



MEMBER HANDBOOK

UPDATED JUNE 2024

Welcome!

We are so excited you are considering partnering with us in this homeschool journey. This group was founded as a way for home learners to grow together. Our hope is that you find the community of The Social Homeschooler to be as valuable as we do!

When learning alongside your child and exploring ways to further their life experiences, do you wish you had a group to lean on and pull from? Do you have the perfect idea to provide your child with invaluable knowledge, but you need a few more friends to join you to accomplish the feeling of group learning? Do you wish for a fun little holiday party, complete with games or crafts, with your child surrounded by others all enjoying themselves? Do you want to see familiar faces and create a sense of connection? Or do you just wish you had another home educator to talk with, share thoughts with, confide in, or seek advice from?

The Social Homeschooler is the perfect place for you to accomplish all that and more! With connection to a dedicated and welcoming community, there are no limits to the ways you can enrich your homeschool experience. We strive to create an environment that welcomes connection, growth, and learning. And we do it without compromising the flexibility that we value!

As a member, we ask that you contribute your time and your passions to foster learning and engage in the opportunities provided by other group members. Through this participation you will find value in the comradery with other homeschool families, inspiration in learning and skill sharing, and the value of working towards a common goal. The more you participate the more value you will gain!

In the hand book below, you'll find all the information you need to become a member, the definition of the flexible participation guidelines, suggestions on how to plan activities, and insight into our community standards. Still want to know more? Reach out to us with any questions or join us at a Recess event to get to know us better!

We look forward to growing in community alongside you and your family.

The Social Homeschooler Team

This volunteer led group is built upon the idea that it is not what the organization can provide for our families, but what we can build together.

The Social Homeschooler is a collection of families with the common goal of seeking community with other homeschool families. We are a group who meets in person to take community building to the next level.

Who We Are:

The Social Homeschooler is a relaxed social co-op that focuses on community building. Because learning is more fun with friends, we strive to create a space that allows for opportunities to learn, connect and grow. We focus on interest led activities and embrace the notion that learning doesn't require a classroom. By providing a platform to host events tailored to your unique interests and through the varied locations and engagement methods our hosts provide, we are able to achieve this well-rounded approach.

Our flexible participation and varied meeting dates and locations means no sacrificing your calendar just because it's co-op day. This means that you can travel without worry, add in extra curricular without stretching yourself thin, or even participate alongside a traditional co-op. With a space to connect and collaborate there are endless possibilities to expand upon our children's learning. With dedicated community support we will all excel!

Mission Statement:

The Social Homeschooler is an inclusive social group open to homeschool families of all beliefs and learning methods, with the idea that variation creates a beautiful tapestry that is our community. We strive to connect local, active homeschool families in hopes that friendships might be forged, interests and skills shared, and our community broadened. Our hope is that by bringing people together we will create a rich and varied homeschool environment that piques curiosity and drives learning, one that creates a solid foundation for education and friendships.

The Social Homeschooler operates as a social club as recognized under definition 501(c)(7).

Membership:

Benefits of Membership:

Gain a platform to build community for your children both from attending events planned by fellow homeschooling parents and by planning events for other homeschoolers to attend with you!

- Connections to dedicated homeschool families in the area who are actively seeking to build a social community for their children.
- You and your children will have the opportunity to attend standing monthly events hosted by The Social Homeschooler, including but not limited to:
 - Board game days, book clubs, Community Conversations events, Recess days, interest led events
 - Annual parties such as meet and greets, potlucks, picnic and field day, homeschool resource swaps, book exchanges
- Many interest based events planned by fellow families. Examples include hikes, home economics, field trips, organized classes alongside other homeschoolers, etc.
- Ample opportunities to receive and offer support with other home educators in the form of in-person meetings and homeschool resource sharing. The amount of organic conversation which takes place at events is priceless and truly opens the door for learning and mentoring alike!
- Peer led events are welcomed and encouraged. By using this platform to host your own peer led event(s), you open the door for your child to gain invaluable experiences as they share their skills and establish mentorship opportunities.
- Opportunities for full family participation. Spouses, grandparents, and children who are not homeschooling are still an important part of your homeschool and we want to include them in the fun!

- Connection to the broader local homeschool community through Recess dates and crossover events.

Membership Application:

Membership is per family, per term. A term is one full calendar year, running from July 1 through June 30. All memberships must be renewed annually at the July 1 enrollment date.

All families seeking membership must have at least one child actively homeschooling. The homeschooling child(ren) must be at least 5 years old and/or younger than 19 years old by August 31st of the current year. Any family interested in obtaining a membership and attending events hosted by members of The Social Homeschooler must first:

1. Complete a member application. You can complete an application on the website thesocialhomeschooler.org.
2. Pay annual membership dues upon application approval. Payment should be submitted via PayPal or check.
 - [PayPal.me/socialhomeschooler](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?xof=1&source=merchandise)
 - Checks must be received before payment is considered official

Applications will be approved/denied within 7 business days. You will be notified of your application status via email from thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com and payment information will be enclosed. If, for any reason, we are unable to process your application or if your application is denied notification will be sent via email listed above. All returned applications will receive a brief explanation and applicants will be eligible to resubmit your application at a future date.

Within 14 calendar days following your application approval, membership fees must be paid in full. Hardship waivers may be available upon request.

After the completed application is approved and membership fees are received, you are an official member of The Social Homeschooler. You will receive access to our private Facebook group and an invitation via email to view our Google calendar.

Member Requirements:

Quarterly Requirements:

In order to keep membership status active we require that all members, at a minimum, attend the following events* each quarter**.

- One (1) Community Conversations event; Community Conversations events (CC Events) are hosted by The Social Homeschooler and will be labeled as such. Examples of Community Conversations events include: All full group and full family events as well as Mom Coffees/Dinners, and Book Clubs.
- One (1) Friday Recess hosted by Homeschool Recess Leavenworth County on Facebook
- Three (3) Events; Events include anything that isn't a Community Conversation or Recess.

Annual Requirements:

It takes each one of our members working together to accomplish a well knit community. With this in mind, we also ask that you fulfill the following minimum in a calendar year:

- Attend orientation
 - This is the opportunity for our group to be under the same roof at the same time to meet, mingle, and be inspired as we step into a new school year!

Our community members find they receive the most from The Social Homeschooler when they are actively engaged with fellow members by attending events. The more events you attend, the more you will find you have in common with other members and the more tailored all the events become.

- Orientation will be held in the evening on Thursday, August 12, 2024
- Lead, assist in planning, or support an event at least once per semester***
 - Attending events is such a great way for you and your children to explore different areas of interest. However, the best way to see an event that is tightly aligned with you or your children's interests is to plan or support the planning of an event yourself.

*While we feel the member requirements are minimal (and hope you will attend more than the minimum), we understand life happens and many things are outside our control. If you find you are having difficulty meeting member requirements, please contact board members at thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com. We will gladly work alongside you to find a solution to keep your membership active.

**Quarters are defined as:

- Winter Quarter: Jan 1 - Mar 31
- Spring Quarter: Apr 1 - Jun 30
- Summer Quarter: Jul 1 - Sept 30
- Fall Quarter: Oct 1 - Dec 31

***Semesters are defined as:

- First Semester: Jul 1- Dec 31
- Second Semester: Jan 1- Jun 30

The Social Homeschooler's intent is to build community primarily via in-person events. All events are planned and hosted by parents, just like yourself. It is our hope that The Social Homeschooler will present opportunities to find your niche within our community.

Membership fees:

- Fee amount \$35
- Fees cover one full year of membership, which runs from July 1-June 30.
- All fees are non-refundable, regardless of the reason for membership termination.
- Fees are received as a donation to The Social Homeschooler. Fees collected do not pay salary to any volunteers or members. Our organization is 100% volunteer run by fellow group members.
- Fees will be used throughout the year, at the discretion of the board, to offset the costs of events hosted by The Social Homeschooler.
- Members joining after July 1 may request their membership fees be prorated. Rates will be prorated by quarter.

Membership Renewals:

- Must be renewed annually by the July 1 registration date.
- Email reminder of renewals and renewal application process will be sent to all members in good standing ahead of renewal deadline.
- Renewal forms can be found on the website thesocialhomeschooler.org
- Any returning members who do not complete the renewal form and make payment by the July 1 date must complete a new membership application.

Revoking Membership:

Unfortunately there will be times where we have to make the decision to revoke membership. Membership revocation could result from the following:

1. Not upholding membership requirements
 - The primary focus of The Social Homeschooler is to foster in person interactions. This is why we have set the requirements for membership as listed in *Membership - Member Requirements*. If a member does not uphold their requirements, they will receive a written advisement from The Social Homeschooler board. If there is not a resolution after the written advisement is received, membership may be revoked.

2. Not upholding Community Standards.
 - A violation of our Community Standards will result in a written advisement directly stating what standard was violated. If the violation continues and/or a resolution is not achieved, membership may be revoked.

Community Standards

We strive to keep our space welcoming and enjoyable for all our members!

- When hosting or attending an event associated with The Social Homeschooler, you are a representation of our community as a whole. Members are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner; bullying, violence, discrimination, vandalism, vulgarity, or damage to property will not be tolerated.
- When interacting with others on The Social Homeschooler public page, The Social Homeschooler private page, and the Recess page members are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner; bullying and discrimination will not be tolerated.
- Be courteous when using public and private spaces. All locations used for events, public or private, should be left in a better condition than when we arrived.
- Be sure you understand the abilities of your own children/watch your children so the burden of their safety is not displaced on other members.
- Make yourself available during events to assist the host should an unforeseen need arise.
- As events allow, participate alongside your children to build many priceless memories.
- We encourage clear and direct communication among members. If a conflict arises that does not violate our Community Standards, please address your concern directly with the individual. If the conflict needs a mediator, members of the board will be happy to assist you.

Event Policies:

- Whether you are planning, hosting or attending an event, we ask that you do not share the information outside of our immediate group. This ensures that privacy is respected for all members. Additionally, we ask that you do not share photos from your event publicly without the approval from the individual or parent.

Hosting Events

Things to Consider:

- Be aware of the current events on the calendar. It is ideal that events do not overlap.
 - Currently scheduled events can be viewed via The Social Homeschooler Google calendar.
- Please ensure all hosts of this event are present and visible to guests during the event.
- Consider that multi-age play and non-gender specific events can truly build interest led interactions/play, opening many learning opportunities for our children.
- Hosting events is 100% a volunteer venture; event hosts may not be compensated for their time. You may, however, charge a nominal fee for event supplies or request attendees assist by bringing items. If a fee is charged, please keep all receipts in order to present them when asked.

Hosting events or classes is at the heart of The Social Homeschooler. We are excited for you to share your passions and interests with the group.

- To utilize a for profit organization in your event, contact the board for further discussion and approval. Not all for profit requests will be approved, these will be handled on a case by case basis. All for profit organizations may be vetted prior to approval. This does not apply to field trip opportunities.

How to Host an Event:

- New members: before hosting an event, you must first attend a Community Conversations event. We want you to have the best outcome for your first event and that will come more easily after you have met other group members!
- Complete the [Event Request form](#) by following the link or by locating the link in The Social Homeschooler private Facebook page.
 - The form should be completed no less than 2 weeks in advance of the event. Exceptions may be allowed by the board.
 - The form should be completed in its entirety. If the form is missing information you will be notified via email to resubmit the Event Request form.
 - Multi-date events that carry over into a new quarter must have a new form submitted.
- After approval, a board member will notify you via email with a link to the Google calendar events.
 - As the host, it is your responsibility to then advertise the event and manage logistics from there.
 - Advertising options include emailing members information about the event, creating a facebook event in the private group, and creating Facebook posts to drive interest.
- If there is a limit on the number of guests who can attend an event, consider the following ways to select members:
 - First come, first serve
 - Lottery draw: give members a deadline to put their names into a “hat” and then randomly select members to attend.
 - Age requirements: some events may be more ideal for specific ages than others, let the group know when advertising your event. This will ensure the right audience is drawn to your event.
- If you want to collaborate on events please use the chat in the private Facebook group or email list in directory to find others to partner with. You can also look for event committee opportunities to help in hosting events and join in on a Town Hall to work on collaborating with others.

Event Cancellation Policy:

- Should an event be canceled, it will not be removed from the calendar, but rather will be reflected as “canceled” or “postponed”.
- **For the Host:**
 - If you are the host and must cancel an event, please notify attendees and thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com as soon as you are aware of the need to cancel.
 - If you as the host cancel an event and a monetary fee was taken, rescheduling the event is requested. Rescheduling must be in a timely fashion and no later than 3 months from the original event date. If rescheduling is not an option, a full refund must be given to attendees no later than 1 week after the event date.
- **For the Attendee:**
 - If you are an event attendee and must cancel an event, please notify the host immediately.

- If, as an attendee, you paid for the event, you may ask the host for a refund of your fee. There is no guarantee your refund will be granted, refunds for events canceled by attendees will be at the sole discretion of the event host.

FAQ:

We've created this FAQ list as a quick reference guide to get you started (and confident in your ability) planning. We can't wait to see what ideas you bring to our community!

- **What kind of event can be hosted?** Events of any type can be hosted; our only requirement is that the event host is not making a profit.
- **Who can host an event?** Any Social Homeschooler member in good standing may host an event. Please refer to the above Membership – Member Requirements for clarification of a member in good standing.
- **Does hosting count towards my attendance?** Yes! When you host an event it counts towards your host requirements as well as attendance for an Event!
- **When can events be hosted?** Events may be hosted at any time. Some things to consider when planning the timing of your events are when guests will most likely be available to attend. There is no limit on what day or what time you choose.
- **Where can events be hosted?** Events can be hosted in any safe environment at the risk and discretion of host and attendees.
- **Can you charge for an event?** You can place nominal fees on an event as long as the amount does not surpass the cost of the event. As an alternative to event fees, you can request that attendees bring the supplies necessary for your event.
- **Why is it preferred that events do not overlap?** By not having overlapping events, we ensure that members aren't forced to choose, possibly resulting in unintentional low attendance. Some competing events for the same calendar days may be approved at the discretion of the board. Exception examples include: an age specific event was added to the calendar first, then a whole community event is submitted after. The whole community event will be approved.
- **What happens if an event is canceled?** Rescheduling of the event is requested as the next step. Should rescheduling not be an option, refunds due to cancellations are required on the part of the host should they cancel and not reschedule.
- **How are attendees determined?** We find great value in multi-age play and varied peer groups, however, each host can determine who to extend the invitation to by listing this in the Attendee Capacity section of the Event Request Form. When there are limitations on attendees, the host can determine how attendees are selected. For example: first come first serve basis, a lottery system, etc.
- **These FAQs were great and I do want to offer up my skills or interests for the group, but I still feel apprehensive about hosting an event. Help!** That's ok! There are all different ways to share your time and skills with the group and we want to help you find a way that YOU are comfortable participating! Attending a Community Conversations event will give you the opportunity to speak with other parents who have hosted or supported an event. Sometimes all it takes is a conversation to get the ideas flowing and oftentimes you can find someone who will host alongside you to take a little of the pressure off. If you still feel uncertain on how to best host, reach out to the board at thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com, we'll help you discover how you can use your passions to create the perfect event!

- **How do I know if I am meeting requirements?** Members are required to track their attendance and be sure requirements are being met. You can log your attendance in your calendar or make a checklist to ensure all you are staying on track. If you need clarification on your attendance you may reach out to the board at thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com but please do not use this as your tracking method, as it is time consuming to our volunteers.
- **What if I am behind on attendance requirements?** While our requirements are few, sometimes life happens and things just don't go to plan. If you are finding yourself behind on requirements, don't fret yet! Reach out to the board at thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com and let's start the conversation to get you back on track!
- **How do I share my ideas for the group?** We love to hear all the ideas you have for keeping this co-op great and increasing the value for the local homeschool community! You can reach out to the board in person or via email at thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com to share ideas. You can also join us for our quarterly Town Hall meetings to hear what is happening behind the scenes and to share thoughts.
- **What is Town Hall?** Town Hall is a meeting held quarterly to invite members to connect with the board in matters relating to the function and direction of the group. This is a place to hear about events being planned, bring ideas for adding to or improving upon our events, and to ask any questions you might have pertaining to The Social Homeschooler. This is also a space to meet with other members to collaborate on events.
- **What is Recess?** Recess refers to our sister group Homeschool Recess Leavenworth County, found on Facebook. This group serves the local community free of charge and free of commitment. It provides an online space to resource share, have homeschool related conversation, as well as sell/gift homeschool items. Its primary focus is in person park dates hosted weekly to get our local homeschool community connected in person in a meaningful way and allow space for connections to be made.
- **Do I have to wait until July to join?** Enrollment is always open for The Social Homeschooler and you can join any time you'd like! So if you're new to town, just hearing about us, or maybe even just starting to homeschool, there is no time like the present to jump in on the fun!

Your voice matters in this community! The board is here to answer your questions and open to ideas that add value to this community.

Board

The board serves as the voice of the community members, ensuring that the group grows alongside its members and fulfills the need within the community of a safe space for our families to learn, grow, and connect. You can approach any board member with thoughts, ideas, or concerns at any time. Additionally, you can weigh in on decision making and interact with the board in bringing to light new opportunities by participating in Town Hall Meetings. These take place quarterly and all are encouraged to come make their voices heard.

The board consists of up to five active group members, with a minimum of 2 to do business, who meet quarterly to keep things running smoothly; plan, problem solve, bookkeep, vision cast, and vote.

The board consists of a director and officers.

The Social
Homeschooler board
is made of parents,
just like you! If you
want to help make
our homeschools
thrive, reach out!

Officer Elections

Each officer position is committed to one full fiscal year term (July-June). Officer elections are held annually, the first Friday in May of each calendar year. Upcoming officer elections will be advertised within The Social Homeschooler. All submissions for open positions are due the second Friday in April in advance of the election.

Eligible Candidates

Any member in good standing may submit their name as candidate consideration. A minimum of four quarters of consecutive active member participation is preferred, but not required. All potential candidates are self submitted; forms for consideration will be provided in advance of each voting date.

Voting

- All members in good standing must vote. Officer positions are selected as majority rules.
- Current Director(s) may not cast votes for any officer position.
- Officers will be notified within 48 hours of election. Full group announcement will be formally made no later than June 30.

Director Elections

The director position is committed to three calendar year terms (Jan 1-Dec 31). Director will be selected by current officers. Upcoming Director elections will be advertised within The Social Homeschooler. All submissions for director positions are due November 5 in advance of the election held the first Friday in December. .

Eligible Candidates

In order to be considered eligible for consideration as director, a member must fulfill the following:

- Served as a member of The Social Homeschooler for 4 consecutive quarters
AND
- Served a minimum of one full term as an officer

If a potential candidate does not meet the above requirements, they may be considered eligible for consideration as director if they fulfill the following:

- Served as a member of The Social Homeschooler for 12 consecutive quarters (3 full years with no inconsistencies)

Current director may submit their name for additional terms.

Voting

- Considerations for director are self-submitted. Submissions will be accepted November 1, with submissions closing on November 5.
- Current officers will vote for director positions following interviews of director by officers.
- Director will be selected by majority vote by present officers. Director selections will be announced by December 30.

The board has the important task of bringing ideas to the table to continue to create fun and meaningful space for connections within The Social Homeschooler. If you have ideas and are interested in running for a position on the board and have questions please reach out to one of our current board members or email thesocialhomeschoolerlv@gmail.com.

