

T.E.A.C.H. HANDBOOK

Trumbull Education Association of Christian Homeschools

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MISSION

To support and encourage Christ-centered, home-based education

PURPOSE

TEACH is a countywide umbrella support organization for Christian homeschooling. It provides a structural basis for unified effort in the scheduling of meetings, communications, events, classes, team sports, as well as other educational services/resources. This includes the introduction of new families to the legal requirements and practical necessities of successful homeschooling. (Within this context it is expected that smaller sub-groups will develop, based on association by geography, church affiliation, curriculum style and the similar needs of student groups.)

TEACH LEADERSHIP STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings and God-breathed.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension and His personal return in power and glory.

We believe salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.

We believe that all believers should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord, and that it is our obligation to witness by life and word to the truths of the Gospel.

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His return to earth, with his saints to establish His kingdom. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgement and everlasting punishment.

We believe God in His Word has given parents the responsibility, authority and ability to educate their children in a Godly manner.

A Philosophy of Home Education

There is a Biblical basis for home education:

- God has ordained the home as the basic educational institution
- Parents are responsible for the total education of their children
- Parents are equipped and capable to teach and train their own children

Home education is academically superior to classroom instruction:

- Regular reinforcement of academic lessons
- Low teacher to student ratio
- Instant parent to child feedback
- Personalized curriculum
- Fewer distractions at home
- Economy of time
- Greater flexibility
- Safe learning environment

Home education encourages the development of Godly character:

- Parents' Biblical values imparted
- Reduces rate of peer dependency
- Encourages relationships between all age groups
- Encourages independent problem solving
- Avoids destructive competition over surface issues

Children do not belong to the state:

- Parents have a God-mandated responsibility to educate their children
- God has enabled parents to educate their children
- Parents also have a constitutional right to homeschool their children

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

TEACH is an organization of homeschool families endeavoring to live Christ-centered lives by the strength and enabling of the Holy Spirit. The task of educating one's own children can be demanding, requiring a significant amount of time and energy. Yet our Lord gives us tremendous resources, despite the struggle and the challenge. There is great JOY in the journey! Thus, the ultimate hope is that our lives might please and bring glory to Him.

Membership in this organization carries with it a unique responsibility. It is expected that each family will agree to accept the principles that govern it. Because of the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life and thought, we believe that the Scriptures establish the basic principles that should guide and govern all behavior. Therefore, members of TEACH are expected to pursue whole-hearted obedience to the moral law of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, and as exemplified in the life of Christ. (Exodus 20:3-17, Matthew 5, 6, 7)

Inappropriate conduct will be dealt with in manner consistent with the Biblical directives of Matthew 18:15-17 and 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15. Continued inappropriate conduct will result in forfeiture of membership. Also, as consistent with Scripture, the demonstration of a penitent spirit will allow for reinstatement of membership.

Because of our fallen nature, difficulties in relationships can occur. In such cases we are commanded to pursue reconciliation. Healing of broken relationships is necessary for a healthy community. When relationships have been harmed, let us reach out to forgive, to make restitution, to restore relationships.

TEACH is governed by a self-perpetuating Board, with the help of a supporting Staff, appointed by the Board. The Board shall consist of at least three members, including a Moderator, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Staff shall consist of at least a Meeting and Events Coordinator, a Newsletter Coordinator, and an Educational Activities Coordinator. Board members shall be nominated from the general TEACH membership, and be eligible to serve upon the majority affirmative vote of the current sitting Board. Those selected must be members in good standing of TEACH, experienced home educators, and sign the Statement of Faith. Staff members and instructors of TEACH-sponsored classes must also sign and return the Statement of Faith, to a TEACH Board member, preferably by September 1 or at least one week before the event begins. It is suggested that parents hold leadership positions no more than three years in succession, that new homeschoolers not serve while becoming established, and that only one parent per family serve in such a capacity simultaneously.

Our activities include:

- Meeting together periodically for support, encouragement, and sharing of information
- Publishing an informative newsletter containing up-to-date news of the group
- Helping to plan educational classes, field trips, and events
- Monitoring pending legislation on issues affecting home education
- Sponsoring seminars and workshops to educate families interested in home education
- Facilitating consultation and evaluation services when requested

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Monthly Meetings

The TEACH monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month, with the location published each month in the newsletter. The meeting is a time of information and inspiration, providing a vital link to other local homeschoolers. The event is usually parent-oriented, and provides a source of encouragement, particularly for mothers as they share insights and experiences. If children attend, they must sit quietly with their parents, as childcare is not provided.

Newsletter

The TEACH Newsletter is a monthly publication that conveys a host of information - from coming events to field trips/classes to educational services/resources and announcements. Along with the monthly meeting it is the vital link to TEACH. Information to be included in the newsletter should be in the Coordinator's hands by the Monday following the monthly meeting.

TEACH Website

TEACH has a website that is a great resource for TEACH members. The web address is www.teachourchildren.cjb.net. This TEACH Handbook along with the current TEACH application is available at this site. Additionally, our website contains links to a multitude of very helpful homeschooling websites, including curriculum. Other TEACH website features include:

- TEACH Calendar
- Latest event updates and cancellation notices
- TEACH Library books, videos, tapes
- Prayer requests

Membership

Membership is open to Christian homeschool families who submit a completed membership application and pay the annual membership fee. Applications are mailed to TEACH members with the June and July/August TEACH Newsletter. Handbooks are mailed to the general mailing list in August, and may also be obtained at Monthly Meetings, or from Board members. Applications are due by August 15. The TEACH directory should be compiled and distributed by the end of September. Annual TEACH Membership runs from August 15th to August 14th of the subsequent year. In signing the application, members agree to read the TEACH Handbook and abide by the principles set forth. Pastors and single parents are offered TEACH membership at a 50% discount.

TEACH Athletics

At various times, depending on student interest level and availability of interested parents as coaches, our TEACH group offers opportunities in team sports, such as basketball and soccer. Although TEACH has purchased modest insurance coverage, the policy does not cover TEACH athletes.

Class and Field Trip – Activity Guidelines

Group activities naturally demand conformity to acceptable behavior, and are thus part of the maturation process for our children. In order to function more efficiently as a group, the following guidelines have been implemented. Planned activities will benefit all of us as we work together and demonstrate consideration for one another. Always check in with the event organizer when you arrive, if appropriate. If questions arise, do not hesitate to ask the designated person.

1. Children should be under control at all times and respectful to the leader, parents, property, and to each other. The instructions of the leader must be carefully listened to and followed. Examples of inappropriate behavior would be talking back and arguing with the instructor, talking while the leader is talking, running and climbing in buildings, touching off-limit items, teasing and fighting, yelling and using inappropriate language, or looking demonstrably bored. If children are not meeting these behavior standards, you will be asked to refrain from participation until they can exhibit the needed improvement.
2. Set a good example for your children. Activities start on time, so please be prompt. Also, parents should not engage in distracting conversations during presentations. Please remove disruptive, noisy children (even a playful noise) quickly from the room during field trips and classes, so that students are not distracted. Our respectful, courteous behavior speaks volumes to those watching us.
3. Do not bring anyone who is not a TEACH member, registered for that particular activity. Our liability coverage is generally not designed to cover non-members.
4. Follow-up activities with notes of appreciation, especially after long-term classes. Notes, cards, baked goods, or a small gift would be appropriate.
5. Dress for swim class: girls will need one-piece, non-white, low-cut leg, modest swimming suits. Boys wear trunk-style suits only.
6. Dress for gym class: wear loose-fitting modest workout gear (no tight-fitting jeans). Jewelry should be removed, and girls should not wear low-cut midriff tops.
7. Dress code for other events/activities: Level of dress code in effect will be at the discretion of the organizer. See Dress Code for description of levels.

Class and Field Trip Cancellation Policies:

1. If for any reason you cannot attend an event you have registered and paid for, please call the organizer as soon as possible to cancel. Others may be on a list, waiting for the opportunity to participate.
2. If an emergency arises and you cannot call or reach the organizer before the event/activity, please call after the event to let them know what happened.
3. At the discretion of the organizer, you may receive a refund. Refunds will not be given if TEACH has already paid for the activity or if your registration was critical to the minimum number required.
4. If the event is cancelled, it is the organizer's responsibility to notify participants.

Waiting Lists:

TEACH members will register for field trips on a first-come, first-serve basis. At times we will have more people interested in an event than space available. As a result, we may have to put some people on a waiting list.

Discipline

Inappropriate conduct will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the Biblical directives found in Matthew 18:15-18 and II Thessalonians 3:14, 15. Continued inappropriate conduct will result in forfeiture of membership. Also, as consistent with Scripture, the demonstration of a penitent and contrite spirit will allow for reinstatement.

TEACH Dress Code

As activities, field trips and events put us in the public eye, it is important that we strive to put our best foot forward. Homeschooling is still misunderstood, and subject to some measure of skepticism. Our desire should be to make a good impression as we represent not only the homeschooling community, but also our Lord Jesus Christ. Does our appearance (behavior and dress) reflect favorably on His on-going work in our lives, or does it cloud and distract? As a result, the following three-level dress code has been implemented. To clarify any question about proper apparel, dress code levels should be announced by the coordinator prior to the activity or event, and listed in the TEACH newsletter.

Level A – Dress Clothes - Girls should wear dresses. Boys should wear dress pants with collared shirts tucked in. No jeans or sneakers.

Level B – Casual - Modest, no holes, no writing on T-shirts, / Jeans and sneakers are appropriate. We desire a neat, clean appearance.

Level C – Recreational – Modest shorts and tops / No short-shorts or bare midriff
No undergarments showing
For swimming: Trunks for boys,
One-piece, modest, non-white suits for girls

TEACH Library Policies

The purpose of the TEACH library is to make available books, videos and materials which would be helpful to Christian home educators. This particularly includes items not readily found in places such as public libraries, as well as more expensive items not normally purchased by individual families. The Board will attempt to include only those materials that are generally acceptable to the Christian community.

- Items may be checked out only by individuals who are currently TEACH members.
- Library is open prior to and immediately following the monthly TEACH meetings. Materials may be returned and checked out at that time.
- Books, videos and printed materials are checked out for a one-month period (meeting to meeting). Items may be renewed just once. Fines are \$.05 per day for books, \$.10 per day for videos.
- Borrowers will be assessed a fine for damage to materials. The full replacement value of the item will be expected for damages that render the item unusable.
- Overdue notices may be published in the monthly newsletter as reminders, in lieu of calls and letters.

Trumbull Education Association of Christian Homeschools (T.E.A.C.H.) board members, staff members and instructors of TEACH-sponsored classes must be able to sign the following TEACH Statement of Faith:

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Signature

Date