

The Journey Homeschool Group

Guidelines 2023-2024

LOCATION OF CLASSES

First Covenant Church
1374 N. Main Street
River Falls, WI 54022

WEBSITE/ EMAIL

journeyhomeschoolgroup.com
journeyhomeschooling@gmail.com

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 1424
Hudson, WI 54016

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR OF REGISTRATION Chair Brenda Schindler brendaschindler520@gmail.com 651-271-4525	DIRECTOR OF SERVICE TEAMS Treasurer Alison Simison alionsimison@gmail.com 612-741-5767	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS Secretary Molly Stehr kmstehr@baldwin-telecom.net 715-928-2328
DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL CONTENT Cori Pierson cori.pierson33@gmail.com 651-894-2518	DIRECTOR OF TEACHERS Jen Topliff j.k.topliff4567@gmail.com 612-326-4174	

TEACHERS

Brooke Ahlert brookeahlert@gmail.com	Ingrid Barlow ingridbarlow@gmail.com	Lisa Buckle danandlisagb@hotmail.com
Jill Burgess jburgess10@hotmail.com	Ingrid Cook ingccook@gmail.com	Alex Davenport alexcorwindavenport@gmail.com
Esther Deuth estherdeuth@gmail.com	Fred Gahl fredg126126@gmail.com	Jenny Johnson lynn2sadaf@protonmail.com
Becky Kneflekamp deut3019and20@hotmail.com	Alyssa Kruschke alyssakruschke@gmail.com	Zach McCabe drzach@mccabechiropractic.com
Eva Opseth eva.opseth@gmail.com	Tim Porter worldviewteacher@gmail.com	Daniel Radke dradke@ambassadorcollege.education
Dan Schneider danschnieder007@hotmail.com	Cara Skarsten cara.skarsten@gmail.com	Kari Slominski me@karislominski.com
Liz Wertz eliz.wertz@gmail.com	Bernie Wollenberg bw6971@gmail.com	

Guidelines

Welcome! We are delighted that you have chosen to join The Journey! We hope the following information will serve you well in understanding how things are run. Please feel free to contact any of the board members or teachers if you have questions. We are happy to assist you!

About Us

We are a group of homeschool families seeking to enhance our home education experience through the opportunities and support of a Christian homeschool group. We are an organization run by a volunteer board of directors. It is our desire to be a valuable asset to new and continuing home educators alike.

Elementary (PreK – 6th Grade) classes meet the first three Mondays of the month (with occasional exceptions) Please see class schedule in your registration packet for details.

Middle School (7th – 8th Grade) and **High School** (9th – 12th Grade) classes meet most Mondays. Please see class schedule in your registration packet for details.

Calendar Dates 2023-2024

Elementary: PreK - 6th Grade Calendar (24 Class Sessions)

*Mid and Year End Reports Handed Out

Sept. 11, 18	Dec. 4, 11, 18	March 4, 18
Oct. 2, 9, 16	Jan. *8, 15, 22	April 1, 8, 15
Nov. 6, 13, 20	Feb. 5, 12, 19	May 6, *13

Middle School/Senior High: 7th - 12th Grade Calendar (30 Class Sessions)

* Quarterly Reports Handed Out

Sept. 11, 18, 25	Dec. 4, 11, 18	March *4, 18, 25
Oct. 2, 9, 16, *23	Jan. *8, 15, 22, 29	April 1, 8, 15, 22
Nov. 6, 13, 20	Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26	May 6, *13

Important Dates:

Monday, August 28, 2023	Parent Orientation Meeting-Mandatory (evening- specific time and location to be announced)
Monday, April 29, 2024	First Make-up/Snow Day (to be used only if needed)
Monday, May 6, 2024	Spring Showcase & Open House 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Monday, May 13, 2024	Last day of classes
Monday, May 20, 2024	Second Make-up/Snow Day (to be used only if needed)

Mondays when The Journey has NO CLASSES:

October 30, 2023	Fifth Monday
November 27, 2023	Thanksgiving Break
December 25, 2023	Christmas Break
January 1, 2024	New Year's Break
March 11, 2024	Spring Break
April 29, 2024	Fifth Monday

Teachers/Leadership

Our teachers are agreed upon and selected by our board members, though each one functions as an independent contractor, providing for your families in their own separate and distinct ways. We encourage you to communicate directly with them regarding any classroom or curriculum questions you may have.

Teachers and other leaders who are a part of our organization uphold and teach to a Biblical Christian worldview consistent with the following basic statement of faith. While we do not require all members to agree to this statement of faith, we believe it is vital for our board members and teachers to agree to and abide by this statement of faith.

Statement of Faith

I. We believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God, the supreme and final authority for all faith and life.

II. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

III. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and atoning death through His shed blood. We also believe in His bodily resurrection and ascension and His imminent bodily return in power and glory.

IV. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost, and only those who put their faith in Jesus Christ alone can be saved.

V. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary death on the cross paid the penalty for man's sin.

VI. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict man, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower believers for Godly living and service.

Annual Family Fees

The fees collected by The Journey are broken into two different categories- Family Fee and Building Use Fee. The Family Fee is used to cover the costs of items such as insurance, website costs, P.O. box, and other incidental items necessary for operating the co-op. The building use fee is used solely to cover the cost of renting the building.

Registration

- When you register your child, you are making a year-long commitment to the group.
- ***IMPORTANT:*** *By signing your registration form, you are agreeing to the terms of the guidelines. You must be sure you have read the guidelines thoroughly so you know what will be expected of you.*
- The Journey does not issue refunds.
- Once you've sent in your registration forms, your class choices will be secured for you. At that point, we cannot allow any switching out of one class and into another as you will have already made partial payment to each individual teacher. You may, however, add in a new class after you've sent in your registration if you so desire.
- A non-refundable payment of \$50 for each elementary class and \$100 for each Middle School and High school class is to be paid to each teacher upon registration. The remaining tuition for each class must be paid in full at the fall Parent Orientation Meeting. Optional- full payment at time of registration.
- Registration for the 2023-24 school year will close on Monday, August 28, 2023 at the parent meeting.
- We realize sometimes there can be unforeseen circumstances for those wishing to register for Journey classes that arise after registration has closed. In these very rare circumstances, and on a case-by-case

basis, the board, in conjunction with the teachers, will evaluate as to whether a student may be allowed to register after the final deadline of registration has passed.

Parent Orientation Meeting: Monday, August 28th, 2023

Each family is required to attend in order to make all final tuition payments directly to each of your children's teachers and turn in all final documentation. This allows for adequate processing time for teachers and board members. Registration will close as of this evening. If payment is not received *in full* this night, your child will not be considered registered and his/her spot in any given class will be given to another on the waiting list. Also, your presence graciously allows the board to share important information to everyone all at one time and gives you the opportunity to ask questions, meet teachers, and receive syllabi and homework assignments due the first day of class.

Volunteer Option and Service Teams

Every member's involvement and cooperation is what makes the co-op function efficiently. We encourage and require active participation in our group, so *please join ONLY if you are interested in becoming fully committed*. With a team approach to getting things done, we enjoy a strong and bonded sense of community with room for vibrant growth.

One parent of each Journey family is required to be part of a service team and will serve all year in one designated area of the co-op. The number of times you are required to serve changes from year to year and depends upon the number of classes in which your children are enrolled as well as the number of families registered in the co-op. When you register, you will complete a Service Team Form where you may indicate your preferences for where you would most like to serve.

We have a Service Team Director who will assign, organize, and assist you with your service team responsibilities.

We do not require that you remain in the building if you are not serving.

Nursery, unfortunately, will not be available this year to utilize during your service time. Please make outside arrangements and plan to serve without your small children.

FINDING A SUB FOR YOUR SERVICE TEAM SLOT

It is *vital* important, if you find you are unable to fill your assigned service team slot, that you use one of the options below to find a substitute. This will ensure that all of The Journey needs are met. **We require that each Journey member take personal responsibility for their service team requirements in the event they cannot fulfill them (if you drop out, have a sick child, etc.).** The following are the steps/options for you to take should you need to find a sub.

Option #1 - MAKE A TRADE WITH A FELLOW PARENT VOLUNTEER

If you cannot fill your scheduled volunteer slot, simply call another parent volunteer to trade assigned dates with you. Then, once you make an agreement and a change to the schedule, *you MUST notify the Service Team Director of the change ASAP*. This option is a no-cost solution.

Option #2 – USE THE BUY-OUT LIST AND SECURE A SUB FOR PAYMENT

If a trade is not an option to fill your scheduled volunteer slot, secure a replacement by contacting someone on the Buy Out List to volunteer for you in exchange for payment. You will need to make the arrangements for your substitute and *you MUST notify the Service Team Director of the change ASAP*. Payment for the sub will be taken out of your Volunteer deposit directly and paid to your replacement by the Treasurer. This option results in a \$40 deduction from your Volunteer Deposit for each incident. If your use of the Buy-Out List exceeds two times, a \$40 fee will be assessed to you for each incident beyond your Volunteer Deposit of \$80. If you simply do not show up for your scheduled

volunteer slot, and the Service Team Director has to find someone to serve on your behalf, you will forfeit the return of your volunteer fee (\$80) at the close of the year.

Regarding Service- Please Note:

- If at any time during the year your child is withdrawn from The Journey, you will be required to find a substitute for *all* of your future service team obligations and to notify the service team director of those substitutions. You will also forfeit your \$80 deposit in order to pay the subs taking over your service team requirements.
- You must have completed all of your assigned service team duties in order to be reimbursed the full \$80 deposit at the end of the year.
- All service team slots must be fulfilled by a PARENT of a currently enrolled Journey student. We do not allow older siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. to fill those spots.
- During your assigned volunteer day, your main focus needs to be the smooth functioning of the co-op. Thus it is important that other care arrangements be made for your children as indicated on the Service Team Descriptions.

Opt-Out Option

For families who are not able to volunteer at the co-op for whatever reason, the Opt-Out Option allows the family to pay \$120 fee for the Board to find and pay their replacements. No volunteering is required and no refunds are given at the end of the year.

Supervision

PreK - 6th Grade Students:

All students up through grade 6 must be under the direct supervision of a parent at all times when not in class.

When you bring your children in the morning, please stay with them until they enter their first classroom. If your elementary student has a period in the day in which they are not enrolled in a class, it is your responsibility to supervise your child during that time. Study Hall is only available for Grade 3/4 and Grade 5/6.

- We ask that all elementary families exit the building promptly after classes and after any required tear down and clean-up.
- Parents should pick up children promptly at the conclusion of their last class period and directly supervise them while on church property after classes as well.

7th - 12th Grade Students:

Middle school and high school students must also be supervised at all times either by a parent or in a study hall, while at The Journey.

STUDY HALL: A separate, quiet, closely-supervised study hall is available for the 3rd - 12th grade students between the hours of 9:00am – 3:15pm. Students must be registered for their study hall hours and are required to be in study hall when they are not in a class. Study hall exists for students who have time between classes, have siblings (or carpool friends) enrolled in a course, or to allow for a parent to serve at The Journey during times when the student is not enrolled in a class.

- A few Middle School and High School classes will begin at **8:00 am** for the 2023-24 school year; however, there is no study hall available until 9:00am, and any children not in class must be supervised by a parent during that time.
- Computers and smart phones may be used *with headphones* as long as these tools are necessary to help accomplish their work. (Also, please see note under “General Expectations” in the Discipline Policy.)

- Study hall is provided for students who have no choice but to wait for their next class due to the way the classes are scheduled, not just for fun or as a drop-off for the entire day. We ask that it be used wisely and minimally with consideration for the amount of time your student can reasonably sit and effectively accomplish independent seatwork. Students *must* come prepared with quiet, independent schoolwork to occupy them the entire time they plan to be in study hall.
- Students who drive themselves to class may choose to leave the church grounds between classes IF not signed up for study hall. We assume that if you entrust them to drive themselves to class, they should be responsible to come and go on time and as needed.
- Students will not be allowed to hang out in their cars in the parking lot. If on the church grounds, they must be in study hall or in class.
- All students must be picked up or exit the church grounds promptly after their last class of the day.

Lunch/Eating Policy

Since our 3rd – 12th grade students have classes spread throughout the day, we will provide a brief, supervised lunch break for them in the study hall room. Please avoid eating in other areas of the building. Please refrain from bringing products containing nuts, as we do have students with serious allergy concerns.

Attendance Policy

Please report all absences to your child’s teachers directly via email as soon as you know they will be absent. Teachers do not keep formal attendance but do appreciate knowing who to expect in their classes each day. If you know in advance that your child will be absent for a family vacation or other special event, please give your teachers as much prior notice as possible. Some high school teachers would like at least a month’s notice, if possible. Please note, refunds will not be given for missed classes.

Weather Policy

The Board members will make the decision to cancel or hold classes when the weather is questionable and will notify members via email. If this is necessary, we will use our predetermined make-up day(s). Please note there are no refunds for any further weather-related cancellations.

Discipline Policy

We want to encourage our students to glorify God by their respectful behavior toward teachers, parents, and peers. Additionally, the intent with the following policy is to provide an enjoyable and optimal learning environment. The following items should be reviewed with your children:

General Expectations:

- Be attentive to the teacher.
- Follow directions the first time they are given without arguing.
- Show respect for others by not handling their property or disturbing them.
- Tell the truth.
- Respectfully raise your hand and wait to be called on before answering.
- Use kind words, not insults, name-calling, crude talk, or swearing.
- Always remain in your classroom with your teacher, in study hall with the supervisor, or within close proximity to a parent.
- Children should never be freely roaming the building alone. They must be with a parent, teacher, or volunteer.
- No gum chewing during classes or in the church building.
- *Brimmed* hats must *not* be worn in the classroom.
- Seek modesty in physical appearance (clothing), language, and actions.

- All Ipod/smart phone devices must be used in an appropriate, school-related, need-based manner and must not be a distraction to others.
- Physical aggression toward students, volunteers, or teachers will be taken very seriously and may be grounds for immediate dismissal.
- No weapons or illegal drugs are allowed.
- Treat the building with the utmost respect at all times.
- Leave the building as clean, if not cleaner, than when you arrived.
- Be quiet, especially around the office, and in the hallways, as church staff may be working.
- Hang coats on the hallway coat racks.
- Refrain from roughhousing, running, or loud behavior.

Formal discipline is as follows:

The following steps for correction of student behavior may be initiated and carried out by a teacher or board member.

Step One:

If a student clearly disregards a basic expectation or behaves in a manner that is disrespectful or disruptive, a simple warning will be communicated by the teacher, and the teacher will issue a discipline note to the parents. Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the teacher to discuss what happened.

Step Two:

If the child continues to be disruptive, he or she will be removed from all classes for the remainder of the day. Parents will be called and will be asked to immediately pick up their children.

Note: *In the event that a student has reached Step Two, parents will be required to discuss the issue with the board. If problems continue, the board reserves the right to suspend the student for the remainder of the year without refund.*

Family Reconciliation Policy

We always aspire to honorably and peacefully resolve disappointments and/or conflict at The Journey, and we seek to do so by following the biblical guidelines given in Matthew 18. As a general rule, when any one of us (leadership, teachers, members, students) who is part of The Journey encounters conflict, it is important to first go directly and *only* to the individual with whom we have an issue. We must kindly listen, seek to understand, express our concerns, and hopefully resolve things without linking any other individuals into that process, therefore unfairly burdening them with information and issues they cannot address. This means that when you have a concern or a complaint, it is rarely (if ever) appropriate to *first* bring it up to a board member or to draw in other Journey members. Any issue that you may have needs to be brought directly to the individual with whom you have the concern. If, after faithfully seeking to resolve any issues one-on-one, you find the problems cannot be reconciled, then it may be warranted for you to bring the issue to the board for help. At that point, we will gladly walk with you. The Journey leadership is committed to diligently seek out reconciliation. If, after many attempts, and in the very rare event that a conflict simply cannot be resolved, the board reserves the right to revoke membership in the group without refund.

Health / Attendance Policy

In order to provide an optimal learning environment as well as a courtesy to others, we require that a child not be brought into any classes if he or she demonstrates any of the following symptoms:

- A fever within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Pink eye
- Any undiagnosed rash or lesions
- Runny nose with yellow or green discharge
- Persistent cough
- Nits or lice found on *anyone in your family*
- A positive Covid-19 diagnosis or suspected symptoms

**If in doubt, please do not bring your child out of consideration to the other co-op families.*

If you determine your child has been to class and later exhibits symptoms of a communicable illness (i.e. chicken pox, lice, Covid-19), please let the board know so we are able to notify our other families and the staff of the church of a possible exposure. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping The Journey a safe and healthy place to learn!

Classroom Observation Policy

Parents must get *prior* permission from the *teacher* before observing in a classroom. Board members cannot grant this freedom. Also, barring extreme circumstances, we ask that no parent(s) sit in on *every* class for the entire year, as one of the goals for our students is to gain a sense of independence in the organized classroom setting of The Journey.

Emergency Procedures/Policy

Parents agree to assume all responsibility for their children while participating in The Journey. Parents also agree to accept any and all financial responsibility for any medical or legal expenses that may occur due to taking part in any group activity. We require that each student has an Emergency Procedure Form on file *before* he/she may begin attending classes. The group and all its members, teachers, and First Covenant Church and all its employees and members shall be exempt from any legal actions or financial responsibility due to any injury, etc., that may occur during any Journey activities.

Grades and Report Cards

We believe it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children are covering all subjects necessary and to award their own children any form of final grades should they wish to do so.

- *Elementary* teachers will not give grades but will give input regarding classroom behavior, respect, and assignments by way of a brief progress report given to the parents midway and at the end of the year.
- 7-12th grade teachers will give quarterly reports to the parents, which will include grades. While the high school teachers will assign a grade to the work done in their classes, it is the responsibility of the parent to calculate total hours and credits and grant a final grade for their child's GPA. Grades given at The Journey should be considered supplemental to the overall work assigned at home.

Communication

E-MAIL

Our main mode of communication is via weekly email updates.

THE JOURNEY WEBSITE

Find the most updated important documents such as registration documents and class schedules, class descriptions and teacher bios online on our website.

FAMILY MAILBOXES

Board members, teachers, and other members of the group may also communicate some information through handouts on class days, so please be sure to check your family mailbox each week.

FACEBOOK -- Find us at: "The Journey: A Homeschool Group"

MESSAGE BOARD – Located in the lobby at co-op each week. A place designed to post any outside events or opportunities that you might like to share with the co-op.

***NOTE:** ONLY information related directly to Journey classes and special events will be shared over email. In order to keep those weekly emails manageable and of high importance to all (and so you'll read them!), we use the mailboxes for all other outside opportunities such as piano lessons, homeschool seminars, discounted days at local establishments, or other bits of information that you may want to share with the group. This type of information will not be included in your weekly updates. We encourage you to share such information in the mailboxes, message board, or on our Facebook page. Please keep the following tax exemption provision in mind as you insert information into the mailboxes.*

TAX EXEMPTION PROVISIONS:

No substantial part of the activities of The Journey shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.