

St. Philomena Homeschool Member Handbook



saintphilomenahomeschool.org

What is Saint Philomena Homeschool?

Saint Philomena Homeschool (SPH) is a Catholic cooperative dedicated to supporting homeschool families through high quality, traditional Catholic based programs focused on spiritual development, educational growth, and fellowship within a supportive and enriching environment. SPH was founded by Catholic families and includes homeschool families from Catholic backgrounds.

Who can attend SPH?

SPH requires potential members be of the Catholic faith to join. It is important for potential members to understand that the goal of this apostolate is to offer Catholic families here in the Dallas-Fort Worth area an educational support option that is 100% traditional Catholic in its core. Wherever the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is discussed, you will find our materials always refer to the Latin Tridentine Mass as promulgated by Pope St. Pius V. However, we gladly welcome all Catholic families who attend any Catholic Rite of Mass to enroll with us and learn about the Latin Tridentine Mass. Our focus is on teaching the traditional Catholic faith to our students, the formation of character, and fostering deep and lasting friendships between our students. Our primary goal is to create a community that will encourage our children to choose the path that leads them to Heaven through the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Who can teach our children at SPH?

Only parents/volunteers who are in good standing with the Catholic Church and attend Mass regularly will be allowed to serve as educational volunteers or be considered for leadership positions on SPH's Board of Directors. All educational volunteers must be approved by our Board of Directors.

All volunteers are required sign that they agree with, and will not teach anything contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church prior to 1963.

What does acceptance into SPH include?

Acceptance into SPH includes access to lesson plans/curriculum, participation on Mondays and Thursdays on OLMC campus, field trip opportunities if they should be available, any homeschool community events, and parent/teacher networking. Families must be formal members of SPH and go through the admissions process and pay the family fee in order to enroll their children in SPH classes.

Our Host Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church (OLMC)

The church assumes no liability regarding the St. Philomena Homeschool or its activities. The church has graciously allowed us to use their facilities, but are not involved in our classes nor provide supervision or oversight of any kind except that our behavior and teachings be in accord with that of the Catholic Church. SPH has a rental agreement with OLMC for the space that is used when students are on-campus. ***Please do not call the church or send correspondence to the church regarding St. Philomena Homeschool.***

Expectations of Families

Families must read and agree to the policies in this handbook, and sign the agreement statement. Families are expected to be on time for class. In the event you are unavoidably late, please call or send a text to one of the SPH Directors. Parents are expected to have supervision over their children if they are on campus before or after school hours. Do not allow children to go outside unattended. We request that families be supportive of the SPH and contribute to its success, by encouraging students to be prepared for their classes and to provide sincere feedback or suggestions as needed. We also ask for your prayers!

Child Expectations

Children are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Catholic teaching. Lying, cheating, stealing, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Additionally,

- Treat everyone courteously and with respect at all times.
- Respect the property of OLMC. Clean up after yourself and others. Clean-up chores will be assigned.
- Come to all classes prepared to learn and participate, having completed assigned work.
- Any public display of boyfriend/girlfriend relationships is not acceptable at SPH or any SPH sponsored activity
- If a child needs to leave early, he/she must remain in a class until the approved time and then be escorted out by the adult who is assuming responsibility.

Materials

The educational materials that have been chosen by the Directors at SPH are required to participate in SPH. All courses are required. Children and families are not allowed to pick and choose what they would like to omit. If there are serious concerns with these materials, please speak with the Director and those concerns will be addressed. If a family does not like the materials, please consider that our group may not be a good fit for your family.

The “No Drop Off” Rule

This means that every child formally attending must have a participating parent/adult who is at SPH the entire time that the child is there, unless prior arrangements have been approved. We do not offer a drop-off service at this time. Special exceptions do exist for families who have children that are all kindergarten age and younger. Please ask us about our options.

Attendance

Please do your best to not miss on-campus days at SPH unless you or one of your children is ill or you have an unforeseeable event. As soon as you are aware that you will not be able to attend, please let the Directors know, by text or phone call, so that arrangements for someone to teach your class can be made. All volunteers are responsible for the children listed on their class roster. If a child does not report to class, the volunteer needs to notify the Directors and the on-campus parent. Attendance records will be kept, and attendance is taken in our first period classes.

Visitor Policy

No unregistered children or adults may attend SPH classes unless prior approval has been made through the SPH Directors. Occasional visitors are allowed with prior approval. For security reasons guests must check in with SPH Directors and login via the Visitor Log Book. They will need to wear a yellow visitor badge and stay with the adult they came with. Visiting children may participate in an age-appropriate class with prior approval. The SPH Directors will check with each teacher in advance for permission to place any extra student(s) in their class as well as to determine if there are enough materials available.

Media Policy

No use of electronics is permitted in the classrooms by children under the age of 18. No cell phones or handheld game devices are allowed during campus hours. Parents/volunteers need to keep their cell phones on silent as much as possible, and their use to a minimum while on campus. Children are not allowed to use or look at parent/volunteer cell phones, unless approval is granted by SPH. Children are not allowed to bring anything to school that promotes media through the use of logos, such as Disney themes, Legos, Marvel characters, Barbie, etc. For example, a backpack that has Disney characters on it is not allowed, nor are shoes with Paw Patrol themes, etc. Items not allowed, that are brought to campus will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

Allergies

Allergies can be quite serious, and SPH must be careful to ensure student safety for those with food and other allergies that may cause a reaction.

Parents: If you have a child with food or other allergies that they could encounter in a class, please notify the teacher of the allergy, the reaction, and what to do if a reaction occurs. You **MUST** communicate allergies to the teacher personally.

Class Volunteers: If you are planning to serve food/treats in your class, you **MUST** notify parents prior to serving food. This will allow parents to choose whether or not the potential food item is safe for their child, or if an alternate needs to be provided.

Medication

SPH will not distribute any medications to children. Any medicine that is needed by a children must be obtained and dispensed by their on-campus parent. Medical emergencies will be handled by the on-campus parent.

Weapons

Children are not allowed to bring weapons of any kind to campus, including pocket knives, swords, bow and arrows, real guns, or anything else not mentioned that SPH deems a weapon. SPH will decide if something is allowed to remain on-campus, if there is a question. Any item not allowed that is brought to campus will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. Repeat violations regarding weapons will result in membership suspension.

Bathroom Policy

Children need to go to and from the bathroom in a timely manner. Designated bathroom breaks will be given to younger children daily. Only a child's parent or the child's class volunteer is allowed to help a child that needs assistance in the bathroom. Only one student is allowed in the bathroom at a time. **No adult males are allowed to assist children in the bathroom.** A child must have an adult (female) accompany them for use of the bathroom in the chapel in the event that the hall bathroom is occupied and a child cannot wait, and two or more children go with the adult, so that there are no one-on-one situations.

Wellness Policy

Please do not bring your child to SPH if they have had any of the following symptoms in the last 48 hours:

- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Green or murky discharge from the nose or eyes
- Rash of unknown origin
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Productive cough with fever or sore throat
- Head lice
- Active diagnosis/positive test for Sars-Cov 2/ Covid 19

******Please use common sense/discretion regarding when to resume on-campus participation after illness. In our charity we do NOT want to spread illness to other members at SPH. Classes are easily done at home, that is beauty and flexibility of homeschool! If one child has an illness that is likely to spread across your household to other family members from exposure, please be prudent regarding your OTHER children's attendance on campus as well.***

Uniform Policy

All children attending SPH are expected to be in the proper uniform as designated by SPH. Please see the website for uniform specifics.

We require children to dress modestly without drawing undue attention to themselves.

GIRLS

- Girls must be dressed neatly at school, shirts tucked in.
- Girls must wear their hairstyle in a clean, neat, and attractive manner. Hair must be a natural color. Hair must be combed. Hairbows or large accessories must be red, white, or black.
- No part of the undergarments can be visible.
- Shorts of some kind must be worn under the knee length skirts.
- Make-up is not allowed in elementary levels, black nail polish is not allowed at all.
- A tight-fitting uniform is not allowed. Please size appropriately.
- Body piercing is only allowed on the ears, 1 set only. No nose rings, lip rings, eyebrow rings, or any other visible piercings. Tattoos need to be covered if possible.
- Earring studs are the only earrings permitted amongst the students. A scapular or religious necklace is permitted. No other jewelry may be worn by students.

BOYS

- Boys must be dressed neatly at school, shirts tucked in,
- All pants must be worn at the waistline. No part of the undergarment can be visible – “no sagging.”
- Any type of body piercing is not permitted.

- No choke chains, wallet chains, or dog collars permitted. No studs or spikes are allowed on belts or accessories.
- Hair must be a natural color, combed, and not in the eyes. Hair past the neckline is not permitted.
- No make up is allowed on boys or nail polish.
- Only religious neckwear or scapulars may be worn, no other jewelry.

**This dress code is not all-inclusive. The SPH Board of Directors will resolve any situation not specifically covered herein following the general intent and purpose of the code. With changing styles, the administration reserves the right to add inappropriate clothing or fads to this list at any time.

Background Checks

We value the safety of the parents and children attending SPH. We want to take prudent measures to attempt to safeguard people and assets from potential harm. Therefore, SPH requires all adults (people age 19+) on campus to have a current background check on file before school sessions begin. Initially, each adult will fill out the background check form and return to the SPH Directors. Each adult will be notified annually that a new check needs to be done.

Financial Responsibilities

There is a yearly family fee determined each year based on our total operating costs and divided accordingly between the number of families we have enrolled. Our greatest efforts are made to keep the cost as low as possible. The cost of books are not included in the family fee and are the responsibility of each family to purchase for their child, from our book lists. Registration is not complete and class participation cannot begin until payment is received or arrangements have been approved by the SPH Directors.

Social Activities

At this time SPH will have 2 school-wide parties on campus, one at Christmas and one at the end of the year. Any additional on-campus parties will have to be approved and will be at the discretion of the SPH directors. Due to the limited time frame of the lunch hour SPH asks that monthly birthday celebrations be left to the school. Children with birthdays will be announced at the beginning of the day so that everyone can make them feel special! At this time, please do not send cupcakes, cookies, or treats. We strongly encourage families who would like to send something for a child's birthday, to send non-food items. Instead of a food item, please consider sending something for the class to enjoy such as: a game for the classroom, a classroom book (A nice touch would be having your child pick it out, sign it, and date it), or a simple classroom set of items for each child to keep such as pencils, pens, erasers, markers, etc. The aforementioned items listed will still make your child feel celebrated and they will last a lot longer than a food item!!

Grading Policy

Grading rubrics for classes will be determined by SPH Directors with the input of the volunteer teaching the class if needed. Children who are failing classes at either mid-year or year-end (not maintaining a grade average of 70 or above) will need to meet/discuss with the SPH directors, the class volunteer, and the child's parents to determine what the proper recourse needs to be with regard to moving ahead to the next educational level. Assignments that are not turned in will become a zero at the discretion of the class volunteer and SPH Directors. Failure to turn in 10 or more assignments will result in suspension of membership.

Refund Policy

If for some reason a family or student needs to drop out of SPH, partial refunding of enrollment fees can have be discussed with SPH Directors. Often times SPH has already purchased supplies or paid for professional services. If your family is in the circumstance of needing to drop out, please speak with the SPH Directors regarding partial refunds.

Snow Days/Closures

In the event of snow/inclement weather, we follow Tarrant County School District closures. When possible, any cancellations will be emailed/texted before 7:30 a.m. the morning of classes. If classes in the Tarrant County School District are delayed 2 hours or cancelled, SPH will not meet. Additionally, depending on how many families we have who cannot be in attendance on a given day for differing circumstances, the SPH Directors will make the decision to cancel on-campus classes for that day.

Clean-Up Policy

We are guests at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. Because of this, we want to be good stewards by leaving the building even cleaner than we found it. Clean up is the responsibility of the students under the supervision of the teacher. All of the following must be done before any students are allowed to leave:

- ALL the chairs and tables need to be wiped down, whether or not they look dirty.
- All trash cans need to be emptied.
- All furniture needs to be arranged neatly.
- Any furniture that was moved into your classroom needs to be moved back to its original location
- Make every effort to complete the classroom cleanup instructions. Please encourage your children to take part without being asked.
- Chores will be assigned to ease this responsibility.

Child Pick-Up Policy

All children must leave the campus with the same adult they came with, unless prior arrangements have been made with SPH Directors

Discipline Policy

We are a Catholic homeschool support group and believe it honors God when our children are obedient to adults and respectful of their fellow peers. At the beginning of each school year, class volunteers will explain class rules to the children so that they understand what is expected of them during their time there. Daily reminders will be given as well.

If a child is disruptive, the following process will take place:

- First Offense: The child receives a clear warning from the class volunteer with their name on the board.
- Second Offense: Check mark next to their name on the board
- Third Offense: The child will step out and meet with one of the Directors to discuss their behavior and given a suitable consequence, such as missing part of recess.
- Important Note: If a child's infraction is of a more serious nature, the corrective action may skip ahead to a more severe discipline up to and including permanent suspension from SPH. These would be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Directors. A child who is expelled from school will not receive a refund for the family fee.

***Liability**

SPH is a home school group co-operative set up as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, status pending. SPH cannot guarantee anyone protection from harassment from legal authorities or prosecution regarding homeschooling laws. Thus it is highly recommended to hold a Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) membership. SPH cannot be held responsible for the outcome of any contact by authorities. SPH is only providing services to assist parents in schooling their children, and therefore we cannot offer legal immunity. We recommend that families familiarize themselves with the homeschooling laws in Texas. HSLDA (www.hslda.org) has a team of lawyers who fight for the freedom to home educate our children in the way we feel God has called us to do.

**This summary is not intended for nor does it constitute the giving of legal advice.*