



Participation Agreement

Parents and students agree to comply with the policies herein as a requirement for taking classes at CHESS.

Our Mission Statement: To support homeschooling parents of seventh through twelfth grade students by providing classes to prepare students for college and for life.

CHESS classes are designed to supplement and enrich the homeschool. Classes meet one or two days per week, while the majority of the work is still done at home. CHESS is not a school. Parents should be involved in what their students are learning. Small class sizes and teachers who are passionate about their subjects make this program unique and effective. If your student is ready for challenging material without the pace of college courses (typically twice as fast as high school), consider our upper level high school classes.

The Instructor's Role

Instructors will teach the course subject, provide a detailed prospectus for the class, post weekly homework assignments on the web page, provide semester progress reports in a timely way, contact the parent if a behavioral problem arises or if homework is not being completed according to their class policies, teach from a Biblical world view and be positive and supportive of homeschooling.

The Student's Role

Students will be on time for class, attend all classes, follow the teacher's prospectus guidelines, meet assignment deadlines, participate respectfully in class discussions, be prepared for class which includes bringing texts, completed assignments, and all required supplies needed to participate fully in the class, respect all teachers, administrators, fellow students, and the church property and building.

The Parent's Role

Parents will see that their student arrives on time and prepared for class, monitor homework assignments and see that they are completed on time, and satisfy all requirements as outlined on the teacher's prospectus. Parents will notify the teacher regarding absences within 24 hours for emergencies, in advance for planned absences, and meet the teacher requirements for getting missed homework. If parents have questions or concerns about a class they will first communicate directly with the teacher. It is the responsibility of the parent to make the final judgment of the performance of their student in each class, record and document their grade, and to monitor home study hours.

Administrator's Role

The administrator and her helpers hire teachers as independent contractors; determine which classes will run; arrange the schedule; build and maintain the website; process registrations and payments; pay teacher, rent, insurance, and scholarships; assist in disciplinary matters; act as facility liaison and generally take care of policy and paperwork so the teachers can concentrate on teaching. You are encouraged to contact the administrator regarding situations of family duress, for suggestions and feedback about the program.

Communication

Contacting the Administration

Tara Taylor
Administrator
admin@chessclasses.org
(703) 753-1901 (h) Weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
(571) 264-3535 (c) While CHESS is in session
-Mondays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm

Kathy Kuhl
Assistant Administrator
kathy.kuhl@chessclasses.org
(703) 715-8697 (h)

Camilla Rivera
Web Master – Email issues and homework postings
Camilla.rivera@chessclasses.org
(703) 815-0215

For emergencies, if you are unable to leave a message on Tara's cell phone while CHESS is in session, call the Centreville Baptist Church office at (703) 830-3333 to relay a message to Tara Taylor.

Email

All families must have access to an email account and check it regularly, since email is the primary means of communication within CHESS. Parents and students should immediately notify the administrator and teachers if their email malfunctions, or if their email address or other contact information changes so that they will not miss important communication. Families should check their email at least twice a week and before each class. You will receive an email confirmation within two weeks once you have registered for classes. If by mid-August you are not receiving email notices from the administrator or web master, please contact us! If a class is canceled due to an emergency during the year, families will be notified via email.

Web Site

On our web site, www.chessclasses.org, you will find links to the teacher's prospectuses, homework assignments, policies, class descriptions, etc. You can also post used books for sale; email your teacher, view an art gallery of our student's work, and get news updates. Check it out!

Inclement Weather Notification

CHESS does not follow the county's decisions. In case of snow or other inclement weather, the administration will email a notification by 9:00 a.m. on the day of class if classes are canceled. Many of the conditions that affect the roads for public school students are not an issue in the afternoon, when CHESS meets.

Privacy

The information collected by CHESS, including email addresses, home addresses, and personal information, is used exclusively for communication related to the CHESS program. The CHESS contact list is not an avenue for advertising. A bulletin board is available to post information related to homeschool events and activities at the "sign in" stand. Parents and students are encouraged to read the postings.

Participation Previews

Participation Previews are mandatory orientations (or review for returning families) to the CHESS program that explain the roles that members of the program play in the education process at CHESS. CHESS is neither a co-op nor a private school. The program is a supporting extension to home schools that thrives on unique interactions between students, parents and teachers. Participation Previews explain how CHESS functions, clarifies our policies, and show parents and students what to expect.

Both new and returning students and at least one of their parents are **required** to attend one of the three Participation Previews in order to receive a \$50 per student Registration Refund at the end of the year. The Participation Previews will meet at Centreville Baptist Church at the following times:

August 18 at 7:00 pm
August 24 at 10:00 am
August 30 at 7:00 pm

CHESSEXPO

The Expo in May is an exciting opportunity for families to hear a brief word from our teachers, meet them, ask questions, and find out what makes them passionate about their subject(s). Some families will add or change their class choices after attending the Expo and hearing directly from our teachers. Parents and students grades 7-12 are welcome to attend, as well as younger siblings however no child care will be provided. It is strongly suggested that registered families meet their teachers at least once before the classes begin in September; the Expo is a great time to do that. We also offer a used book sale (CHESSEXPO textbooks only) at the Expo.

Open House

We host an Open House in the spring each year for families who interested in the program as well as currently participating families. Visitors can see samples of class work and sit in on the classes throughout the day. Visiting a class is a great way to determine if a class is a good fit for your student, in addition to a careful reading of the teacher's prospectus for the class.

First Day of Class

It is strongly suggested that at least one parent attends the first class with his/her student. This and a careful reading of the prospectus is the best way to understand how the class works and what the students and parents should expect. Parents and students will have two opportunities to meet the teachers before classes begin - at the Open House in the spring, and the Expo in May. History has shown that parents who meet with the teachers are the most satisfied with the classes and avoid miscommunication. Childcare for younger siblings featuring Veggie Tales videos will be available to watch during the first day of class so that parents can attend classes with their students.

Academics

Deciding Which Classes to Take

We recommend that you come to the Open House and sit in on the class, or any class taught by the teacher, and talk with the teacher at the Expo. Carefully read the prospectus for the class, and consider if your student is willing and capable of meeting the requirements. Are you, as the parent, also willing to follow through? Be honest about your student's abilities, grade level and maturity. See if your student meets the pre-requisites for the class, and take any placement tests.

All of our classes are challenging because they meet only one or two days-per-week, for just 33 weeks. Can your student keep up with the pace? Do they have learning disabilities or an illness that requires more time for learning? Are you willing for your student to accept the consequences as defined by the teacher regarding homework, absences, etc.? Note: Junior high students will need even more support from the parent on the days when classes do not meet.

Grades

Each teacher will write a prospectus, which will include their policies on (1) course objectives, (2) grading scale, (3) grading criteria, and (4) late homework/quizzes/tests. Prospectuses for each class will be available at the Expo, and on our web site, www.chessclasses.org.

A minimum of three student reports (one initial feedback and two semester reports) will be sent home in a sealed envelope from the teacher to the parent or as explained by the teacher in their prospectus.

Whereas grades and 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. It is also the responsibility of the parent to monitor home study hours. The State of Virginia requires 120-180 hours of study in order to receive a full Carnegie unit of credit for a high school course. This translates to 2.6-4.5 hours of study per week, in addition to class time, for CHESSEXPO classes meeting once per week, or 1.6-3.5 hours for classes meeting twice per week. (Completing a textbook also qualifies for a Carnegie unit.) Parents should make sure that their students devote an appropriate amount of time to study apart from class.

If a student drops a class, the teacher is not obligated to issue a semester grade for a class whose assessment is based on a full year of participation.

Honors Classes and Honors Option Classes

Students looking for more challenging courses can choose an Honors class or choose the honors level option of a class. Parents should record an honors class as such on the high school transcript. There is an additional fee of \$45 per annum for an honors level class. The fee should be added to the total tuition payment, after discounts have been applied (see Tuition and Registration Fees).

Attendance

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.

Absences: A student's absence can affect the entire class, and is disruptive in many ways. It is also difficult for the students; since missing 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. Parents, please review the CHESS calendar and consider whether you are ready for this level of commitment. If you anticipate missing two or more classes, contact the administrator before signing up for a class.

Excused/Unexcused Absences

Absences are considered excused in the cases of illness, family duress, or annual testing. Travel, activities, competitions, and other choices, are not considered excused. A student may be dropped from any class after three unexcused absences.

The administration will take the following action in reporting unexcused absences:

- On the first occurrence, a parent will be notified via email, and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the second occurrence, a parent will be notified via email or phone, and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the third occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class, or the program

Planned Absences – What to do

Parents (not the students) will notify the teacher at least two weeks in advance if their student will be absent so that the student can pick up, complete and turn in - if required - any homework due in advance. Students are expected to keep up with the homework assignments while they are absent. Planned absences for reasons such as travel, activities, competitions, and similar choices are considered unexcused.

Unplanned Absences – What to do

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 the parent does not notify the teacher, the absence will be considered unexcused.

Tardiness: When a student is late for class it is a disruption to the other students and the teacher. A student is tardy if they arrive after the classroom door has been shut. Students that are tardy may not enter the class until they have obtained an "Administrative Notice" from the administrator or assistant. After obtaining an "Administrative Notice", students should go directly to class, enter quietly, hand the notice to their teacher and be seated. Teachers are not obligated to make special accommodations for students who arrive late for class - the students are responsible for what they missed.

Parents should make every effort to communicate with the administration in situations of family duress and emergencies. Generally, situations that could have been prevented are considered unexcused. Repeated tardiness will be considered noncompliance to the policy.

The administration will take the following action in reporting unexcused tardiness:

- On the first occurrence, a parent will be notified via email that their student was tardy, and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the second occurrence, a parent will be notified via email or phone, and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the third occurrence, a parent conference with the administration is required, and the student will receive a copy of the administrative notice
- On the fourth occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class

No tuition refunds or grades will be issued if a student is dropped from a class or from the program.

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 (or per the teachers prospectus), and posted weekly by the teacher on the CHESS website. To check on posted homework assignments, go to www.chessclasses.org and click on homework. If the information is unavailable on the website, parents should contact the teacher directly.

When the teacher determines that a student has not complied with their policies, they may issue an "Administrative Notice". The administration will take the following action regarding homework assignments, or other classroom issues that are reported by the teacher:

- On the first occurrence, the student will be given an administrative notice to take home, and the parent will be emailed
- On the second occurrence, the student will be given a notice to take home, and the parent will be contacted by phone
- On the third occurrence, a parent conference with the administration is required
- On the fourth occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class

Classes Meeting Twice a Week

The policies above for tardiness, absences and homework apply differently for classes that meet twice a week. At the end of the first semester (16 weeks), if a student has not been dropped from a class, the administrators will not count the first semester's administrative notices 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 violation 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 they are 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 special needs (e.g., learning or attention difficulties, developmental delays, chronic illness, or anything else) 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 registering and provide details on the back of the registration form. 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 on the teacher or the class, the student may be dropped from the class.

Used Books

Families that have books to sell are encouraged to post them on the website, www.chessclasses.org, and/or bring them to the Expo to sell. Books are limited to those used within the CHESS program.

Conduct

Code of Conduct

CHESS upholds a Biblical standard of respect, honor, and integrity for all who participate in the program. Students are to be respectful to all others including fellow students, teachers, and administrators, in action, speech, and demeanor, at all times.

Cheating and plagiarizing are serious violations. If a student is found to be cheating or plagiarizing on the first violation the student will be given a verbal warning and the parent will be notified. Teachers may assign a grade of zero for the assignment, at their discretion. If there is a second violation the student will be dropped from the class.

The administration and teachers reserve the right to limit and define appropriate content for all student produced work.

Disciplinary Action pertaining to Code of Conduct

When the administration determines that the code of conduct has been violated, the issue will be dealt with according to the following guidelines. (The administration is not exclusively limited to this procedure.)

- On the first occurrence, the student will be given a verbal warning, and the parents may be notified
- On the second occurrence, the student may be removed from the class or location where the violation occurred, and be placed under administrative supervision, and the parent will be notified
- On the third occurrence, the student may be dropped from the class where the violation occurred, or expelled from the CHESS program, according to the level of offense

Resolving Conflict

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. While we know not all families involved in CHESS are Christian, CHESS aims to operate on Biblical principles. We will deal with conflicts according to the Peacemaker's Pledge, a helpful summary from Peacemaker Ministries, which can be read here:

http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958159/k.A440/Peacemakers_Pledge.htm. All CHESS participants agree that any claim related to this agreement shall be settled by mediation in accordance with the *Rules* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation which may be read here: <http://www.peacemaker.net/rules/>.

Attire

The standard for dress is modesty. The student's clothing should completely cover his/her torso, including the shoulders, back, middle, and chest, regardless of posture. No spaghetti straps, shoulderless garments, mid-drifts or low-cut tops. No clothing with offensive printed material. Shorts should be at least as long as the fingertips, and should not expose undergarments, regardless of posture. Skirts and skorts should reach at least to the knees. Footwear is required at all times.

Should a student's attire be deemed immodest or inappropriate by a teacher or administrator, supplementary clothes will be loaned to the students, and parents will be notified.

Building Use

Requests for the use of Centreville Baptist Church for any CHESS related activity must go through the administrator.

The church property and all its amenities must be treated with respect. If a student damages classroom materials, lab equipment, white boards, chairs, or other articles of property owned by CHESS or Centreville Baptist Church, his/her parents will be fined for the damages.

In accordance with these standards, CHESS has established the following corollary rules:

- While in the lunch room, students are expected to promptly clean up all trash and crumbs for which they are responsible, this includes running the vacuum when necessary
- Students should notify administration if they spill a fluid other than water, so appropriate cleaning materials can be used
- Bottled water only is allowed in rooms other than the lunch room
- White boards are for teachers' use only
- Students must walk at all times while in the building
- Items such as lighters, matches, fireworks, weapons, toy weapons, and obscene/offensive printed or electronic media are prohibited. The administration reserves the right to determine obscenity or offensiveness.
- Additional rules specific to the lunch room also apply, the rules will be posted in the lunch room

Please be aware that the lunch room is a privilege and not a right. The lunch room is not primarily a social outlet; it is primarily a place for eating lunch. A study hall is also available for students who wish to study when they have extra time.

Internet Use/Electronic Devices

Student cell phones must be turned off in class. No downloading material onto any electronic device while at CHESS. Playing music while wearing earbuds is OK, but no one else should be able to hear it. Students may not access the internet while at CHESS.

Dropping Off and Picking up Students

Do not park or wait in the fire lane while waiting for students. If parents expect any kind of delay when they drive up to the building, they should park their car in the parking lot, and wait for their student to exit the building, and then drive around to pick them up or come in to get them. Please pick up your students promptly when their classes are over.

Sign In and Church Premises

We are guests of Centreville Baptist Church and have limited access to the building. Please use only the exterior entrance marked "Daytime Office Entrance." Each student must sign in at the CHESS entrance upon arrival (no earlier than 10:05 am on Mondays, 11:15 am on Wednesdays). Students are expected to remain on the CHESS hallway, the study hall or lunch room during CHESS class hours. Students may enter the courtyard of the church property after obtaining permission from an administrator, and must also sign out noting their location, and sign in upon their return. If a student wants to temporarily leave the premises for an exceptional reason, he/she must obtain permission from an administrator, and sign out noting their location, and sign in upon their return. No student is to leave the church property without obtaining consent from the administrator.

Visitors

Visitors must obtain prior approval from the instructor and administrator before visiting a class. Parents are always welcome to observe classes when space permits. Only students that are registered for a class on a given day should be on the premises. Unsupervised siblings of students are not permitted on the premises.

Classes Meeting Off Premises

If a class meets outside of normal class times and is a teacher-led event, the policies that govern CHESS apply to the event.

Parents and students agree to comply with the policies outlined in this Participation Agreement for admission into the program.

It is not necessary to send a copy of this agreement to CHESS as the act of registering for classes confirms full acceptance of the terms of this agreement. Please keep a copy of these policies for your records.