

Elmore County Homeschool Organization (ECHO) Bylaws

Preamble

The Purpose of ECHO is:

- To represent the homeschool community in a manner that honors God.
- To serve as a non-profit support group for all families in the greater Elmore County area who have chosen to homeschool.
- To provide a positive socialization environment for homeschooled children.
- To support and encourage their parents in the homeschooling process while providing an atmosphere for exchange of teaching techniques and curriculum information.
- To keep the group informed of any pertinent homeschool current events such as seminars, conferences and legal issues.
- To promote public awareness of home education.

I. Membership Requirements

1. Open to anyone who is interested in or actively engaged in home education.
2. There are no membership dues and we never do "fund raisers". Instead we collect Box Tops for Education to support ECHO. Occasionally we may also ask members to donate specific supplies.
3. Our existence depends upon dedicated members who volunteer their time and resources. We ask for your active participation.

II. Officers

1. Leader

- A. One person will serve as Leader for a one year term, from June through May.
- B. The membership will vote on Leader in the spring and she/he will take office in June.
- C. Duties
 - a. Oversee the carrying out of the Purpose Statement.
 - b. Ensure that business is kept to a minimum during meetings so that our time is spent mostly in fellowship and organized activities.
 - c. Oversee all group functions and activities.
 - d. Each leader has a specific opportunity for service to ECHO that may vary each year.
- D. Requirements
 - a. Has homeschooled at least three years (This stipulation may be waived by 2/3 assenting vote of members present.)
 - b. Has been an active member of ECHO at least one year (This stipulation may be waived by 2/3 assenting vote of members present.)

2. Treasury Committee

- A. This is a standing committee with at least one person who serves as the Treasurer and two persons who have signatory access to the ECHO account, currently at Wachovia Bank of Alabama.
- B. Voting is not necessary as long as the membership agrees they are honest and trustworthy.
- C. Elections may be held if deemed necessary by the Officers or membership.
- D. Treasurer Duties
 - a. Collect, count, & submit all Box Tops for Education.
 - b. Handle all ECHO bank transactions.
 - c. Be prepared to give an account of available funds at any ECHO meeting.

3. Committees/Coordinators

- A. Tasks will be divided into committees and coordinators or rotated among the membership as determined by the Officers or membership.
- B. Each spring the list of committees/coordinators will be updated and members asked to volunteer for service for June through May.
- C. Committees and coordinators and their descriptions may be changed at any time as needed with general membership consensus.

III. Meetings

1. Location

- A. Meetings are held at the Coosada Baptist Church (Annex), which has so graciously allowed us to use their facilities free of charge.
- B. Coosada Baptist Church has the responsibility of developing the facility rules and overseeing the physical needs of our attendance there.
- C. The Officers will schedule meeting dates six months to a year in advance to ensure that the church will be available.

2. General Guidelines
 - A. Meetings are held on the second and fourth Friday of each month, except when such dates interfere with major holidays.
 - B. ECHO meetings are open to all homeschool families and are designed to provide support and encouragement to parents and socialization for children.
 - C. Supervision of the children is maintained by the parents. Parents are responsible for resolving any conflict that arises between the children. (See Appendix A)
 - D. At no time should pets/animals be brought to meetings unless they are a service animal.
 - E. To ensure that the facilities are left the way we found them, everyone is asked to help clean up at the end of a meeting.
 - F. If you or any of your children are sick, or even recovering from an illness, please refrain from attending that week. (See Appendix B)

3. Meeting Activities

- A. Business

- a. The business portion of each meeting will be limited strictly to crucial, time-sensitive matters so that we may focus on organized activities and fellowship.
 - b. Parents should take turns supervising the children during business meetings.

- B. Children's Activities

- a. Organized Activities

1. Organized activities will allow members to count ECHO meetings as school days if needed for their cover school.
 2. Approved activities include (but are not limited to) holiday parties, group enrichment activities, arts & crafts, show and tell, science & geography fairs, and/or park days. Guest speakers are welcome, but no sales pitches.
 3. We encourage any parent who wants to host a special interest club or offer an enrichment class, but such activities cannot take place during regular ECHO meetings.
 4. Volunteer coordinators will determine the activity and provide a list of materials needed for parents to bring, if necessary.

- b. Play Time

1. Children may engage in free play time during the time parents spend on business and/or following any children's organized activities.
 2. Adults will supervise the children at all times both inside & outside the building. Children are not allowed to roam the building unattended.
 3. Running & rough play are not allowed indoors
 4. Children may bring an activity or game to share. However, keep in mind that there will be small children present.
 5. Do not bring items that are precious to you or your child. ECHO is not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal items.

- IV. Field Trips

1. Field trips are initiated and planned by volunteers, under the leadership of the Officers.
2. To prevent hassles and embarrassment, we have set up some simple rules for field trips and other group events.
 - A. Please let the person in charge of the field trip know in advance if you plan to attend. If last minute problems occur, call the person in charge as soon as possible.
 - B. Should the field trip be canceled or other problems ensue, you will be contacted as soon as possible via telephone or email. If at all possible, check your email the night before or the morning of the field trip to verify that no one has been trying to reach you.
 - C. Attend field trips and other group events with your own children or send your children with another adult who will take responsibility for their behavior.
 - D. Arrive early. All tours begin on time.
 - E. Children and adults should listen when someone is talking. There are other times better suited for fellowship.
 - F. Respect age limits. The host sets the age restrictions. Do not bring extra children or babies without first getting permission from the person in charge of the field trip.
 - G. The safety and discipline of the children is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. In an effort to present a good witness to our host and to promote common courtesy among participating families, the person in charge of the field trip has the authority to insist that the parent remove disruptive children.
 - H. Be generous with "thank you" and "please."
 - I. Thank you notes are appropriate. The person in charge of the field trip is responsible for sending a thank you note to the host in a timely manner.

V. Dissemination of Information

1. ECHO distributes meeting minutes and other important information via Yahoo Group. A membership form must be completed before a person is allowed to join the Yahoo Group.
2. ECHO maintains a free web site at www.freewebs.com/onlineecho. Carren and Daniel Joye currently financially maintain the web name www.onlineECHO.com which redirects to our free website.
3. Emails are used strictly for communicating among members about homeschool info. & ECHO business. No Spamming Allowed.
4. Members can see our active Membership List in the Yahoo Group Address Book.
5. News releases and photos of our children will be sent to various local media occasionally. To protect our children, personal information will be limited to names, ages and cities of residence.

VI. Legal Information

- A. Legal services and homeschool covering are not provided by ECHO.
- B. Membership in the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) is encouraged.

VII. Amendments

- A. The Officers evaluate the Bylaws annually, appealing to the Lord for His direction and wisdom.
- B. The general framework may change and policies may be added or improved at any time as needs in the group warrant.
- C. Members are encouraged to give input as desired at any time.
- D. Amendments must be approved by a 2/3 vote of members present.

Appendix A

Rude language and physical aggression will not be permitted. It is the responsibility of each parent to monitor his/her own child's behavior & exact discipline when necessary. If a child repeatedly mistreats fellow members it is at the leader's discretion to politely dismiss his/her family from the meeting.

Appendix B

Please do not attend a meeting or event if you or your child have had any contagious symptoms in the past 48 hours. Contagious symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- fever
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- discolored mucus
- rash