

FSP Co-op/ SOAR
Sharing Opportunities for Achievement and Relationship

SOAR strives to provide homeschool families with affordable, fun-filled, quality academic classes within a nurturing Christian environment. The idea of a cooperative (co-op) is to bring homeschooling families together to share teaching. A home-school teacher may choose books for instructing her own children, and prepare her lessons in a way that benefits her unique students. But some subjects are easier to teach in a group, and in this way, labor can be shared so that the teacher's preparation applies to more students. Cooperative teaching is a means of utilizing a teacher's specific gifting and area of interest. Classes may be offered that some teachers could not accomplish at home on their own. A co-op also provides a context of accountability so that core areas are being reinforced weekly. Students can learn group behavior and public speaking skills.

1. Policies

A family committing to joining the co-op is expected to be a member of Covenant Life Church's Family Schools Program, and as such in compliance with FSP's Statement of Faith and CLC's Child Protection and Oversight policies. This includes having a current application and background check on file in the Discovery Land office, renewed every year by the close of registration. Teachers and students in the co-op will be expected to carry out their work responsibly and serve other members with an attitude of love.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS:

- Students are expected to
 - show respect to teachers/ assistants and other children at all times, including others with kindness and grace in all activities.
 - attempt to work out conflicts between each other. If the conflict continues, children are expected to inform an adult and ask for assistance.
 - not leave their classrooms without their parent or two other adults. Only students in 6th-8th grade may leave a classroom unaccompanied, if permitted by their parent.
 - bring designated class materials each week.
 - complete specific class assignments in a timely manner.
 - dress appropriately for SOAR and SOAR-related events. We do not have a formal dress code, but please be open to input, especially from teachers and coordinators.
 - leave all toys, gadgets (including electronic devices) and pocket knives at home or with a parent during all SOAR-related activities.

BEHAVIORAL POLICY:

This policy uses a team approach to communicate and enforce behavioral expectations to create a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

Student:

- Sign the SOAR Behavioral Expectations form and return it to the leadership team.
- Adhere to SOAR Behavioral Expectations.

Teacher:

- Communicate to students behavioral expectations appropriate for the classroom setting at the beginning of and throughout the school year.
- Notify parents when the student does not comply with behavioral expectations and has been taken out of the classroom.

Assistant:

- Reinforce the behavioral expectations of the teacher to allow the teacher to focus on teaching.
- Monitor students during class and intervene when behavioral issues arise.
- Speak to the student and remind them of the classroom expectations in situations when the student is not following the rules.
- Move the student to another seat to stop further disruption. If the student does not respond to correction, the assistant may take the student to the hallway with the hall monitor present to repeat rules. If the student agrees to change their behavior they may return to the classroom; otherwise, the student will be sent to their parent.

Parent:

- Review the SOAR Behavioral Expectations form with the student at the beginning of the school year to ensure they understand and agree with the expectations.
- Sign the SOAR Behavioral Expectations form and return it to the leadership team.
- Determine the consequence (if any) for the student's behavior in conjunction with the teacher. Consequences may include cleaning duty after SOAR (emptying trash cans, vacuuming, etc.) or the loss of lunchtime privileges. The video room will be available for the student (supervised by their parent) to eat lunch away from the rest of the group.

SOAR Leadership:

- Provide support and guidance to teachers, parents, and students when behavioral rules are not followed.

TEACHER EXPECTATIONS:

SOAR is committed to providing solid, interactive learning experiences in fun, hands-on, meaningful ways. In order to fulfill this commitment, all parents must commit to be an active part of a teaching team and use creative and fresh ways to teach their class. Each teacher must complete the following:

- **Develop and submit a class syllabus**
Teaching teams should meet over the summer to develop the class syllabus. The syllabus and teaching team distribution must be submitted to the leadership team for review and approval no later than August 31st.
- **Clearly communicate class expectations and homework assignments to student's parents**
Homework assignments and class schedules should be clearly communicated to parents in a timely manner. New assignments must be posted no later than the Wednesday prior to the next class to allow students enough time to complete assignments.
- **Ensure that the teaching reflects the class description advertised at the time of class registration**
Changes in curriculum or syllabus must be approved by the leadership team in advance.
- **Ensure a majority of class time is dedicated to fun, hands-on, and meaningful interaction**
Teachers must dedicate sufficient time and thought to ensure quality classes are provided for the students. The majority of learning in science, history, and writing will occur at home through the completion of homework assignments. For science, at least 50-75% of class time is spent on classroom experiments. For all other classes, 50% or more of class time should be hands on and interactive. The use of lecture-based classes is not recommended for the ages of the children that SOAR serves.
- **Communicate with the leadership team if additional support is necessary to successfully meet teaching requirements**
The leadership team wants everyone to be successful and can provide support in lesson planning, classroom management, and ideas for hands-on activities. If a teacher is unable to fulfill their teaching responsibilities, they must communicate to the leadership team for additional support.

SECURITY POLICY:

- All teachers, assistants, and students will have an ID for speedy entry into the building.
- Schedules, rosters, incident report forms, and fire drill instructions will be posted in classrooms for teacher security use.
- Hallways will be monitored by all teachers during class transitions.
- Bathroom breaks will abide by the 2-Adult rule, which states two adults must accompany **all** students in the building. Students are encouraged to use bathrooms during breaks, when the 2-Adult rule is upheld by hall monitors.
- Transitions of classes – Both teachers and students will be moving from class to class.
- First Aid – Anyone requiring more than a band aid or a tissue will be returned to the parent; supplies for first aid can be found in the check-in room.
- Walkie-Talkies – We will use the MCI walkies to stay tuned to the emergency channel.
- Fire drills – as CLS conducts fire drills, we will participate in moving students as a class to the back parking lot. Teachers will be given instructions on how to conduct drills at the Orientation meeting. It is critical we practice these procedures, and students must understand the importance of following directions of the classroom instructors for their safety.

Emergency Situations:

In the event of an emergency (evacuation, lockdown, etc.), please refer to the corresponding procedure document in the classroom's wall-mounted bin and follow the instructions. In the event that a child is choking or needs CPR, please refer to the related wall posters in the classroom.

Reporting Potential Child Abuse and/or Neglect:

Covenant Life Church ("CLC") cares deeply about children and desires to prevent all child abuse and/or neglect. CLC wants any suspected child abuse and/or neglect reported immediately to legal authorities, in accordance with Maryland state laws. CLC believes that it is the moral responsibility of every Discovery Land ("DL") volunteer to report to local law enforcement authorities if the volunteer has reason to believe that child abuse and/or neglect has occurred.*

DL volunteers should exercise sound judgment in reporting potential child abuse and/or neglect. If a DL volunteer has reason to believe that a child has suffered abuse and/or neglect, that individual must immediately follow a two-step reporting process:

First, to the local department of social services or to a local law enforcement agency, and

Second, to the Discovery Land director (Josh Cooley). If Josh Cooley is not available, the report must be given to a CLC pastor.

Because CLC provides police security for all Sunday morning services and other DL events, CLC has sought and received assurances from local law enforcement departments that volunteers can accomplish step 1 by reporting directly to any of the law enforcement officers on duty at CLC. (An officer is usually available at the Info Center in the main church lobby.) If a law enforcement officer is not available at that time, the volunteer must contact the Montgomery County Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (240-777-4417) or the Montgomery County Police non-emergency line (301-279-8000). Proof of abuse and/or neglect is not required before reporting.

To protect children still further, CLC requires DL volunteers to report any suspicion whatsoever of child abuse and/or neglect to the DL director even if the suspicion does not rise to the level of state-mandated reporting based on a "reason to believe" standard.

When reporting their reasonable belief about abuse and/or neglect to

the local law enforcement officer on duty at CLC and the DL director, DL volunteers should state the following, to the extent of their knowledge:

1. The name, age and home address of the child
2. The name and home address of the child's parents or other person who is responsible for the child's care
3. The whereabouts of the child
4. The nature and extent of any potential abuse and/or neglect of the child, including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of potential abuse and/or neglect
5. Any other information that would help determine (a) the cause of the potential abuse and/or neglect, and (b) the identity of any individual responsible for the potential abuse and/or neglect

(*Important note: In Maryland, the legal standard for reporting potential abuse and/or neglect is "reason to believe," not just "suspicion." As a practical guideline, having a "reason to believe" means that there should be something objectively observable — and not just intuition or "a gut feeling" — that can be rationally explained to a third party and supported by the type of evidence that is indicative of abuse.)

DL volunteers should be aware of the physical and behavioral signs of child abuse and/or neglect. Some of the more common indicators are summarized below (taken from Montgomery County Family Crimes Division website):

1. Physical Abuse

- a. Physical indicators may include:
 - i. Unexplained bruises on face, torso, back, buttocks, thighs
 - ii. Multiple injuries in various stages of healing
 - iii. Bruises/welts
 - iv. Human bite marks
 - v. Injuries regularly appearing after absence, weekend, etc.
 - vi. Unexplained fractures, lacerations, abrasions
- b. Behavioral indicators may include:
 - i. Reports he or she has an injury caused by his or her caretaker
 - ii. Uncomfortable with physical contact
 - iii. Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably
 - iv. Wears clothing inappropriate to weather (to cover body)
 - v. Afraid to go home
 - vi. Chronic runaway (adolescents)
 - vii. Behavior extremes (e.g. withdrawn, aggressive)
 - viii. Apprehensive when other children cry

2. Physical Neglect

- a. Physical indicators may include:
 - i. Consistent hunger, poor hygiene
 - ii. Unattended physical problems or medical needs
 - iii. Consistent lack of supervision
 - iv. Abandonment
- b. Behavioral indicators may include:
 - i. Reports that he or she has no caretaker at home
 - ii. Begg, steals food
 - iii. Constant fatigue, listlessness, or falling asleep in class
 - iv. Extended stays (early arrival and late departure)
 - v. Shunned by peers

3. Sexual Abuse

- a. Physical indicators may include:
 - i. Sexually transmitted disease
 - ii. Pregnancy
 - iii. Difficulty walking or sitting
 - iv. Pain or itching in genital area
 - v. Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
 - vi. Bruises/bleeding in external genitalia

- b. Behavioral indicators may include:
 - i. Reports sexual abuse
 - ii. Highly sexualized play
 - iii. Detailed, age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior
 - iv. Role reversal, overly concerned for siblings
 - v. Chronic runaway
 - vi. Seductiveness
 - vii. Suicide attempts (adolescents)
 - viii. Deterioration in academic performance
 - ix. Sudden, noticeable behavior changes

4. Emotional Maltreatment

- a. Physical indicators may include:
 - i. Speech disorders
 - ii. Delayed physical development
 - iii. Learning problems

- b. Behavioral indicators may include:
 - i. Habit disorders (sucking, biting, rocking in older child)
 - ii. Antisocial, destructive
 - iii. Passive and aggressive behavior extremes
 - iv. Appears to derive pleasure from hurting others or animals

(Important note: Volunteers should recognize that it could be significant if a child exhibits multiple indicators, while also understanding that in and of themselves, such indicators do not prove abuse and/or neglect.)

For more information, visit the Maryland Department of Human Resources' Child Protective Services website at www.dhr.state.md.us or the Montgomery County Family Violence Division's child abuse website at <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sao/units/familyViolence/ChildAbuse.html>.

2. Scope:

The church can provide classrooms to host up to 8 groups of children. All ages will be provided for, including childcare and preschool rooms, up through middle school (grade 8). Groups will be divided based on grade and number of teachers available. See schedule and class offerings document for suggested groups. These group divisions are suggestions; for example, if a parent feels their kindergarten student can participate in a 1st-4th grade class, they can register the child for that class.

Parents can register their children for all classes periods or as little as one. Parents are required to be on site at all times when their children are attending classes. They are responsible for the safety and behavior of their own children.

Chapel will cover Bible, church history, and music. Preschool will have language and math components as well as stories and free play. Elementary and middle school groups will cover history, literature, and science (with activities), with electives such as art, health, logic, and P.E. The subjects should be integrated as much as possible, e.g., singing hymns in chapel from the time period studied in history, while reading literature from the same period and doing activities or art projects that coincide.

Preferred class size is 10-15 students. If a class has fewer than 3 students, it will be cancelled and students registered for that class will be incorporated into others. Teacher approval will be needed for a class size exceeding 15 students.

3. Parent responsibilities:

Any parent wishing to register their child(ren) for the co-op must commit to teaching 12 classes. Parents may choose to team teach a full year class and each teach 12 classes; team teach two semester long classes and each teach 12 classes; or teach on your own one semester for 12 weeks. A minimum of two adults must be with a child at all times: in class, this will be the teacher and the assistant; for bathroom breaks, it will be a teacher/assistant and hall monitor.

Because of the need for committed teachers, please consider carefully whether you can fulfill your commitment to the co-op for all the yearly meetings. Absence is strongly discouraged, except in the case of sickness. Teaching responsibilities may be swapped among members of the teaching team for that class in the event of necessary absences. Notify the leadership team as soon as you know you will not be present. If you are a primary teacher and will be absent, you are responsible to get your teaching materials to the co-teachers who will cover your class. Parents and children will also be responsible for facility clean-up tasks on a rotating basis.

4. Time:

Meetings will be held in the Covenant Life Church classrooms on Tuesdays from 9:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. Chapel/Announcements may be added prior to first period classes. The details will be determined at a later time. Orientation will be held September 5, then classes will begin September 12 and end April 24 with some breaks for holidays and church closures. This allows for 2 semesters, a total of 24 meetings. May 1 and May 8 will be reserved as make-up days in case of unforeseen need to cancel (for example, the building is closed due to snow).

5. Suggested weekly schedule:

Chapel/Announcements may begin prior to 1st period classes. The details will be determined at a later time.

Classes will begin at 9:30 A.M. and continue until 11:35 A.M. (9:30-10:30, 10:35-11:35). Lunch hour, 11:40-12:30, will take place only in designated rooms, including an allergen-free room for those with allergies. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children during all pre-class and lunch activities. Three more class periods (12:35-1:25, 1:30-2:20, 2:25-3:15) will take place after lunch.

Parking will be in the “finger lot” (1A) or lot by the Events Center. Please reserve the front (guest) lot for use by handicapped, visitors and CLC staff. Entry and exit will be by the main lobby only. Parents will show their photo ID to be admitted by building security. They should then proceed to the SOAR check-in table.

See “Class Offerings” attachment for the schedule of classes available for each group. Further explanation is found below the schedule.

6. Curriculum:

The books assigned for each class will be determined by each teaching team, within the general framework outlined in the scope and schedule. Classes are determined based on parent and teacher input prior to registration each year.

7. Fees:

A one-time per year registration fee of \$30.00 per student, with a family cap of \$90.00, payable by check to Covenant Life Church (with the students’ names in the memo line) will cover basic supplies for teachers, ID badges, and facilities/security. Payment should be made upon confirmation of registration; refunds are available for those needing to cancel their registration before September 5, 2017, at the orientation meeting. Individual teachers may charge a materials fee to be paid through the SOAR Paypal account or directly to them by orientation as outlined in “Class Offerings.” These classes may also require books or other materials that the parent will need to purchase. Some classes feature a professional teacher whose class carries a more substantial fee that will be paid directly to them. Otherwise, all expenses are covered by the FSP tuition fee.

8. Weather policy:

The co-op will be subject to decisions made by the church office on whether the building is closed due to weather. SOAR will not meet if Montgomery County Public Schools are closed; if MCPS schools have a delayed opening, we will meet as scheduled. Confirmation of this will be by email by 10:00 P.M. the night before.

9. Sickness policy:

We leave it to the parent to determine whether their child is healthy enough to attend SOAR. If the child has a fever or is contagious, they should stay home. If the sick child can stay home with another adult, the parent may attend SOAR along with their other children if they are not contagious. If the parent needs to stay home with the sick child, their other children may not be sent to SOAR with another parent. Teachers are arranged in teams to compensate for parents who may miss due to illness.

10. Photo Policy:

Out of respect for the privacy of all families, if you take photos of children other than your own at SOAR, only share the pictures on SOAR's private Yahoo Group and not on social media unless verbal permission is specifically given by the parent(s).

11. Leadership Team:

The leadership team for the 2017-2018 school year will be as follows:

Co-Directors- Janet Segui and Jenny Dunbar

Onsite Coordinators- Terry Wilcox and Sommer Gee

The co-directors of the co-op are directly accountable to the FSP Administrator and the board. A co-director will be on-site for each meeting and coordinators and teachers will report to them.

Leadership team contact information:

Janet Segui- jsegui@covlife.org and 240-464-3585

Jenny Dunbar- jen.dunbar95@gmail.com and 301-875-2777

Terry Wilcox- wilcoxquiver9@yahoo.com and 301-758-3734

Sommer Gee- sommergee5@gmail.com and 631-255-9615

Covenant Life Church, Inc.

Waiver of Liability for Independent Program Held on-site at Covenant Life Church

Name of the independent organization: SOAR Co-Op (Sharing Opportunities for Achievement and Relationship)

Names of Child(ren) participating in program:

Name of parent/guardian of above named children _____

I hereby grant permission for the FSP SOAR program to provide Co-operative learning programs for the above named children. I understand that SOAR is a co-op of Family Schools Program parents and that Covenant Life Church permits these parents use of the facility for their program.

I hereby agree to hold Covenant Life Church, Inc. harmless for any wrongful acts committed intentionally or unintentionally by the overseers, leaders and participants of the SOAR program against me, my family, or my children. I release Covenant Life Church from liability for any such wrongful acts.

Signature of parent /guardian

Date