



## Family Participation Agreement 2024-2025 Table of Contents

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# **CHES - Community Homeschool Enrichment Support Services**

## **Equipping students for life**

### **Family Participation Agreement 2024-25**

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

#### **CHES's Mission**

Our mission is to help families homeschool through high school with confidence. We offer onsite and online 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.

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'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 fourth 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 for information about the approval process.

Classes meet at Emmanuel Baptist Church, 8006 Centreville Road, in Manassas, Va., hereafter referred to as "EBC." If and when CHES meets at other locations, policies specific to the location will be communicated to parents and is subject to change.

#### **The Parent's Role**

Parents are responsible for choosing grade-level appropriate courses for their student. Prior to enrolling, parents should read the prospectus for the course and contact the teacher with questions. Parents are responsible for staying involved in their student's education; tracking their progress; monitoring homework assignments and timely completion of them; and satisfying the requirements on the teacher's prospectus. Parents are responsible for the final judgment of the performance of their student in each class, for recording and documenting their grades, and monitoring home study hours. Parents are responsible for their student's arrival time and class preparedness; for notifying the teacher regarding absences and working with the teacher regarding missed homework. If parents have questions or concerns about a class, they will first communicate directly with the teacher.

#### **The Student's Role**

Students are responsible for arriving on time for class; attending all classes; complying with the teacher's prospectus requirements; meeting assignment deadlines; participating respectfully in class discussions; coming prepared for class which includes bringing textbooks, completed assignments and all supplies needed to participate fully in the class; respecting the teachers, administrators and their helpers, fellow students, and the facility.

#### **The Instructor's Role**

Instructors are responsible for teaching the course subject as stated in their course prospectus, providing weekly homework assignments to the students and parents, providing semester progress reports in a timely way, contacting the parent if a behavioral problem arises or if homework is not being completed (according to their class policies), teaching from a biblical worldview, and being positive and supportive of homeschooling.

#### **The Director's Role**

The director and her support team are responsible for hiring teachers as independent contractors; determining which classes will run; arranging the schedule and calendar; processing registrations and payments; issuing scholarships; writing policy and meeting with the advisory board; maintaining the website and advertising outlets; coordinating volunteers and events;

paying expenses and maintaining the program's support systems; assisting in disciplinary matters and conflict resolution; acting as facility liaison; and generally taking care of policy and paperwork so the teachers can concentrate on teaching. You are encouraged to contact the director 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, Director: tara.taylor@chessclasses.org  
703-753-1901 (primary) Tues., Thurs., Fri., 9:00 - 5:00; 571-264-3535 (cell) On campus
- Vickie Pitts, Administrative Advisor (off campus): Profesora4733@gmail.com
- Coordinator on campus: coordinator@chessclasses.org

**Emergencies (family).** Families who have an emergency and need to contact CHESS while classes are in session should call the director's or coordinator's cell phone. If unable to leave a message and you need to speak to someone immediately, you may call the EBC office at 703-368-9206 to relay a message to Tara Taylor.

**Emergency Care (onsite)** If an emergency or urgent medical problem involving your child occurs, every effort will be made to contact the parent(s) using the contact information provided in StudyPlace. If emergency contacts cannot be reached, permission is hereby given to the medical provider selected by the CHESS director/coordinator or teacher in charge to secure proper medical treatment.

**Teacher communication.** Teacher contact information may be found on their course prospectus or you can email them via our website, [www.chessclasses.org](http://www.chessclasses.org). When you email teachers, please include the class name, student name, and "CHESS." Teachers may use a variety of platforms to communicate with parents 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 regularly and before each class meets throughout the year. Our ability to communicate is compromised when you don't read your emails. We primarily use MailChimp and StudyPlace to generate emails. You need to train your email server to accept our emails. Families agree to receive emails from us upon enrollment in the program and may unsubscribe after the current academic year ends. 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.** The messages feature in StudyPlace is used to communicate news and provides message history. You can also find and edit family information, set up student accounts, and the check billing status of your account. See "Getting to Know Your StudyPlace Account" for more details.

**Website - [www.chessclasses.org](http://www.chessclasses.org).** On our website you can contact us, read teacher biographies, browse and search for courses, access your family account through StudyPlace, and learn about upcoming events.

**BAND App** In order to receive emergency notifications via text, parents must download and join the group app.

**Instagram – [chess.homeschool](https://www.instagram.com/chess.homeschool)**

**Facebook page - [CHESS.Homeschool.Classes](https://www.facebook.com/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 **NOT** follow Prince William County school closure decisions. In the event of a closure or a one or two-hour delay, an email will be sent and a message will be posted on StudyPlace with details.

## Safety and Security

CHESS seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our program. CHESS administrators, teachers, and volunteers are the primary source for implementing the procedures in the CHESS Security/Safety booklet. All CHESS participants are required to abide by these policies.

**Dropping off and picking up students.** For the safety of the students, we recommend drop-off and pick-up at the covered porch entrance at EBC. A diagram showing traffic flow is on our website. You will receive additional drop-off/pick-up policy details via email. We recommend having your student text you 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 EBC and our use of the building is limited to the classrooms we have leased, the fellowship hall (cafeteria), and restrooms. Students do not have permission to use any other part of the church property, while participating in CHESS. Parents and their children may use outside spaces if they are supervised by their parent.

**Cafeteria Use.** The cafeteria is available for eating, studying, and socializing throughout the day for students (and parents) who have an opening in their schedule or are waiting for a sibling in another class. Headphones are recommended for those who need quiet to study.

**Student sign in/sign out log.** Each enrolled student must sign in upon arrival (no earlier than 8:15 am) and sign out when they leave for the day. If an independent student driver wants to temporarily leave the premises for any reason, they must sign out, noting their destination, and sign in upon their return. All other students must remain on-site 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 CHESS-leased spaces.

**Building Access and Security.** All CHESS participants will use EBC's covered porch entrance. In the event of an on-site emergency, CHESS will follow the procedures found in the CHESS Security/Safety booklet. Doors to classrooms will not be locked while persons are inside the room.

**Visitors.** Visitors must obtain prior approval from the teacher and/or administrator before visiting a class. Children not enrolled in the CHESS 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.** CHESS runs background checks on 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

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, check the "Include in Family Directory" box in your StudyPlace account. CHESS staff may take photos of students and classes throughout the year for use in our yearbook and on our website. You will have the opportunity to opt your student out when completing the CHESS Parent/Student Signature form-Agreement & Permissions.

## First Day of Class

It is highly recommended that one parent attends the first class with their 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. Childcare for younger siblings 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. The prospectus for the classes are found here: <https://chess.studyplace.us/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. CHESS 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: <https://hsllda.org/post/3-ways-to-determine-my-teens-high-school-course-credit>. In brief, parents

may issue one high school credit for a student completing an appropriate textbook or for completing approximately 120-150 hours of work. For parents to award high school credits for students taking high school-level CHESS 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 33 weeks on a CHESS class (including class time) would total 165 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 may record an honors course 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

**Commitment to the group learning experience.** While many homeschoolers enjoy flexible schedules, the CHESS 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 CHESS calendar lists the holidays that classes do not meet in person. 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.

- Remote access to class, **if possible**, must be prearranged.
- 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 her 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 by the teacher electronically. The teacher's prospectus will explain how you can access homework. 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 enrolling 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

**Respect for others.** CHES considers the Bible to be the ultimate authority in life and the standard upon which we base our policies. CHES upholds a biblical standard of respect, honor, and conduct, while applying grace, for all who participate in the program, which includes students, parents, teachers, and administrators. As we believe that God created only two genders, male and female, we will address students according to their biological gender/sex at birth. CHES participants agree to respect each other in action, speech, and demeanor at all times.

- CHES teachers reserve the right to limit and define appropriate content for all student-produced work.
- Cheating, plagiarizing and submitting AI-generated work as one's own are serious violations. When a student is found to be cheating, plagiarizing, or submitting AI-generated work as one's own, a parent conference will be required with the student, teacher, and administrator. Teachers may assign a grade of zero for the assignment. If there is a second occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class. The use of AI systems such as ChatGPT, are prohibited unless specifically permitted or required by the teacher. Students are responsible to produce their own ideas and original work for their assignments and, if asked, must be prepared to show their sources and defend their creative process behind the assignment.
- 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. During CHES events and while on the property, students agree to behave towards one another as "singles," regardless of any outside relationships. Sexually suggestive remarks and behavior are not appropriate.
- For any CHES event, in order to protect all persons present on campus, restroom use will be based upon 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.
- Items such as lighters, matches, fireworks, knives, 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 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. Conflicts will be managed according to the Peacemaker's Pledge, provided by Peacemaker Ministries, found here: <https://www.iccpeace.com/peacemakers-pledge/>. All CHES participants agree that any claim related to this agreement shall be settled by mediation in accordance with the Guidelines for Christian Conciliation which can be found here: <https://www.aorhope.org/icc-guidelines>. 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. Adhering to the dress code is one way that we show respect to others. Students who are not in compliance may be asked to change clothing before attending class, or loaned supplementary clothes and they will receive an Administrative Notice. Here are some standards to go by when choosing what to wear to CHES\*:

- Footwear is required
- No clothing with offensive images or messages
- No visible undergarments (including bras, bralettes, boxers)
- No basketball style sleeveless shirts
- Tops should be modest, not form fitting or low cut and completely cover the torso regardless of posture
- No pants with shredded fabric or holes above the knee or words printed on the seat
- Form fitting pants should be covered by tops that are 3" above the knee or longer
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must be modest - 3" above the knee or longer
- Extremes of dress, hairstyle, and makeup are not appropriate, including the overt appearance of trying to identify oneself as other than their biological gender at birth.

\*Some courses and teachers may have additional requirements

**Building Care.** Our intention at CHES is to care for the facility and spaces we use, to bless our host facility and to work together. While on site, participants may be asked to move chairs and tables, clean up, or help in other ways.

- Requests for the use of our hosting facility for any CHES-related activity must go through the director.
- 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 CHES, a teacher, or our host facility, his/her parents may be fined for the damages and dropped from the program.

Additional policies specific to any room where CHES is a tenant may also apply.

**Cell phones/electronic devices/internet use/media.** Cell phones must be turned off in class. Outside of class, use of electronic media should not be audible to others. Media content should be respectful to others and suitable for all ages. If a student chooses to view or share material of questionable content while at CHES, 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 CHES 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.

## Liability

**Classes meeting off premises.** If a class meets offsite and is a teacher-led event, the policies that govern CHES apply to the event.

**Field trips and CHESS sponsored events.**

Parents are solely responsible for their child's transportation to and from CHESS field trips and sponsored events and for the supervision of their child before, during, and after the event. If the parent will not remain physically present during the event, they are responsible to make arrangements for their child's supervision with the teacher or their designated supervising parent and will communicate that responsibility to their child with acknowledgement of the teacher or designated supervising parent **prior to the event**. Participants will not leave the event without permission from the teacher or designated supervising parent, and will not leave with someone other than their parent or parent's designated driver. CHESS Family Participation Agreement policies apply during field trips and CHESS sponsored events. Parents will communicate the policies for attending events with their child and are responsible for their child's compliance. This document must be signed by the parent of the attending child and be turned in to the teacher prior to attending any field trip or CHESS sponsored event.

**Social Events Non-Sponsored.**

Any gathering of CHESS participants that is not a CHESS sponsored class meeting lead by the teacher, a class field trip, or NHS event, such as those organized through the BAND app, is considered non-sponsored. CHESS families and students who organize and/or engage in social activities together do so at their own risk. Un-sponsored social events must NOT use CHESS's name, logo, or words which imply that the event is sponsored by CHESS. Parents should take reasonable precautions to ensure that students are supervised by responsible adults during any social activity.

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.