

Policy Handbook and Guidelines for Participation

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This Policy Handbook and Guidelines for Participation is to be issued with the following completed and signed forms only:

Family Registration Form, Activity & Enrollment Form, Parental Enforcement of Rules and Guidelines/Waiver and Release of Liability Form, Authorization for Medical Treatment/Emergency Medical Consent Form

The Educare Foundation Inc. of Illinois & CareNow Ministries....a 501c3 Non-Profit Ministry Organization
...dedicated to bringing principles that care to hearts of young and old through media, music and educational missions.

"Educating Hearts to Care" ® Post Office Box 425, Harvard, Illinois 60033-0425
Email: info@educaremissions.org Phone 815-569-2803 The Ark 815-258-6821

Policy Handbook and Guidelines for Participation

Welcome

Please read the Policy Handbook and Guidelines for Participation carefully. As partners with one another in the education of our children, it is necessary to ensure that we are in agreement regarding our expectations. By submitting the registration application each family acknowledges their agreement and consent to these conditions. Parents need to review these guidelines along with their child/ren prior to their first activity.

Ministry Goals and Member Benefits

Membership is available to families, those home schooling, or those considering home schooling; and those seeking additional enrichment resources for their children as they approach and consider their future educational options. Our hope is that through a variety of efforts and support activities, existing and new families will be uplifted and encouraged to choose or continue to teach their children at home. We strive to meet the needs of member families by offering several levels of involvement to provide support, resources, activities, and inspiring fellowship for one another, along with visions for the future to work toward.

Membership is for support and resource purposes only. It does not research, certify, qualify, approve, or in any way determine who may or may not home educate. Nor do we endorse any particular curriculum or any particular social development program. We strive to mutually support and encourage one another in our God-given task of raising Godly children in an ungodly world.

Statement of Faith

Agreement with our Statement of Faith is not a condition for membership, however, it is important to know that we are led by leaders and instructors who agree with it.

We believe in one God who is eternally present in three persons: God the Father the Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; God the Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer; and God the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and animates the faithful.

We believe that the Holy Trinity is one God existing in three persons, and three persons existing in one God.

We believe the Bible to be the infallible inspired word of God.

We believe that to be a faithful disciple of Christ involves having a personal relationship with Jesus our Savior.

We believe that human life is sacred and we profess a pro-life worldview.

We believe that Christians have a common enemy whose goal is to divide believers and conquer the world. Our goal is to unify as Christians so we can, with God's grace, overcome the evils of our society, spread the Gospel, and be a true example of the Love of God in our communities.

We believe that to be respectful and accepting of the different Faith backgrounds is to be a faithful and loyal servant unto the Lord.

Members pledge their fullest cooperation to keep doctrinal controversy, denominational, and political ideology out of the group at all times.

Personal Virtues

It is our desire to promote the ultimate end of all Bible-centered education which is to grow in wisdom and virtue, therefore, we require all our families, support staff and volunteers to exhibit the following minimal personal virtues at any and all activities:

- Kindness
- Truthfulness
- Courtesy toward others and respect for their property rights
- Punctuality in attendance and work
- Respect for and obedience to those in authority
- Diligence in effort and attention
- No aggressive horseplay
- No bad language
- No hurting others
- No defacing property
- No inappropriate contact

Discipline and Conflict Resolution

If a conflict occurs that affects the unity and functioning of the group, the offended party shall communicate the grievance lovingly and tactfully to the offender, with the goal of reconciliation. Every effort shall be made to resolve the conflict at this level. If personal reconciliation is impossible, through prayer and searching Biblical principles this group shall make every effort to resolve the problem. The Ministry Board shall be resolved to hear only the issues involved and not engage in, nor encourage, attacks upon personalities.

After a search of the Scriptures, prayer, reflection, and research, the Ministry Board shall be empowered to administer the appropriate disciplinary action. This may include a person being asked to resign from their assignment, a person being asked to abide by policy, or a person being removed from membership. The final decision rests with the Ministry Board. All parties involved in conflict resolution and/or disciplinary action shall ever bear in mind that the goal of this process is restoration and reconciliation. The focus of this process shall be unity within the membership.

Modest Respectful Dress Code

This dress code applies to adults, parents and children alike, those enrolled, those picking up, dropping off, or on the premises for any reason.

Our goals are to focus our attention on learning and growing. Extremes in dress, hairstyles and other cosmetic fads are distracting to this purpose and we ask for your consideration and cooperation.

Clothing should be modest, clean, respectful in appearance
No excessively tight fitting or excessively loose fitting or dragging clothing
Avoid wearing clothing with holes
No bare midriffs, halter tops, tank tops, spaghetti straps
No backless, strapless, low-cut or Tarzan tops
No stomachs or backs showing, even when arms are raised, at any time
Open chest shirts or visible cleavage is unacceptable.
Shirts and Dresses must have shoulders/sleeves
Underclothing of any kind should not be visible
Skirt and dresses should be about to or below the knee in length
Shorts/Short Pants about to the knee or below the knee
Shoes should be worn except when playing on soft-gym mats. Socks must be clean
Boys must always be wearing a shirt
No goth or excessive make-up, or extreme 'spiked' hair styles or 'unnatural' dyed hair colors
Those with body/face pierced jewelry will be expected to remove it while on the premises
No shirt or clothing that advertises any thing or person should be worn

Any person with questionable attire will be asked to change or wear a cover. We do realize that babies and preschoolers are precious and ask that you make reasonable choices knowing our ultimate desire.

Behavior Expectations and Guidelines

Children must be under direct supervision of a parent or adult at all times.
Do not interrupt the instructor/leader when he/she is talking.
Do not touch things unless you have been given permission.
Do not go into areas that are not part of your activity.
Use all resource center equipment properly and carefully.
Inappropriate physical gestures will not be tolerated.
Keep hands, feet, and objects to oneself.
Use low voice levels at all times.
Walk properly at all times in the building.
Wait for your turn. Raise your hand to indicate your desire to speak or ask a question.
Do not attack or abuse another person's character or comments.
It is to be expected that we will respectfully disagree with others at various times.
Do not disturb others who are working.
No snacks, gum, or drinks in workshops; See "Food Rules".
No bathroom breaks during workshops unless it is very necessary. If you must, ask the instructor.
Don't forget your books, notebooks, Bible and whatever you need for work each day.
Show respect for the instructors by looking at them during instruction times.
Show respect for the building by taking care of the furniture, the floor and the facilities.
No littering; leave it the way you found it or better.
No alcohol, drugs, smoking, cussing, or paraphernalia of any kind allowed.
Please do not bring anyone to an activity or event who is not registered.
Children who are ill should not be brought to activities. See Well Child Policy.

Removal from Group

We reserve the right to request immediate removal of any child for the following behaviors:
Causing injury to other children, such as unmanageable biting, hitting, pushing, fist fighting
Use of unacceptable and inappropriate language
Failure by parents/guardians to follow policies as described herein

Cell Phone Conduct

Please adjust your ringers and tones to mute or vibrate while you are on the premises. If a parent, volunteer or instructor absolutely must have a conversation on a cell phone, please go outside or to a remote corner so not to disturb a workshop or activity. It is expected that you will not leave your assigned post to have a phone conversation, unless it is truly an emergency and in that event you will notify someone else in the building to secure a stand-in while you are on the phone. Our assignments require us to be focusing on children therefore casual phone conversations are not permitted.

What Not To Bring

No electronic devices, Ipods, Mp3s, blackberries, cell phones, video games, walkmans, or other devices, etc. indoors or outdoors. If brought on the premises, they will be removed from the child's possession and returned before they leave for the day. Adults are also expected to leave any unnecessary electronics at home.

Weapons

No weapons, guns, knives (real or play), of any kind will be permitted on the premises indoors or out doors at any time. The only exception is if a workshop is held (in weaponry, hunting, safety etc.) and then special guidelines will be required for that time. At any other time, bringing weapons, real or play will be cause for disciplinary action.

Sign-In, Sign-Out, Dropping Off Children

Dropping off children outside is not permitted without prior consent. When a parent cannot come inside for whatever reason, prior arrangements must be made by phone or other contact, to escort child into the building and than back to parents car. Under most circumstances, it is expected that you come inside and sign your children in and out.

Donations

We cannot operate without donations which are collected to support the operating costs of the ministry. If adequate donations are not received to cover basic costs, an activity will be cancelled. The stated amounts are the minimum needed to operate the activities in the schedule. With that said, if you are able to donate further, all donations are tax deductible as allowed by law, and will be used to advance the missions contained herein. If you might struggle with affording the donations as listed, please list what you can afford in the section on donations in registration forms.

Scholarships and Work-Exchange

Families who are unable to donate, due to financial hardship, may request a scholarship and/or work exchange. Registration forms must be completed in order to be in line for scholarship donation funds as they become available. Donations for scholarships will first applied to registration donation, then as scholarship funds become available, toward specific activities or workshops. A family who has made the registration donation, will be first in line to receive a work-exchange for activity participation when a work-exchange becomes available.

Responsibility of Volunteers

At a time whereby a 'donor-work-exchange' is organized, by enrolling your child/ren in exchange for a daily or weekly task, you must agree to complete your assigned task. In the event of your absence, you agree to follow guidelines regarding notification of absence and securing someone to substitute for you. This arrangement and substitute person must be approved by the Ministry Board. Substitutes must be a current registered member. Abuse of this arrangement in any way, at any time, will require a dissolution of any work exchange agreement.

Siblings Not Enrolled In Workshops

It is critical that arrangements be made for siblings not enrolled in workshops. They may be enrolled in another activity occurring simultaneously, or special arrangements may be made for babysitting or activities in the play area at the hourly donation rate. Siblings will not be allowed to attend classes in which they are not enrolled for.

Food Rules, Eating Times

Food is allowed only in designated eating area at designated eating times. All persons must sit down while eating; no eat-play-eat-play or walking around with food will be tolerated. Once you are finished, hands must be washed with soap and dried before returning to any play or activity areas. Good eating manners will be expected of all persons.

98% Sugar Free Zone

When sending a bag lunch or snack to share, this is a 98% sugar free zone. Please practice extreme moderation in choosing snacks where sugar content is concerned. The Ministry Board reserves the right to substitute a pure-sugar snack for a healthier, low sugar snack at any time. We also reserve the right to hold the snack and distribute to the children when it is time to go home.

Clothing and Personal Baby Care Items

For Baby and Toddler care during Parent's Time Out, and during other times when my child may be participating in activities and in the care of a baby sitter, I agree to have an appropriate supply bag with personal care items for my child/ren as well as change of clothing. I will supply disposable diapers and baby wipes if necessary and whatever personal items my child may need during this time.

Outdoor Play - Change of Clothing

If your children plan to be playing outside, and it has been damp weather, please send a clean change of clothing and socks in case their clothing gets wet or muddy. If a child does not have a clean change of clothing and socks, they may be limited to restricted play areas, or not allowed into the soft-play area after coming in from outside.

Duties and Participation

Not everyone will choose to participate in all activities all of the time for any number of personal reasons. So please choose the activities that you can participate in and when possible, volunteer your time and assistance as you are able. A helper-wish list, or work exchange may be available at some point.

Emergency Contact

Please be sure to list all possible phone numbers to reach you in your registration papers, including cell, mobile, pager, fax or email addresses. In case of emergency and you need to contact someone at The Ark or office, all contact phone numbers and addresses are at the end of this handbook.

Loitering

Unless you are registered and enrolled in an activity indoors or outdoors, no one is to be loitering outside, or in any areas of the building. Building Rules and Guidelines must be obeyed and respected at all times which include staying within assigned areas.

Playground Rules and Conduct

Respect nature! Refrain from picking leaves off trees.

Permission is needed to leave the playground area.

Do not climb or hang on fences or anything not on the playground.

Use playground equipment properly and safely: for example up stairs, down slide.

No jumping from any piece of equipment..

Swing properly on your bottom, keeping hands and feet out of the paths of others swinging.

Jumping off the swings is not allowed.

Standing on swings not allowed.

Sand toys must remain in the sand area.

Soccer and other balls shall be used in designated areas.

Refrain from throwing sand, sticks, woodchips, and/or rocks.

Shoes/boots must be worn at all times.

Drinking water shall be swallowed - no spitting at any time.

Help keep our toys in good condition by returning them to the proper place after each play session.

Indoor Play Area Rules and Conduct

All hands must be washed prior to entering play area.

All rules for indoor play must be followed and age limits strictly observed.

No shoes or sharp objects on soft play cushions or mats.

Clean soft socks must be worn on play cushions and mats in indoor play areas.

Please plan to bring a change of clothing to wear to play indoors if clothing gets soiled from outside play.

Workshops, Supplies & General Information

Children should arrive five minutes before workshop begins and are expected to be prepared with any required supplies requested by instructor at enrollment.

Homework

Homework and study responsibilities will be outlined upon enrolling for a particular workshop or activity. Whenever possible, these activities will be coordinated with existing curriculums and may be planned with parents during a private consultation.

Tardiness

If you are late in arriving to a workshop or scheduled activity, please do your best to avoid disturbing others. Quietly take your seat.

Cancellations/Make-Up Days/Weather Policy:

Reasonable efforts will be made to notify families in advance in the event an activity or workshop must be cancelled due to weather, instructor illness, or other unforeseen circumstance. If an activity is cancelled, parents may have the option of substituting an activity, or being notified when a make-up time and day is scheduled. In case of snow, ice, or emergency weather related closings, most likely activities will be cancelled. Please check phone message, email and/or website for postings.

Planned Absences

Absences from certain workshops, may not be able to be made up. Certain activities may allow for make-up days. If you are aware of an upcoming absence, make arrangements for make-up dates, ahead of time.

Medical Emergency Departure

If a medical emergency comes up and you have to be away, please notify the Board of the emergency and provide a medical release form [if not already in file] along with the name of the custodial adult for your child/ren. Be sure to let your child/ren know to whom they are accountable. These emergencies are limited to medical emergencies, not scheduling conflicts.

Unable to Attend Due To Illness of Volunteer Parent or Child

If you have committed to running an activity, but cannot due to you or a child being ill at home, with as much notice as you can possibly give, every attempt will be made to help find a qualified member substitute, or the activity may be rescheduled. Sometimes last minute rescheduling may be unavoidable and in certain instances one activity may temporarily be replaced with another.

Well Child Policy

Illness is an inevitable fact of life. To reduce incidents of illness, we have set some standards for attendance. The following guidelines can help you make an informed decision when determining if you should bring your child for enrichment activities. Please adhere to these guidelines for the protection of all of our members. A well child has:

- ♦ No fever currently or for the last 24 hours
- ♦ No vomiting or diarrhea, currently or for the last 24 hours
- ♦ No runny nose (has no heavy green/yellow nasal discharge)
- ♦ No coughs
- ♦ No unexplained rashes
- ♦ No skin infections, impetigo, boils, ringworm
- ♦ No eye infections

If a child develops any of the above symptoms while at an enrichment activity, the workshop or activity coordinator will isolate the child and ask the parent to take the child home. We will not administer any medication of any kind. A child may be sent home due to chronically or severe runny nose. A nose that runs green through the entire day should be treated by a Doctor as this is an indication of infection.

The Ministry Board reserves the right to over-ride Dr's notes if a child is coughing frequently and/or the child is not mature enough to cover their cough.

Fever-reducing medications mask symptoms and encourage parents to bring a child to activities that is still sick and contagious. This is primarily why children become sick in a group setting. More than all of these standards, parents must use their own good judgment. When your child is sick by your standards, please don't expose them to other children.

If you enroll and have made a donation towards a certain activity or workshop and your child/ren are unable to attend due to illness, and you choose to keep them home because of this policy, every attempt will be made to have a make up arrangement to cover the material missed.

List of Communicable Diseases

When it is safe for a child to return to activities in a group setting:

Chicken Pox – for at least 7 days after the onset of rash and until all sores are crusted.

Conjunctivitis – during the acute stage, until the eyes are clear or three days after the onset of treatment.

Diarrhea – after the acute, infectious stage when child no longer has fever and loose watery stools have subsided.

Fever – fever has returned to normal for the child for the last 24 hours without Tylenol or similar product.

Hepatitis – for 7 days after onset and diarrhea subsides. An authorized release from child's doctor is required.

Impetigo – antibiotic treatment given and lesions are crusted and healed.

Measles or Rubella – for 8 days after onset of rash or until rash disappears. Two weeks after onset of rash if child has not been vaccinated.

Meningitis – until the child is completely recovered. A written release from physician is required.

Mumps – for 10 days after swelling appears (or 26 days after onset of swelling if child hasn't been vaccinated) or until swelling is gone.

Pediculosis (lice) – until treatment with medicated shampoo is begun and no signs of eggs are evident.

Runny nose with green or yellow discharge associated with fever or cough with mucus secretion – may participate after all symptoms are gone and 24 hours after being fever free

Streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep) – for a full 24 hours after beginning on an antibiotic. If not treated with antibiotics, you must provide proof of a negative Strep culture from the doctor.

Tuberculosis – 14 days after treatment has begun.

Vomiting accompanied with fever – until vomiting stops, all other symptoms have disappeared, and child temperature has been normal for 24 hours

Whooping Cough – for 2 weeks after antibiotic treatment has begun. If not treated, the child should not participate for 21 days from onset.

Children with an unidentified rash can not be brought in until the rash is clear, or has been identified as non-contagious.

Children with a low fever (under 101) can be brought to activities unless there is another symptom present that would indicate a potentially contagious condition ie; rash, lethargy, excessive irritability, vomiting, diarrhea.

A child who has been sent home with a fever over 101 may not return until they have been fever free (without medication) for 24 hours.

Children with open cold-sores, impetigo, or hand foot & mouth disease can not be brought to participate in activities until completely healed and not contagious.

Children should not be brought if they have experienced diarrhea without a recovering firm bowel movement.

Children with a repetitive cough can be brought only if they have a written Dr. note that they are not contagious.

Grading and Constructive Assessments

Workshops will not provide “a grade” however, on request, the instructor may provide a report of how well your child comprehended the material, etc. Please discuss these options with the individual instructor if you would like comments or a “constructive assessment” of your child’s participation. Testing is available on request through outside sources.

Computer Access - Email

Members should have computer access, as our means of communication is e-mail and the website (currently in development) in addition to telephone and mail. If you do not have an email address that we can use to communicate, we will need to determine and document the best ways to communicate with your family.

Family/Mailbox/Folders

We may eventually develop a ‘mailroom’ area where we can provide you with updates and news concerning upcoming schedules, activities, etc. Once established, please check , on your visits.

Member Directory

We may eventually create a member directory, and all members will have the option to be included or excluded. A directory would be prepared for your convenience as a personal resource. Information in the directory is to be treated as confidential and is not to be given, sold, or distributed in any way to anyone who is not a member of this group, or otherwise used for any other purpose than which it is intended.

Precautionary Measures

The Ministry Board or staff is responsible for exercising reasonable precaution to assure the safety of the member children. The staff is not responsible beyond the exercise of due care for any accidents which may occur inside or outside, or for incidents resulting from lack of information which should have been supplied to the staff by parents/guardians.

Emergency Procedures

In order to adequately account for each child during an emergency, all students, who are unaccompanied by their own parent, must remain with their assigned adults. In case of a fire, alarms will sound and all children should be evacuated along assigned routes to safe areas away from the building. Keep children as calm and quiet as possible. Move quickly but do not run or allow children to run. All exits are clearly marked. Should we not be able to enter the building again, the designated adults will remain with the children until all parents arrive to pick them up. Emergency drills will be practiced from time to time, as an educational activity, as well as to perfect the conduct of those present in the event of any particular emergency.

Holiday Breaks

Support and Enrichment Activities will be occurring year-round. Please see current calendar schedule.

Music

The Ministry Board reserves the right to limit the use of music at activities, as they deem necessary.

Information Policy/Disclaimer

As a non-profit organization, we are prohibited by law from the “carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation”, neither shall we “participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) for any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.”

Pets

No pets are allowed on premises unless a special pet day is scheduled and all arrangements are covered with advanced notice and preparations. Working service dogs may be brought with prior approval.

Photo Disclaimer Policy

We reserve the right to use any photograph taken at any event sponsored by The Educare Foundation, Inc. & CareNow Ministries, without the expressed written permission of those included within the photograph. Photographs may be used in publications or other media material produced, used or contracted by including but not limited to: yearbooks, catalogues, brochures, newspapers, magazines, television, websites, etc.

Concerns and Questions

Members agree that if they have concerns about any of the activities, individuals or groups within the group, they will in no case discuss it with other member of the group. After praying, and in the love of Christ, concerns should be submitted to the Ministry Board by written letter, email, or in person to ensure that concerns are properly addressed. If you have any questions, now or at any time, please feel free to communicate by any of the means listed below.

If you are unsure of the meaning of any rule please feel free to ask.

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