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CHESS Family Participation Agreement 2020-2021

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

Helping families homeschool through high school since 2001

CHESS's Mission

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

CHESS operates on three basic principles:

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

CHESS's 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 fifth-grade through twelfth-grade homeschooled students. CHESS 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 for information 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 and considering the appropriateness for their child prior to applying. 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/or electronically, 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 (primary) Tues., Thurs., Fri., 9:00 - 5:00
571-264-3535 (cell) During CHESS hours

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

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

Vickie Pitts, Administrative Consultant (off campus)
Profesora4733@gmail.com

Emergencies (family). Families who have an emergency and need to contact CHESS while classes are in session should call the administrator's 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 provide 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, 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, student achievements and news, and occasionally pictures of lost & found items.

Inclement weather notification. CHESS will follow the City of Manassas'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; enter the pick-up area when you know that your student is ready. The church's main building parking lot, second row (designated Cell Phone Lot 1), will be used for vehicle parking and waiting and for student driver parking. A diagram showing traffic flow is on our website. Please always remember to drive slowly to reduce risks to pedestrian traffic.

We recommend your students text you to let you know when they are ready to be picked up. If you are delayed in picking up your student, contact an on-site administrator.

Permitted Areas. We are tenants of MBC and our use of the building is limited to the rooms we have leased which include the classrooms, the cafeteria, and the interior courtyard. Students do not have permission to use any other part of the church property, including the fields outside, and are not permitted to loiter in the parking lot.

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 an independent student driver wants to temporarily leave the premises for any reason, he/she must sign out, noting their destination, and sign in upon their return. All other students must remain onsite in approved locations until they leave for the day. Students should never leave the premises with someone other than their parent or their parent's designated driver. Upon signing out, parents are responsible for their students and their actions and they no longer have access to CHES-leased spaces.

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, CHES 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.

Visitors. Visitors must obtain prior approval from the teacher and/or administrator before visiting a class. Children not enrolled in the CHES program must be under their parents' supervision while in the building. Only students that are registered for a class on a given day should be on the premises unless they are being supervised by their parent.

Safety protocol. CHES 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. CHES does not physically discipline children and does not tolerate child abuse. If child abuse is suspected, CHES will follow procedures as recommended by HSLDA and in accordance with Virginia law.

Privacy

The personal information collected by CHES is used exclusively for the CHES program. Emails to the group are limited to items relevant to CHES families and students. To be included in the CHES family directory so that your contact information can be seen by others in the group, please check the box in your StudyPlace account. The CHES 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.

First Day of Class

It is strongly recommended 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, with the teacher's approval.

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 CHES 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: hslda.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.

If you anticipate your student will be absent at any time during the year, consult with the teacher before you register to see if those absences can be accommodated by the teacher.

Absences due to illness, family duress, or annual testing are excused. Absences due to travel, activities, competitions, and other choices are recorded as planned absences. It is at the teacher's discretion to determine if and how they will accommodate a student's absence and homework assignments. Students who incur multiple absences may not be approved for seats in future 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 who 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 in 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 and homework apply differently for classes that meet twice a week. At the end of the first semester (16 weeks), 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 occurrence 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. CHESS 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.

- CHESS 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, bullying of any kind, and physical aggression 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 CHESS 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 CHESS or any CHESS function will be considered grounds for expulsion and students involved may be turned over to the proper authorities.
- Items such as lighters, matches, fireworks, weapons, and toy weapons are prohibited.

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 CHESS 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 CHESS are Christian, CHESS 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 CHESS participants agree that any claim related to this agreement shall be settled by mediation in accordance with the *Guidelines for Christian Conciliation* which may be read here: <https://peacemaker.training/guidelinesforchristianconciliation/>. While CHESS reserves the right to expel a family for any reason, our desire is to preserve relationships and faithfully work toward peaceful reconciliation.

Attire. CHESS 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 CHESS*:

- Footwear is required
- No clothing with offensive images or messages
- Knee length shorts only
- No visible undergarments (including bras, bralettes, boxers)
- No basketball style sleeveless shirts
- Tops should not be form fitting or have a neckline that is revealing or low cut and should completely cover the 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

*Some courses and teachers may have additional requirements

Building Care. 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, or help 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.
- 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.

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.