

**COTTAGE GARDEN POLICY FORM**  
**August 2011- May 2012**

**I. Statement of Faith**

We give thanks to Jesus Christ, the one and only manifestation of God in the flesh, for Cottage Garden. He alone has provided for all our needs. He is our Savior and Lord, and we want this co-op to honor Him.

**II. Goals of Cottage Garden**

Through Cottage Garden, we seek to

- A. provide classes, activities, and teaching assistance for one another
- B. expose our children to the concept of authority outside of the home.
- C. enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents,
- D. provide training for new co-ops.
- E. provide a system of academic accountability at the secondary school level.

**III. General Guidelines for Achieving Our Goals**

**A. Provide classes, activities, and teaching assistance for one another-**

- 1. The Cottage Garden will seek to offer physical education, science, language, and elective courses for all school-age (kindergarten or older) children. Preschool classes are designed to emphasize gross and fine motor learning.
- 2. Children receive instruction one day a week at Cottage Garden in a classroom setting. Older children generally have homework assignments to complete during the rest of the week which are assigned at age-appropriate levels.
- 3. Parents stay on-sight for the entire school day, assisting in a variety of ways
- 4. The vast majority of classes are taught by returning, parent volunteers. Paid instructors are occasionally recruited, but simply provide an additional option regarding class selection.
- 5. Cottage Garden meets one day a week (Mondays), following a calendar that has been approved by the membership. The calendar is generally set to allow for a field trip or school holiday every third or fourth Monday. Older students continue to complete their assignments at home during these "off" weeks.
- 6. Students register for at least three periods of classroom instruction. **Please see section IX, "High School Policies," for attendance options of older high school students.**
- 7. Class sizes, age appropriateness, and any prerequisites are determined by the teachers of each class.

**B. Expose our children to the concept of authority outside of the home-**

- 1. Students are expected to obey and respect authority figures at school, which would include their teachers and any parent on campus. All adult members are encouraged to correct any misbehavior they observe.
- 2. Children who create a distraction to learning will be taken to their parent by the teacher assistant for the remainder of that class period. A hall monitor is also available to assist teachers in this way.
- 3. Public displays of affection that become a source of discomfort or distraction to other members are to be avoided.
- 4. The advisory council reserves the right to possibly expel a family if disciplinary problems create a continuing threat to stability and learning.
- 5. Parents must repair or replace any property damaged by a family member.
- 6. Students are not allowed to bring toys or electronic games or devices to Cottage Garden (unless instructed to do so by a teacher) since these items can create distractions. If a student has a cell phone, the cell phone needs to be turned off and put away while at Cottage Garden. Parents are asked to stay off of their phones as much as possible.

**C. Enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents-**

1. Relationships among children are developed through the cooperative experience of the classroom setting. Students treat one another respectfully.
2. At registration, Cottage Garden mothers register for a women's group one period. The women's groups play an intrigal role in fostering strong, supportive relationships among families.
3. Offenses are inevitable in a diversified group, but they can often be avolded with forethought and planning. Listed below are some preventative ideas concerning three general areas of offense (student behavior, clothing, and teaching styles) that have arisen in previous years.
  - a) student behavior

Please think about your child's response at home to correction and the language that your family uses. Responses and language that are acceptable in your home may not be considered acceptable among some families at Cottage Garden. Please prepare your child to make adjustments before classes begin at Cottage Garden.
  - b) clothing

Cottage Garden does not have a dress code, but we can look back to past years and thoughtfully consider clothing choices. Here is a list of clothing choices that you may want to avoid: tight-fitting items, tops that allow cleavage to show, low rise pants, shorts, undergarments (or items that could be mistaken for undergarments) showing, and logos or clothing that may be associated with an anti-Christian culture. Thank you for your careful considerations. (1 Corinthians 8:13)
  - c) teaching styles

Please address students respectfully. What is considered playful teasing or correction in your home could be hurtful to others. If you are a teacher, communicate with the students and parents in a timely fashion concerning assignments or problems that have arisen.
4. When an offense does occur, Cottage Garden members have the Biblical responsibility (Matthew 18:15) to address the issue privately with the offending party as gently as possible. Other individuals are not to be brought into the issue until this initial appeal has been made. Most importantly, please prepare yourself for the possibility that you may be the recepiet of a message appealing to you to adjust your family's freedoms for the sake of others.

**D. Provide training for new co-ops**

1. Cottage Garden members occasionally begin new co-ops in nearby communities. Support and training is available to assist in these endeavors, if desired.
2. When requested to do so, Cottage Garden provides training at The Scroll for individuals who are interested in starting new co-ops.

**E. Provide a system of accountability at the secondary school level**

1. High school teachers grade student assignments and tests and keep parents informed regarding their child's progress. Students must pass subjects at Cottage Garden in order to register for the next level of that training.
2. Please see section IX, "High School Policies," for a detailed description of the accountability program for secondary school classes

#### IV. Cottage Garden Attendance Policies-

##### A. Parental attendance

1. A Cottage Garden member is defined as a parent or legal guardian with at least one kindergarten or older aged student.
2. Since Cottage Garden is a cooperative effort, a commitment to attendance is very important. Attendance is required on Cottage Garden class days, including opening assembly and at least three class periods. Attendance at field trips and special events is optional.
3. Absences should only be in association with sickness, emergency, or other unusual circumstances. Individuals that are ill with a contagious disease, including fever and/or vomiting in the previous 24 hours, thick nasal discharge, or head lice, do not attend Cottage Garden.

*If a family contracts head lice, all family members must stay home until the entire family is clear from signs of lice for ten consecutive days.*

4. A child who is seven years old or older may attend with another Cottage Garden parent in rare situations when their parent cannot attend if a supervision form (available on the web site) has been turned in to the communications coordinator. Children cannot attend without this form in place. In the event an emergency arises during the school day and the parent must leave Cottage Garden for even a short time, a supervision form must be filled out and turned in to the communications coordinator in order for children to stay on campus without the parent.
5. A maximum of five absences are allowed each school year in order to participate in early registration and/or to volunteer to teach in the coming year. Three tardies will count as an absence. If the member provides another adult (such as a grandparent) to attend in their place, fulfill their work responsibilities, and take responsibility for their children for that day, the absence will not be counted.
6. If you know you will be absent, contact the communications coordinator as soon as possible. Due to the hardship that unreported absences place on Cottage Garden, parents who do not contact the communications coordinator about an absence **even once** will forfeit early registration for the following year. Three such unreported absences will prohibit registration.

##### B. Student attendance

1. Students do not attend regularly Cottage Garden without their parents in attendance. Please see information above regarding parental absences and emergencies.
2. Cottage Garden students must be the children or under the legal guardianship of Cottage Garden members. Members are not allowed to bring children whom they are employed to care for.
3. In case of an absence, it is the responsibility of a student or their parent to contact the teacher regarding missed assignments.
4. If a teacher assigns homework, students will be expected to complete the homework unless the teacher indicates that it is optional. Students who do not complete homework assignments on a regular basis may be reassigned to a different class.
4. Student attendance records are only kept at the high school level. Please see section IX, "High School Policies," for details.
6. Students who are 16 years old or older are allowed to attend partial days at Cottage Garden. The parent of the student must assist at Cottage Garden while their child is there. **Again, please see "High School Policies."**

#### V. Registration and Enrollment Guidelines-

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through an on-line reservation process. Members register in blocks according to the following order:

1. teachers (for the coming year) who have turned a syllabus or lesson plans for an entire school year in to the curriculum coordinator
2. administrators and teachers for the coming school year who have not turned in a syllabus
3. other returning members who have met attendance requirements
4. returning members who have not met attendance requirements
5. new members- New members are admitted according to the number of parental working positions that need to be filled, not according to available space for students. New members must:
  - a) be screened through an on-line questionnaire and invited to join
  - b) understand that Cottage Garden is a Christian organization and pledge to in no way proselytize children or parents away from the Christian faith
  - c) personally attend an orientation meeting to discuss the policy form
  - d) have at least one school-age child (defined as kindergarten or older) who will be attending Cottage Garden

- B. Through the on-line process, members reserve positions of service for themselves and then reserve classes for each of their children. These reservations do not equate to registration. Registration is complete once reservations are verified and fees are collected on a scheduled date in late spring.
- C. On fee payment day, each member's reservations are verified in person by the member and an advisory council member. It is necessary for each member to personally come and pay for their family's fees and verify the schedule. If it is physically impossible for a member to be present that day to verify their schedule, the member must send someone to verify and pay for them, or their reservations will be cancelled.
- D. If another Cottage Garden member plans to verify and pay for someone else, they will be required to go to the back of the line after paying for their own family to pay for and verify the second family's reservations..

## **VI. Costs-**

1. Fees for the fall semester are collected in early spring on the fee collection/reservation verification date. Fees for the spring semester are due in early December.
2. Dues are paid per family, not per individual. Dues vary in amount from year to year, but are generally very reasonably priced. (See web site for more details.)
3. Any checks written in December for the second semester dues will not be deposited until early January. A ten dollar late charge will be added to second semester fees that are overdue.

## **VII. Governing policies and administrative positions**

- A. This policy form is the governing policy for Cottage Garden. Any potential changes to the policy form must pass the approval of the voting membership by a 75% or greater vote.
- B. An advisory council, consisting of volunteering members who wish to serve Cottage Garden in an administrative position, serves as a leadership team. The council plans long term direction for Cottage Garden, monitors and meets needs that arise during the school year, and seeks to represent the concerns of the entire group. Responsibilities on the council flux according to need, and the council assigns its own roles. Council members act in an advisory capacity to each other, but final decisions are made by the member who has been assigned a specific responsibility. Council positions include, but are not limited, to the following roles.
  1. Director- acts as a public representative of Cottage Garden, directs regular class

- days and council meetings, and plans and conducts registration and orientation for new members. The director may appoint instructors outside of the normal method of teacher selection if an emergency vacancy occurs in a teaching position.
2. Assistant director- helps meet the technical needs of the school and assists the director, or acts as the director, as needed.
  3. Curriculum coordinators- coordinate the planning of classes and placement of teachers. There are three curriculum coordinators: high school, Jr. high, and elementary.
  4. Treasurer- collects and manages all money collected for operational costs, pays building usage fees and other costs associated with the co-op, and keeps accurate financial records.
  5. Women's ministry director- plans and facilitates Mom's Night Out events, and initiates prayer and other support for special needs of members.
  6. Building Supervisor- is responsible for all aspects of building set up, clean up, and restoration on regular class days.
  7. Special events coordinator- plans and directs field trips and special events.
  8. Communications coordinator- forwards group emails and fields calls of absent members, filling in work positions with floaters

### **VIII. Service Positions**

- A. Teachers- plan and teach the appropriate number of lessons each semester, provide substitute lesson plans for the communications coordinator to use in case of absence, and turn in any supply fees to the treasurer prior to registration. Teachers must be returning members who have met the attendance requirements for early registration. Classes with paid instructors will occasionally be an option for some classes.
- B. Assistant teachers- act as a "hands on" helper for the teacher and as a substitute teacher if the teacher is absent.
- C. Floaters- work under the supervision of the communications coordinator to fill in as necessary for absent members.
- D. Nursery and preschool workers- supervise the safety, needs, and behavior of children, clean and reorder classrooms and playground areas as needed, and monitor the care of equipment.
- E. Building clean-up- Clean and restore the building at various times during the school day. All members who are not teaching or assisting in teaching during the last class period of the day generally help clean the building.
- F. Hall monitors- monitor building safety during class and help contact parents when they are needed by their children.
- G. Women's group leaders- lead a women's group during a class period at Cottage Garden, facilitating and helping build supportive relationships among the group members.

### **IX. High School Policies**

- A. **In an effort to provide confidence to students, parents, and teachers that high school credit was earned, Cottage Garden will seek to support academic accountability and success through the following efforts:**
  1. **Commitment to academic stability-**
    - a). Cottage Garden will seek to provide on-going, stable offerings of math, science, and English classes on the high school level each year. When necessary, paid instructors will fill the positions that are not filled by volunteering parents.
    - b) Additional classes will be available on a year-to-year basis, depending on need and availability of instruction.
  2. **Commitment to academic accountability-**
    - a) Classes at Cottage Garden on the high school level are offered in support of the bulk of

learning which will be accomplished at home. It is not unusual for high school classes to require one to two hours of study at home each day. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to see that assignments are completed in preparation for the next Cottage Garden class day.

b) Teachers will provide class descriptions before registration. The class description will include information about any prerequisites or pre-tests needed prior to registration, as well as a description of the textbooks and grading system that will be used in class.

c) Grades may be based upon participation in class activities and discussions as well as completion of daily assignments, reports, tests, etc., depending on what the teacher deems necessary for the measurement of student success in that subject.

d) High school teachers are encouraged to register for an off-period at school that would be used for grading and reviewing student progress. This off-period would be in addition to the member's women's group time.

e) Teachers are also encouraged to use non-class, field trip weeks to contact parents of students who are falling behind academically. Teachers are free to contact parents in any of a variety of ways: through a personal contact, by leaving a note concerning student progress in the parent's mail file at school, or by calling or emailing the parent.

f) Parents assume ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of their child's progress and can check with the teacher at any time.

g) The parent of a student whose academic failure is hindering instruction may be asked to relocate their child to a different class or study hall.

h) Parents are responsible for high school transcripts. Records of grades at Cottage Garden will be kept for registration pre-requisite purposes, but Cottage Garden in no way seeks to prove accreditation.

i) An advisory council member will serve as a high school academic coordinator. In this role, this individual may assist as needed regarding curriculum choices as well as in the development of grading systems. The academic coordinator will also seek to facilitate communication between teachers and parents regarding student performance and will keep records as needed for registration purposes.

## **B. Student responsibilities-**

1. Students need to complete all assignments in order to succeed in class. When a student is absent, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the teacher for assignments and see that assignments are turned in. Assignments that are two weeks late will be graded as an automatic zero.

2. High school students are allowed a maximum of five absences each school year. Students who have more than five absences may be pulled from the class.

3. Students who are consistently failing a class will be removed from the class and reassigned to study hall.

4. All high school work will be graded and monitored. Students are not allowed to audit classes.

## **C. Dual credit option for 16-18 year olds-**

Many home school students take dual credit courses during their junior and/or senior years of high school. Special provisions are made for these students so they may better access the courses they need for graduation.

1. A student who is at least 16 years old may register for a partial school day at Cottage Garden as long as the parent is in attendance with the student while at Cottage Garden.

2. The parent cannot leave younger children at Cottage Garden to transport the high school student to classes.

3. This partial day option is available only to returning Cottage Garden members and new members who will present for the school day with younger children. Cottage Garden is not available for drop-off students.