-op classes on Friday. During this text exchange, these questions should be asked and answered:

- "Will you be there on Friday?"
- "Who will come early for check in?"
- "Who will stay late for check out?"
- Who will cover which part of cleaning
- Make sure our teachers are coming, make arrangements for subs if not.
- Do you need anything from co-op supplies on Friday?

Nursery Team

1. **Team Lead:** Responsible for creating a text group for team members to communicate, conducting Tuesday Group Text to organize co-op days, and then report information on GroupMe.
2. **Schedule:** Make sure each of these roles are decided on during Tuesday's Group Text.
 - a. **Check-in Adult:** Someone needs to arrive by 9:15 a.m. Pick up the class binder at the check-in table upstairs, as children arrive, make sure their parents complete the check-in sheet and put a nametag on the child's back. Make sure every team adult knows the headcount for the day.
 - b. **Care Monitor:** It is crucial that each child is checked for diaper changes, food or drink intake, and wellness/safety. Every parent in the nursery should be familiar with the Care Checklist - one person should check off on the sheet what is being done.
 - c. **Engagement:** help children transition from parents to play, choose specific toy buckets/activities. Read books, play music, make sure children are specifically attended to, safe and comforted.

- d. **Snack:** Use the snacks parents send in their diaper bag. There are also Cheerios in your tub, along with wipes, paper towels, tissues.
 - e. **Check-out:** One parent needs to plan on staying behind and doing the check-out procedure. Stay until the last child is picked up. Deliver binder upstairs to the check-in table.
3. **Cleaning Zone:** As part of our contract with the building, we must fully clean up after ourselves. Your room responsibilities are: 1. Empty trash, tie the bag, set it in the hallway. Place a fresh bag in the trash can. 2. Pick up all toys 4. Vacuum if needed.
 4. **Tuesday Group Text:** Leads send out a tuesday check in group text, each team member responds. This is where you coordinate Steps 2 - 3.

Toddler Class Team

1. **Team Lead:** Responsible for creating a text thread for group team members to communicate, conducting Tuesday Group Text to organize co-op days, and then report information on GroupMe.
2. **Schedule:** Make sure each of these roles are decided on during Tuesday's Group Text.
 - a. **Check-in Adult:** Someone needs to arrive by 9:15 a.m. Pick up the class binder at the check-in table upstairs. As children arrive, mark attendance inside the class binder and clip their name tag to their diaper bag, and place the sticker name tag to the toddler's back. Make sure every team adult knows the headcount for the day.
 - b. **Morning Free Play:** Help children transition from parents to play, choose specific toy buckets/activities. Fully clean up (children can help) before proceeding with the schedule.
 - c. **Singing Time:** Choose 3 interactive follow along songs, to repeat each class during singing time. They need to have follow-along physical actions. They can be played over a speaker or just sung. Repetition gives the consistency this age group needs.
 - d. **Craft/Activity:** Take turns planning crafts/activities. At least one craft/activity will be done each day.
 - e. **Storytime** - Pick 1 or 2 stories to read to the group. This can be done at the same time as the activity if the group needs to be split in half and traded between the two activities.
 - f. **Games:** A minimum of 2 games each co-op day: Ring around the rosie, musical chairs, animal mimic game (hop like a bunny, stomp like an elephant, reach up high like a giraffe, etc.), toss bean bags into a bucket, jump over a string/rope.
 - g. **End with Free Play:** bring the toys back out and let them free play. Use this time to begin cleaning efforts.
 - h. **Check-out:** One parent needs to do the check-out process at the door, plan on staying until the last toddler is picked up. Return the binder to the check-in table upstairs.

3. **Cleaning Zone:** As part of our contract with the building, we must fully clean up after ourselves. Your room responsibilities are: 1. Empty trash, tie the bag, set it in the hallway. Place a fresh bag in trash cans. 2. Wipe all tables 3. Pick up all toys 4. Vacuum.
4. **Tuesday Group Text:** Leads send out a Tuesday check-in group text, each team member responds. This is where you coordinate Steps 2 - 3.

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 2024-2025.

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 Committee 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.

I also understand that I have an obligation to implement and follow these policies and procedures.

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 2024 - July 2025.

I agree not to hold Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals, Florence, AL or any of its volunteers responsible for any accident that may occur on the way to, from, or during an 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 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 2024 - July 2025**

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

Homeschool Co-op of the Shoals

Mandatory Class Idea Form for 2024-25

Co-op Class Schedule Format

Duration: 45 Minutes for juniors or 1 hr
for seniors for four sessions

**Circle the quarter you would prefer to
teach in or leave it blank if you are
flexible**

- Fall Quarter 1
- Fall Quarter 2
- Spring Quarter 3
- Spring Quarter 4

Each class will be assigned a time period.
1st period or 2nd period.



Seniors get to choose their classes at this time
That can change based on registration
numbers. Juniors are assigned a class
schedule.

Class Subject & Parent Name

Please indicate what your class would be about:

This class is intended for: Juniors Seniors

Budget & Supplies

Class budgets are \$120. List supplies and purchases your class will need:

Answers can be emailed to:
abundantfeast@gmail.com

FCA School Building:
2701 Florence Blvd, Florence