

COMMUNITY of life-long learners
OBEDIENCE to the teachings of Christ
VISION for service to the community & world
EXCELLENCE in education

OUR MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

What is COVE?

COVE Homeschooling Association is an all-volunteer homeschooling association. It is established pursuant to Michigan's non-profit corporation statute as a non-profit organization, but does not have 501(c)(3) status. It is an association of parents working out their moral obligation to direct the education and upbringing of their own children. It is an association of instructors who, either voluntarily or by contract for a fee, offer their teaching expertise and knowledge to parents.

Through this association, students are educated according to the free choice and direction of their parents in cooperation with instructors whom parents select. COVE provides the administrative framework enabling these relationships to flourish. COVE rents space at Covenant Community Church and collects fees to pay the rent and insurance. It seeks to do nothing more. COVE is not a school. COVE does not “teach the children.” COVE does not pay instructors. COVE does not know what is best for your children. What COVE does, is offer parents and instructors the opportunity to individualize the education of their students. This opportunity is provided free from governmental regulation and control. It is provided free from private school bureaucracy and standardization.

The rules which COVE does adopt are kept to a minimum and are primarily in deference to our Church host and good stewardship of its facility. Instructors are paid by parents based on the terms upon which they can agree. Many parents and instructors are uncomfortable discussing payment for educational services because our current approach to government and private education has conditioned us to defer to a system of administrative control whereby such matters are removed from parental influence and direction. But if parents are to train up a new generation, they too must strike out into new territory as they reacquire control of their child's education. COVE is not a place where parents drop off their kids and hope for the best. It is, rather, an opportunity to fulfill your moral obligation as a parent to freely oversee the education of your own child without interference from your neighbor, and for your neighbor to do likewise in regard to his or her child without your interference.

Mission

To glorify God through home school classes designed to complement and support home schooling parents and their education of their own children as they equip them for the Lord's call on their lives.

2 Peter 1:4-6 “He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Vision

To be a body of believers who exemplify devotion to Christ, who extend grace to their fellow man, who experience joy in the journey of life, and who encourage interdependence and support of one another.

Core Values

Loving God, loving man - We seek to honor God whole heartedly, body, mind and soul. In addition, we seek to love our fellow man with the same love displayed by Jesus.

Pursuit of Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding - Wisdom is knowledge experienced and applied. Therefore, we learn to understand; when understanding is applied, we gain wisdom.

Grace and forgiveness - Recognition that we are all on a journey of maturation in Christ but are prone to fall short of God's standard. We seek to come first and foremost from a position of grace and mercy, always seeking restoration and reconciliation when possible.

Humility and servanthood - We seek to have the same attitude of Christ who was humble and came as a servant to all. To that end we strive to develop young men and women who have a heart for service to our community and world, a strong character and a sense of citizenship.

True Community - Genuine relationships which are marked by transparent, honest, and open communication. Our desire is to seek each other's highest good in all things.

Christianity

COVE is a Christian Association. In all our behavior and speech, we strive to glorify our Lord Jesus Christ! We aim to respect and are open about each other's beliefs and their expression, recognizing that we each may belong to different denominations and believe slightly differently than others. We agree with the statement of St. Augustine:

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Let's not allow this to be a source of conflict but a sharing in the richness of the Body of Christ. Even in our uniqueness we are all one in Him. Let's try to be sensible and merciful as we share together.

Statement of Faith

- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

New Families

To determine if COVE is a good fit for a family's homeschool education, new families must have an interview with two people from COVE's leadership team before they are allowed to register for classes. One parent or both parents, whichever is easier for the family, will meet with COVE representatives to discuss the family's homeschool experience and their philosophy of homeschooling. In addition, the vision and day-to-day responsibilities of COVE are explained.

To register for the first semester, new family interviews must be done by the end of August. To register for the second semester, they must be completed by mid-January.

For the first year that a family is at COVE, a parent must stay onsite regardless of the age of the student. After the first year, the family can then follow the guidelines listed under Oversight, Coordination, and Safety for what age students may be left on the premises alone.

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FINANCIAL MATTERS

Association funding

Each participating family will pay COVE an annual non-refundable registration fee to cover supply needs, facility costs, liability coverage and limited administrative costs. COVE purchases liability coverage separate from that of Covenant Community Church. Each family pays a share of this cost as a part of annual fees. In addition to registration fees, money raised through lunch sales and other fundraisers goes to cover these costs as well.

Registration

COVE holds two regular semesters each year, fall and spring. Many, though not all, classes are full-year courses. Students register and pay for all classes, even full-year classes, by semester. COVE handles registration paperwork for all instructors. At the time of registration, families will need to turn in: a registration form, a fully signed family agreements form, hold harmless form, emergency medical form, and registration fee. Class selections should accompany the registration paperwork. Families will be connected to the Yahoo Groups at time of registration. Each family will sign up for their job(s) and On-Call slots at the August Parent Meeting (or at the time of your registration after that).

Instructors

All instructors, whether a parent or outside instructor, will be required to utilize curriculum from a Christian/Biblical perspective. Courses and text books will be reviewed and approved by the COVE leadership team.

- COVE's goal is to provide parents with the opportunity to retain instructors in connection with the education of their children who include God's perspective concerning the particular subject matter of their class. Parents ultimately decide if a particular instructor satisfies this goal and are responsible to investigate the credentials, qualification and faith of each instructor they retain. COVE welcomes parental feedback concerning this important goal.
- COVE does not set teacher/instructor qualifications, because it has no teachers/instructors. COVE has no teachers/instructors because COVE is not a school. COVE is an Association that provides opportunity for parents to affect their educational purposes by selection of those instructors and classes that fit their children's needs. Instructors should come to COVE with this goal in mind and COVE's responsibility is to explain that we are a Christian Cooperative Association aiding instructors who include God's perspective into the subject matter of their classes. If an instructor is willing to further that goal, then COVE will consider them for inclusion into the schedule. Parental feedback ultimately judges instructor effectiveness.

Class Fees and Payment

Instructor fees and a non-refundable class fee are due directly to the instructors in the schedule arranged by COVE.

- Instructor fees and class fees for every class are listed on the course description. Materials listed under "family to supply" are not included in these amounts. Class fees are due before the start of the semester (generally at the Orientation Meeting in the fall) and on the first day of class for the winter semester. Class fees are not refundable unless the class is cancelled by COVE.
- Instructor fees are due in two payments, one the first day of class, the second about mid-semester, as noted on the COVE calendar.
- All payments can be placed in the instructor's mail folder. Note in the memo line of your check the student's name and the course name, etc. Please consider making cash payments directly to the instructor and obtaining a receipt. (Receipt books are available for instructor use.)
- Any classes not meeting their minimum number of students on the final class fee due date will be cancelled.
- Ordinarily, a student may drop a class within the first week of classes, and any instructor fees already paid will be refunded. COVE does not expect instructors to refund the first half of instructor fee payment after the first week. Instructors may choose to give a prorated refund for classes dropped later.
- Students whose first instructor fee payment is not paid the first week may be bumped from a class in favor of someone on the waiting list.
- Any class meeting only the minimum number of students is described as a "specified minimum" class. In this situation, the full instructor fee is due on the first day, and no refunds will be made for any "drops." We will be in contact with families if this occurs to make sure all involved want to proceed with the class under these circumstances.
- No grades will be returned or next semester registration processed unless all payments are current.
- Instructors will notify the family and the COVE treasurer within two weeks if payments are in arrears. The leadership will help to contact parents, as needed.

Instructors should not have to remind families of money due, but we are asking that they do so one time if payment is not received. If any unexpected financial difficulty arises, we encourage families to contact instructors to work out payment arrangements. Each of our instructors is an individual business person, as opposed to employees of the Association, so the parties are free to maintain or modify their agreements as they mutually see fit.

Drop/Add Procedure

Drop/Add is just a part of any organization offering different classes to students. The following procedure will help ensure that all aspects of changing classes are handled properly.

1. Drop/Add may be requested anytime after registration by completing a Drop/Add form. Forms will be available on the website. Completed forms should be returned to the Registrar. If classes have already begun, parents please discuss your decision with the Registrar before you turn in the form.
2. Class Fee is not refundable after the last regular registration day unless COVE cancels the class.
3. If not a “specified minimum” class, the Instructor’s Fee will be refunded in full if the class is dropped BEFORE the second meeting of the class. If the class is dropped after attending the second week class, the refund will be prorated to pay the instructor for the weeks attended.

Reminder: Most of the classes have a minimum and maximum number of students. Dropping a class could potentially cancel a class if it falls below the minimum. In this case, to be fair to other students and the instructor, full payment may be required from the family who has dropped the class. If a class falls in this category, all families will be made aware of the fact before the class fee due date. On the other hand, your student may not be allowed to add a class if the maximum student number has been reached.

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DAY TO DAY GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Oversight, Coordination and Safety

- **Leadership:** At least one member of the COVE leadership team, or someone designated by the team, will be on premises at all times, acting as the key point of contact between students, parents, and church personnel. A schedule of these times will be provided to parents to ensure communication with leadership if an issue arises.
- **Parents:** A parent is required to be on the premises supervising their own children at all times, except:
 1. A parent may leave younger children in the care of another adult if a) that adult agrees to supervise the child(ren) and b) the parent signs out at the front table indicating her expected time of return, a contact number and the supervising adult's name.
 2. We will allow High School students to remain on-premises without a parent and will also allow them to take responsibility for a sibling at the Jr. High level. This benefit will be revoked if behavior standards are not adhered to.
- **Security:** All COVE adults wear nametags so that we can more easily recognize each other. Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself and ask the business of anyone without a nametag—you might be welcoming a church member, but that's fine! Unless the weather is too cold, the welcome table is set up at the bottom of the north stairway, where the door is visible, so we can see who is entering. All other doors are exit only. They are locked from the outside and should remain so.

Guests

Any unregistered minor may visit under the supervision of a registered COVE adult or his/her own parent only. We do not have an Open House day, but prospective families may request a visit. A short waiver form, available at the check-in desk and on-line, is required for guests. If a guest wishes to attend a class(es), please contact the instructor for approval before class, if at all possible.

Cleanliness

COVE is a guest of Covenant Community Church. Please treat the property respectfully. Instructors, please be careful to leave your room clean for the next class. Parents, keep an eye on your children. ANY AND ALL messes must be cleaned up as quickly as possible. Students-- food and drink should stay in Myers Hall. We do not want to "overstay" our welcome.

Behavior Standards

Parents and students will be required to sign a 'Code of Conduct' in order to participate. COVE expects all our students to:

- Honor God in all places at all times. Exodus 20:3, James 4:7
- Respect authorities in and out of the class room. Romans 13:1, Daniel 4:17, 1 Peter 2: 13-14
- Respect one another. 1 Timothy 4:12, Romans 15:7, Titus 3:2
- Behave as good friends toward one another. John 15:12,17; Hebrews 10:24,25
- Respect the building and property of others.
- Attend all scheduled/registered classes and groups.
- Arrive on time to each class.
- Complete all homework assignments on time as designated by the instructor
- Dress modestly and appropriately.
- Use electronic devices outside of class only.

COVE expects parents and students to model and reinforce the above conduct.

Dress Guidelines

1. Shorts and skirts should reach at least the fingertips when arms are hanging at the side.
2. Undergarments are cool to wear but not cool to show off. Please make sure they are not in full or partial view of the public.
3. Make sure the 4 B's are covered (bosom, back, belly, bottom) at all times and in all body positions you may find yourself in (stooping, squatting, jumping, etc.) Uncovered tank tops are not allowed.
4. No clothing advertising offensive messages.

Discipline and Grievances

- Discipline will be handled discreetly and with respect for the individual:
- For problems in class, the instructor will speak with the student individually.
- The student's parents will be alerted to the situation and asked to coordinate, with the instructor, the best solution for both the student and entire class.
- A problem between students that doesn't pertain to a certain class should be handled, if possible, by the parents of students involved. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of the Chaplain's services in resolving these matters to the benefit and growth of all the children.
- Parents observing conduct not in keeping with COVE guidelines or which otherwise concerns them should go to that student's parent. If parents would prefer, leadership team members are willing to set up a more formal meeting with all parties involved to suggest possible consequences or remediation. Remember, though, we are not a school and do not impose disciplinary actions.

Display of Affection Protocol

Showing love and compassion to others is strongly encouraged at COVE. In some instances, appropriate displays of affection are also warranted. While it is acceptable for preschoolers and elementary kids to walk hand in hand down the hallway, displays of affection in middle and high school may be perceived differently by parents, instructors and students and could create an environment that is not conducive to learning.

COVE is not a school, but an association of parents and instructors that is intended to assist parents in directing the education of their children. As such COVE does not desire to substitute its judgment for that of a student's parent. Nor does COVE discipline students or attempt to oversee a student's behavior, or in this case a student's display of affection for another student.

Yet, experience has shown that at the middle school/high school level, some displays of affection tend to distract from a parent's educational goals at COVE. For example, prolonged hand holding, prolonged hugging, kissing, piggyback riding, snuggling together or any other body to body display that draws undue attention may be distracting. Students are expected to show good taste and conduct themselves respectfully always.

The following protocol should be followed. If a COVE parent or instructor observes displays of affection at COVE which tend to distract from the educational atmosphere and the student's parent is present, COVE encourages the concerned parent or instructor to discuss their concerns with the student's parent in hopes of their advising their own son or daughter to discontinue the distracting conduct.

If a student's parent is not present, the concerned parent or instructor may offer the students a private, calm and gentle reminder to refrain from such behavior. Thereafter, every effort should be made to subsequently contact the parents of both students by the parent or instructor who witnessed the behavior. All contact should be undertaken with the understanding that the goal is to avoid distractions from the education goal of COVE parents.

If the distracting behavior continues, the COVE Board should be updated accordingly and will take action as may be necessary.

Smoking

No smoking of tobacco in the Covenant building or on Covenant Church premises, including the parking lot. Violators will be asked to leave the premises.

No possession, smoking or vaping of tobacco or e-cigarettes, by persons under 18 years of age anywhere on Covenant premises, including the grounds and parking lot. Violators will be asked to leave the premises.

No possession or smoking of marijuana, or possession or use of controlled substances, anywhere on Covenant premises, including the grounds and parking lot. Violators will be asked to leave the premises and be barred from COVE for the balance of the school year. Police will be called if repeated violations occur.

Family Jobs

In keeping with our value regarding servant hood, parents will be required to contribute to the needs of COVE. In addition to a limited number of teaching positions, parents will serve as “monitors” in study hall, classroom assistants, hallway monitors, nursery workers (nursery is provided for young children of instructors only), set-up/teardown, and clean-up crew, painting crew, etc. Each family will sign up for their job(s) and On-Call slots at the August Parent Meeting (or at the time of your registration after that). The jobs are a year-long commitment. If you plan to only participate in COVE for one semester, please speak with the Jobs Coordinator to plan which job duty you could perform for only a semester. A limited number of the jobs may be performed by an older student, and a limited number can be performed off-site. Once your job responsibility is determined, it must be completed each week in order for your student to attend classes. If a situation arises and you are unable to attend COVE that day or, if for some other reason you cannot do your job, you must a) find a substitute or b) contact the job supervisor for that area or c) contact the overall Jobs Coordinator. If you find that your job is not working out as you anticipated, please contact the Jobs Coordinator to find a solution. Operation of COVE depends on everyone doing their part!

Attendance

Students, you are expected to attend all scheduled classes and groups for which you have registered, to arrive on time, and to complete any homework assignments - on time. Parents are expected to encourage and support their students in doing so. If the work load is too heavy, please speak with the instructor and/or consider taking classes with a lighter homework load for the following semester.

Building Use: Lunch and Free Periods

COVE rents much of the church facility from Covenant Community Church, but there are areas which are off limits to us: the kitchen; the glassed-in foyer (narthex); the sanctuary (except for pre-arranged music lessons); and the office hallway rooms.

The sub-basement open room may be used for dodgeball and other active games with supervision only. We do not have the use of Covenant's hockey and ball equipment. Students who want to use this room when an adult monitor is not present must find an adult to supervise the room before they play. At this time, we do not have use of the youth room.

Pizza lunch is available each Tuesday at 12:30, with snacks and drinks available throughout the day. All funds raised help to defray our building and other administrative costs. If you would like to bring something to contribute to the lunch sale, see the lunch supervisor. Costs will be posted. Feel free to bring lunch from home, but please bring any necessary ice packs or coolers if you wish to keep your items cool. The refrigerators are reserved for COVE supplies. We have a small microwave near the kitchen serving window for warming food and beverages.

Sickness/Absences

Please, if you have a fever or are vomiting - we prefer not to share your malady.

If you cannot attend COVE, please contact those affected by your absence. This would include your children's instructors and your job coordinator. Plan ahead by talking with other parents who could do your job in case you are absent. Then, if you do find yourself unable to attend, contact that person to do your job. Communication is the key!

Instructor Absences

1. We ask that instructors try to find a substitute. If you will be absent and you don't have a sub, feel free to send out a request through the yahoo group for a substitute. Also, you can use someone that you know outside of COVE who has the skills or knowledge that you use in instructing the class. Try to provide appropriate lesson plans to this individual to maintain quality instruction.
2. Please notify the Teacher Liaison and your parent helper regarding who is substituting for you.
3. If you are a paid instructor, consider reimbursing the individual who subs for you from your instructor fees.
4. If you cannot find a sub, or have an emergency, please contact the Teacher Liaison, who will post the information on the Announcements yahoo group.

Inclement Weather

When it is unclear as to whether classes will be held, please consider the following:

1. Often, if Livonia Public Schools are closed, we will be too.
2. Check the announcements yahoo group to see if there has been a cancellation notice. We try to make a decision and send an e-mail by 7:00 a.m.
3. If you live in outlying areas and find the roads too bad to travel, please inform your students or your instructors and job supervisors, if there has been no cancellation notice.

Fire Plan

We ask all adults and older students to be aware of building exits and know which ones are nearest to your location. In the event of a fire, please assist the children in your charge, or those in the room where you are, in lining up and exiting in an orderly fashion through the closest exit. Instructors will follow evacuation plans.

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is provided in almost every classroom and in general use areas. The password is posted in our general announcement area.

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COMMUNICATIONS

Website

Our website: www.thecovecoop.org is designed to share information about COVE with the public. There you will find schedules, course descriptions and general information. We will not post student or family information there.

Yahoo Groups

Communication within COVE will primarily be done via the yahoo groups. We have three different groups for different purposes:

Vital information will be posted on the "announcements" site. Only leadership team members may post to this site. We require that everyone choose to receive every notification from this group. Please make a priority of checking the "announcements" group before you come to COVE each week.

Other information, including non-COVE items of interest to our families will be available on the "fellowship" site. Feel free to post prayer requests, homeschool activities and specials you may hear of, books or services for sale, etc. at this site. (While items and services for sale are welcome on the yahoo group, please ask the leadership team before making these offers during the COVE day.) Remember you can choose to receive these memos as "daily digest" or "no e-mail" if you want. All COVE members can post to this site.

The "instructors" group is for communication for and between instructors. Only instructors and leadership can post to this site.

Rosters

Rosters of all COVE families and instructors will be posted in the "files" section of the announcements yahoo group and updated each semester. They will also be included in the Information Binder at the front table.

Mail files

We have a mail system in place through the use of mail files. Each family and instructor have a folder in the rolling file. Please make a habit of checking your folder each week. Feel free to use these folders for any personal communication.