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CHES Family Participation Agreement 2019-2020

Parents and students agree to comply with the policies herein as a requirement for participation in the CHES Homeschool Enrichment Support Services program.

Helping families equip students for life

CHES Vision

CHES supports homeschooling families by connecting students with teachers and courses that inspire excellence in a small group environment.

CHES Mission

Our mission at CHES is to help families homeschool through high school. We support families by offering onsite courses, taught from a Biblical worldview, that inspire excellence. Our caring teachers and small group environment encourage building relationships and mastery of the material, as students learn and grow alongside each other. Parents choose the courses they want to enrich their homeschool and have opportunities to serve and connect with others in a supportive environment.

CHES operates on three basic principles:

1. Commitment to the group learning experience (regular attendance and completion of assignments)
2. Respect for others
3. Communication

CHES leadership, teachers, and advisory board are in agreement with a statement of faith which is published on our website here: <https://chessclasses.org/about-us/>

Courses offered are for seventh through twelfth grade homeschooled students. CHES is open to any homeschooling family that agrees to abide by the policies in this agreement and has been approved for a course. See the Tuition, Fees, Payments and Refunds document to read about the approval process.

Classes meet at Manassas Baptist Church, the Rock building, located at 8730 Sudley Road, in Manassas, Va., hereafter referred to as "MBCR".

The Parent's Role

Parents are responsible for carefully reviewing the prospectus for each course prior to applying and considering the appropriateness for their child. Parents are responsible for staying involved in what their student is learning, tracking their progress, monitoring homework assignments, seeing that they are completed on time, and satisfying all requirements as outlined on the teacher's prospectus. It is the responsibility of the parent to make the final judgment of the performance of their student in each class, record and document their grade, and monitor home study hours. Parents will see that their student arrives on time and is prepared for class. Parents are responsible for notifying the teacher regarding absences and for working with the teacher to make up missed homework. If parents have questions or concerns about a class, they will first communicate directly with the teacher.

The Student's Role

Students will be on time for class; attend all classes; comply with the teacher's prospectus requirements; meet assignment deadlines; participate respectfully in class discussions; come prepared for class which includes bringing textbooks, completed assignments, and all required supplies needed to participate fully in the class; respect all teachers, administrators and their helpers, fellow students, and the facility.

The Instructor's Role

Instructors will teach the course subject as stated in their course prospectus, provide weekly homework assignments in the classroom and electronically (via email, StudyPlace or other site), provide semester progress reports in a timely way, contact the parent if a behavioral problem arises or if homework is not being completed (according to their class policies), teach from a Biblical worldview, and be positive and supportive of homeschooling.

The Administrators' Role

The administrator and her helpers hire teachers as independent contractors; determine which classes will run; arrange the schedule; process registrations and payments; maintain the website and advertising; coordinate volunteers and events; pay rent, insurance, and manage scholarships; assist in disciplinary matters and conflict resolution; act as facility liaison; and generally take care of policy and paperwork so the teachers can concentrate on teaching. You are encouraged to contact the administrator regarding situations of family duress and to offer suggestions and feedback about the program.

Communication

Please note that by participating in the CHESS program, you grant us permission to contact you via email or text, as appropriate, during the administration of the program.

Contacting the Administration

Tara Taylor, Administrator
tara.taylor@chessclasses.org
703 753-1901 (home) Tues., Thurs., Fri., 9:00 - 5:00
571 264-3535 (cell) While CHESS is in session

Becky Hauge, Coordinator (on campus)
coordinator@chessclasses.org
703 832-7895

Andrew O'Donnell, Technical Support (on campus)
andrew.odonnell@chessclasses.org
571 643-1987

Kathy Kuhl, Administrative Consultant (off campus)
kathy.kuhl@chessclasses.org

Emergencies (family). Families who have an emergency and need to contact CHESS while the classes are in session should call the administrator or coordinator's cell phone. If unable to leave a message and you need to speak to someone immediately, you may call the MBC office at (703) 361-2146 to relay a message to Tara Taylor or Becky Hauge.

Teacher communication. Teacher contact information may be found on their course prospectus. You can email them via our website, www.chessclasses.org. When you email teachers, please include the class name, student name, and "CHESS." Teachers may use emails or StudyPlace messaging to communicate with the families and students. If a class is canceled due to an emergency during the year, families will be *notified via email*. Therefore, parents should check their email before each class meets.

How CHESS communicates with parents and students.

Email. All families must have access to an email account and check it at least twice a week and before each class meets during the year. Our ability to communicate is compromised when you don't read your emails. We use MailChimp, StudyPlace and other systems to generate emails. You need to train your email server to accept our emails. Parents and students should immediately notify the administration and teachers if their email malfunctions or contact information changes. If by mid-August you are not receiving email notices from the administrator, please contact us!

Your StudyPlace account. We use the messages feature in StudyPlace to communicate news and list message history. In StudyPlace you can also find and edit family account information, set up student accounts, and check billing status. See the *Getting to Know Your StudyPlace Account* document.

Website - www.chessclasses.org. On our website you can learn about and contact us, read teacher biographies, access StudyPlace to browse and search for courses, and find upcoming events.

Facebook page - [CHESS.Homeschool.Classes](#). On our facebook page, we post CHESS-wide and class specific special events, reminders, boast about our students, and occasionally pictures of lost & found items.

Inclement weather notification. CHESS will follow Prince William County's school closure decisions. In case of a one or two-hour delay, we will post a message on our website regarding the start time.

Safety and Security

Dropping off and picking up students. For the safety of the students we recommend drop off and pick up at the curbside in front of MBCR. CHESS uses MBCR's cafeteria doors to access the building. Entrance to the MBCR parking lot for pick up and drop off is at the light on Plantation Lane. There is no temporary parking or waiting in the fire lanes or parking spaces in front of the MBCR building. The church's main building parking lot, second row (designated Cell Phone Lot A) will be used for vehicle parking and waiting, and for student driver parking. Please exit that parking lot onto Stonewall Road. A diagram showing traffic flow is on our website. Please always remember to drive slowly to reduce risks to pedestrian traffic.

We recommend you text your student to let them know when you have arrived. If you are delayed in picking up your student, contact an on-site administrator.

Student sign in/sign out log. Each student must sign in upon arrival (no earlier than 8:05 am) and sign out when they leave for the day. If a student wants to temporarily leave the premises for any reason, he/she must sign out noting their destination and sign in upon their return. Students should never leave the premises with someone other than their parent or their parent's designated driver. CHESS is not responsible for students after they sign out.

Building Security. Doors to classrooms will not be locked while persons are inside the room. The cafeteria entrance will remain locked while students are in the building. In the event of an on-site emergency, CHESS will follow MBC's protocol and may send a text message to inform you. You must provide a cell phone number in your StudyPlace account so that you will be on the list to receive a text message.

We are tenants of MBC and our use of the building is limited to the rooms we have leased. No one has permission to go outside or use any other space on the premises that we do not have permission to use. Upon signing out, parents are fully responsible for students and their actions.

Visitors. Visitors, including parents, must obtain prior approval from the instructor and administrator before visiting a class. Children not enrolled in CHESS must always be under adult supervision while in the building. Only students that are registered for a class on a given day should be on the premises.

Safety protocol. CHESS seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our program. We run background checks on all paid staff and teachers. CHESS does not physically discipline children and does not tolerate child abuse. If child abuse is suspected, CHESS will follow procedures as recommended by HSLDA and in accordance with Virginia law.

Privacy

The personal information collected by CHESS is used exclusively for the CHESS program. Emails to the group are limited to items relevant to CHESS families and students. To be included in the CHESS family directory so that your contact information can be seen by others in the group please check the box in your StudyPlace account. The CHESS staff may take photos of students and classes throughout the year for use in our yearbook and website. You will have the opportunity to opt your student out when completing the emergency care form.

Participation Preview

The Participation Preview meeting is a mandatory orientation (or review) to the CHES program for both new and returning families. Students and at least one parent should plan to attend, however the whole family is welcome. At the meeting we review the Family Participation Agreement, answer questions, cover policy changes and last-minute updates, collect post-dated checks, and complete emergency care forms. We explain how to:

- Access a carpooling list
- Find homework on StudyPlace
- Train your email filters to receive our messages
- Be included in social activities

We'll have special opportunities for all who attend the meeting, and even some door prizes to give away. Each CHES student who attends will receive a free "pizza or snack" coupon. You don't want to miss this informative and fun event! Families will learn about, and have a chance to get involved in, our extra-curriculars such as:

- Graduation
- The Harvest Ball
- Clubs
- More than Lunch
- Honor Society
- Mom's Prayer Group
- Mentoring
- Social Events with HOPE*, our partner.

**CHES is partnering with the HOPE homeschool group as a social and community outlet.*

CHES Symposium

Every January, CHES invites gifted speakers who can help answer questions about and offer support for homeschooling through high school. This event is open to the public, and to any homeschooling family.

CHES Expo

The Expo in the spring is an exciting opportunity for families to hear a brief word from our teachers, meet them, ask questions, and find out what makes them passionate about their subject(s). Some families will add or change their class choices after attending the Expo and hearing directly from our teachers. Parents and students grades 7-12 are welcome to attend, as well as younger siblings; however, no child care will be provided. It is strongly suggested that registered families meet their teachers at least once before the classes begin; the Expo is a great time to do that.

Open House

We host an Open House in the spring each year for families who are interested in the program, as well as for currently participating families. Visitors can sit in on the classes throughout the day. Visiting a class is a great way to determine if a course is a good fit for your student, in addition to a careful reading of the teacher's prospectus for the course.

First Day of Class

It is strongly suggested that at least one parent attend the first class with his/her student. This is an opportunity to connect with the teacher, strengthen your understanding of your role in the class, and get excited about what your student will be learning over the course of the year. Childcare for younger siblings featuring age appropriate videos will be available during the first day of class to allow parents to attend classes with their students. Parents are welcome to occasionally audit the classes during the year.

Academics

Grades. Each teacher will write a prospectus which will include their policies on (1) course objectives, (2) grading scale, (3) grading criteria, and (4) late homework/quizzes/tests. Prospectuses for each class are available throughout the year on the StudyPlace course list.

Teachers use different methods to evaluate the students' work; check their course prospectus for details. Generally, teachers will provide two semester grade reports, the first to be issued approximately two weeks after the first semester ends, and the second to be issued two weeks after the last semester ends. Whereas grading or evaluations are issued by the teachers, it is the responsibility of the parent to make the final judgment of the performance of their student and record the grade on the student's transcript. CHES is not a school and does not provide transcripts for students.

For parents to award a high school credit (aka a "Carnegie Unit"), Home School Legal Defense Association provides a helpful summary on their website: hslida.org/highschool/docs/EvaluatingCredits.asp. In brief, parents may issue one high school credit for a student completing an appropriate textbook or for completing approximately 120-180 hours of work. So for parents to award high school credits for students taking high school level CHES classes, we recommend that parents keep track of their student's study hours. HSLDA recommends logging hours, but not being legalistic about recording each minute. For example, working five hours a week for 32 weeks on a CHES class (including class time), would total 160 hours. Many of our courses require more time than this.

Dropping classes. If a student drops a class, the teacher is not obligated to issue a semester grade for a class whose assessment is based upon a full year of participation. See the "Tuition, Fees, and Payments and Refunds" document for detailed information about dropping a course and your financial obligation.

Honors-option courses. Students looking for more challenging courses may choose the honors-level option of a course if offered, by contacting the teacher. Parents should record an honors course as such on the high school transcript and add .5 points to the grade point for that course. For example, if a student taking an honors course earns an "A," the grade point for that course would be 4.5 rather than 4.0. There is an additional fee for taking the honors level of a course, which is paid directly to the teacher.

Advanced courses. Advanced courses prepare students to take the CLEP exam, but do not receive a weighted grade on the transcript. Learn more about record keeping on our website.

Attendance and Assignments

While many homeschoolers enjoy flexible schedules, the CHES program is not designed to accommodate a spontaneous lifestyle. This is a fast-paced, 33-week program. Punctuality and regular attendance are expected. The hour (or two) that teachers have with the students each week is vital to covering the material and to communication. A student's absence in a class that meets once a week is the equivalent of missing one week of instruction, and, in many cases, it is impossible to make up what has been missed, e.g., classroom lecture and practice.

Absences are considered excused in the cases of illness, family duress, or annual testing. Travel, activities, competitions, and other choices are unexcused; every week your student misses a class for one of these reasons, it counts as an unexcused absence. A student may be dropped from any class upon incurring three planned (unexcused) absences and these students may also not be approved for seats in future CHES classes.

Personal holidays. The CHES calendar lists the holidays that CHES is scheduled not to meet. We respect your family's decision to observe other holidays during the year; however, absences taken for other holidays will be counted as planned (unexcused) absences.

Absences – what to do.

- For planned absences, **parents** (not the students) will notify the teacher at least **two weeks in advance** so that they can follow through with the teacher's absence policy (see their prospectus) which may include picking up, completing, and turning in any homework due in advance. Students are expected to keep up with the homework assignments while they are absent.
- For unplanned absences, **parents** (not the students) will notify the teacher within **24 hours of the class** meeting date to follow up on missed homework assignments and find out what needs to be done to keep the student on track.
- If no reason is given by the parent for an absence, it will be considered unexcused. Please copy the coordinator when you notify the teacher about an absence (coordinator@chessclasses.org).

Tardiness. A student is tardy if they arrive after the classroom door has been shut. Students that are tardy may not enter the class until they have obtained an Administrative Notice form from the administrator or assistant. After obtaining an Administrative Notice, students should go directly to class, enter quietly, hand the notice to their teacher and be seated. Teachers are not obligated to make special accommodations for students who arrive late for class - the students are responsible for what they missed.

Parents should make every effort to communicate with the administration in situations of family duress and emergencies. Generally, situations that could have been prevented are considered unexcused. Repeated tardiness will be considered noncompliance to the policy. The administration will take the following action in reporting unexcused tardiness:

- On the first and second occurrences, a parent will be notified and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the third occurrence, a parent conference with the administration is required
- On the fourth occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class

Homework assignments. It is the responsibility of the student to complete, on time, all homework, tests, quizzes, and other assignments—even those given while the student was absent or tardy. Homework for each class will be given in class and posted weekly by the teacher electronically. You can access homework, if posted on StudyPlace, via our website or directly the Family LMS at <https://chess.StudyPlace.us/family>. For more on the subject, please refer to *Getting to Know Your CHESS StudyPlace Account*. If the homework is unavailable, parents should contact the teacher directly.

When the teacher determines that a student has not complied with their class policies, they may issue an Administrative Notice. Parents will be notified when an Administrative Notice has been issued by the teacher. If a student receives as many as 3 notices in a class, a parent meeting with the administrator is required. A student that incurs 4 notices may be dropped from the class without a refund.

Classes meeting twice a week. The policies above for tardiness, absences, and homework apply differently for classes that meet twice a week. At the end of the first semester (16 weeks), if a student has not been dropped from a class, administrative notifications will reset to "0". The administrative notices from the first semester will not count towards the second semester. For example, if a student was late twice in the first semester and late again in March, that counts as a first violation rather than a third.

Modified assignments. If a parent wants to modify the teacher's guidelines for the class in any way, they should contact the teacher in advance and make a request. It is the teacher's discretion to allow any changes and/or allow a student to audit a class or continue if changes are made. If a parent modifies the assignments and the student is permitted to remain in the class, the responsibility for grading will then fall to the parent.

Special needs. Our program is not designed to serve special needs students, although we are sometimes able to do so. Our teachers have only 33 or 66 hours to cover a year's worth of material and do not have time for remedial work. If you have a child with learning challenges, medical conditions, or who is not at grade level for their age, and you think he or she can keep up with the pace of the work and the teacher's expectations, please discuss your child's special needs with the teacher before applying and provide details when you register.

It is the teacher's discretion to allow a student to take their class when there are special needs. If it is determined during the course of the year that a student's needs are making excessive demands upon the teacher or the class, the student may be dropped from the class.

Conduct

Code of Conduct. CHES upholds a Biblical standard of respect, honor, and conduct for all who participate in the program, parents, teachers, and admins while applying grace. Students are to respect all others, including adults and fellow students, in action, speech, and demeanor at all times.

- CHES teachers and administrators reserve the right to limit and define appropriate content for all student-produced work.
- Cheating and plagiarizing are serious violations. If a student is found to be cheating or plagiarizing, a parent conference is required including the student, teacher and administrator. Teachers may assign a grade of zero for the assignment. If there is a second occurrence, the student will be dropped from the class.
- Harassment and bullying are not appropriate.
- Physical displays of affection (such as hugs) should be brief and friendly, rather than appearing to be romantic. Sexually suggestive remarks are not appropriate.
- For any CHES event, restroom use will be based on the biological sex of the individual as recorded on his or her birth certificate.
- The possession or sale of illicit drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, etc. at CHES or any CHES function will be considered grounds for expulsion and students involved may be turned over to the proper authorities.

Disciplinary action pertaining to Code of Conduct. When an administrator or teacher determines that the code of conduct has been violated, the issue will be dealt with according to the level of offense, based upon the following guidelines. (The administrator or teacher is not exclusively limited to this procedure.)

- A student may be given a verbal warning, and the parents may be notified
- A student may be removed from the class or location where the violation occurred and be placed under supervision, and the parent will be notified
- A student may be dropped from the class where the violation occurred or expelled from the CHES program

Conflict resolution. We recognize that conflict is an opportunity for personal growth. Some conflicts can be quickly resolved by communication. Other conflicts may need a more studied approach. When there is a conflict, involved parties are encouraged to first go directly to the other person to understand interests and search for solutions, then to the administration if needed. While we know not all families involved in CHES are Christian, CHES aims to operate upon Biblical principles. We will deal with conflicts according to the *Peacemaker's Pledge*, a helpful summary from Peacemaker Ministries, which can be read on their website at www.peacemaker.net. All CHES participants agree that any claim related to this agreement shall be settled by mediation in accordance with the *Rules of the Institute for Christian Conciliation* which may be read here: <http://www.peacemaker.net/rules/>. While CHES reserves the right to expel a family for any reason, our desire is to preserve relationships and faithfully work toward peaceful reconciliation.

Attire. CHES is an academic environment and our dress code for all who participate, including students, staff and volunteers, is aimed towards helping us stay focused on our purpose. To prevent having your student's clothing addressed, please check for compliance before you (or they) leave home. Students who are not in compliance may be asked to change clothing before attending class or supplementary clothes may be loaned to the student and they will receive an administrative notice. Here are some standards to go by when choosing what to wear to CHES*:

- No basketball style sleeveless shirts
- Tops are not form fitting with neckline that is not revealing or low cut and completely cover torso regardless of posture
- Tight pants, leggings, jeggings, and tights should be covered by tops or dresses that are at the knee
- No pants with shredded fabric or holes above the knee or words printed on the seat
- Dresses and skirts should reach at least to the knees
- Knee length shorts only

- No visible undergarments (including bras, bralettes, boxers)
- No clothing with offensive images or messages
- Footwear is required

*Some courses may have additional requirements

Facility use. Our intention at CHESS is to care for the facility and spaces we use, to bless MBC our host, and to work together. While on site, participants may be asked to help move chairs or tables, tidy up, serve pizza, or help out in other ways.

- Requests for the use of our hosting facility for any CHESS-related activity must go through the administrator.
- Students are expected to promptly clean up all trash, crumbs and spills for which they are responsible.
- Students will notify a monitor or administrator about any spills or incidents.
- In classrooms, students are permitted bottled water with a lid only.
- White boards and chalk boards are for teacher use only.
- Students must walk, not run, while in the building.
- Items such as lighters, matches, fireworks, weapons, and toy weapons are prohibited.
- The property and all its amenities must be treated with respect; if a student damages classroom materials, equipment, furniture, or property owned by CHESS, a teacher, or our hosting facility, his/her parents will be fined for the damages and may be dropped from the program.

Additional rules specific to any room where CHESS is a tenant may also apply. Use of rooms that CHESS has leased is a privilege and not a right.

Cell phones/electronic devices/internet use/media. Cell phones must be turned off in class. Outside of class, listening to music is OK, but no one else should be able to hear it. Electronic media content should be respectful to others and suitable for all ages. If a student chooses to access, share or view material of questionable content while at CHESS, or if their use of an electronic device becomes questionable or burdensome to others, the student may:

- Receive a warning
- Lose the use of electronic device(s) while at CHESS for the year
- Lose the privilege of staying on the premises when not in class

The administration reserves the right to determine obscenity and offensiveness.

Classes meeting off premises. If a class meets outside of normal class times and is a teacher-led event, the policies that govern CHESS apply to the event.

We consider it a privilege to support you as you homeschool, however, noncompliance to any part of this agreement, financial non-payment, or putting CHESS's use of the facility at risk may result in a student or family being dropped from a class or the program.