

KATY ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLERS

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures are a living document and will change from time to time as the Board of Advisors sees fit and appropriate for the organization, appealing to the Lord for His direction and wisdom.

MEMBERSHIP YEAR: The KACH membership year runs from September 1 through August 31 of the following year.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: Dues are currently \$20 for new members and \$15 for renewing members. Any member who allows their membership to lapse will be required to pay the new member rate. All renewals will be handled through our online community at www.bigtent.com. All new-member payments will be handled through our website, www.katyhomeschoolers.weebly.com, on the “membership” page.

MEMBER BENEFITS: Members who have paid their annual dues can participate in organization events, field trips, moms’ night outs, small group gatherings and activities, and the KACH online community. Members may also have the benefit of a membership card, member directory, and newsletter. These benefits may be expanded or contracted as volunteer participation permits.

MEMBER PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES: Members are encouraged to participate in organization-wide events, field trips, moms’ night outs, and small group activities.

MEMBER EXPECTATIONS:

1. Members of KACH are expected to represent the Katy, Texas, homeschool community in a manner that honors Jesus Christ.
2. Members are expected to assist where needed in the activities they participate in. Members are also encouraged to share their skills and talents to aid, encourage, and inspire others.
3. Members are expected at all times to treat other members with respect, courtesy, and love as the Lord instructs us to do when he says, “Love your neighbor as yourselves.”

KACH ONLINE COMMUNITY:

1. The KACH online community is located at www.bigtent.com. New members will receive an invitation to join the community via email once a membership application and payment has been received.
2. Once the invitation is received, members will need to set up a Big Tent user account. This is separate from KACH but will be needed to access the KACH online community.

3. Small groups are assigned an area within our online community called “subgroups.” Members should join the subgroups of the small groups they are interested in to receive information and event notices.
4. Members are responsible for checking their own email settings within Big Tent to make sure KACH notifications are being received in a timely manner.
5. Flaming and harshness within our online community is NOT acceptable. We are here to share information, to encourage one another, and uplift one another to the Lord, not tear each other down. Continued violation could result in being placed on “moderate” status or being permanently removed from the KACH online community.

ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS:

1. All current members will be given access to the KACH members-only online discussion forums. Members who do not maintain a current membership will lose their access to these forums.
2. Please be considerate to all members of the group in ALL postings. We are made up of many wonderful families who have many wonderful backgrounds. Please choose your words wisely so they will not offend others. Remember, your opinion is your opinion and others may feel differently.
3. When replying to a KACH posting, the default email address is the person who sent the original email. Please do NOT respond to the entire KACH Yahoo Group unless it is appropriate information to all.
4. When sharing any information, please consider the source and only post things that are verifiable and not hearsay or conjecture. This is especially important as we all are striving to be people of truth. Refrain from sending information that is not applicable to all members.
5. Consider your audience before forwarding any e-mails (especially off-topic emails). Would it be better received by a personal friend? Please do not forward the entire email to the forum, but rather copy the appropriate section and paste into a new email.
6. If you are interested in getting your KACH emails under control, you can change how often you receive them. Go to www.bigtent.com and log in using your user ID and password. Go to “email settings” and adjust the frequency of emails you wish to receive for each of the areas of our online community.
7. The views and opinions expressed by individual KACH members are not necessarily those of the KACH board members, leaders, volunteers or other members.
8. Flaming, harshness, and the like are NOT acceptable. We are here to share information, to encourage one another, and uplift one another to the Lord, not tear each other down. Continued violation may result in a member being placed on “moderate” status for a time, requiring all of the member’s postings to be approved by the Board of Advisors before being released to the group. It may also result in being permanently removed from the KACH online community.
9. ON-TOPIC POSTS—any posts about homeschooling or prayer requests are considered on-topic. We encourage posts regarding prayer requests, curriculum reviews, teaching ideas, field trip ideas, questions about homeschooling, and information on homeschool classes and programs.

Offering homeschooling materials “for sale” are also considered to be on-topic. On-topic posts can be posted online to the “homeschool” forum or emailed to kach_hs@lists.bigtent.com.

10. **OFF-TOPIC POSTS**—when posting messages that do not concern homeschooling but would be of interest to all, please post them online to the “off-topic” forum or email to kach_ot@lists.bigtent.com. We encourage OT discussion--feel free to ask about or post about plumbers, doctors, vacation ideas, events, etc...we are here to support each other with these things as well!
11. **POLITICAL POSTS**—Postings related to parental rights are allowed and encouraged. Political postings and political links related to homeschooling and parental rights, including links to political homeschool sites, are allowed. Please discuss all political issues with grace and, if necessary or asked, off-list. These postings can be posted online to the “political” forum or emailed to kach_political@lists.bigtent.com.

OFFERING ITEMS FOR SALE TO MEMBERS:

1. Items that may be of interest to members may be offered for sale or for free through KACH.
2. Homeschooling materials for sale or free can be posted on our “homeschool” forum or posted in the Classifieds section of our online community. This includes anything you would use to teach your child...curriculum packages, workbooks, flashcards, DVDs, etc. and ALL books.
3. Other items such as furniture, household goods, pets, etc. **MUST** be posted on the Classifieds section of our online community. These items are not allowed to be posted to the “off-topic” forum. Using the Classifieds section allows KACH members to opt out of notices regarding items for sale unrelated to homeschooling.

PERSONAL BUSINESS ADVERTISEMENTS: Members who own their own businesses are welcome to post one email per month to the “off-topic” forum, letting other members know about products, services, and special offers that may be of interest.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES: KACH recognizes that all homeschooling families carry a heavy load. However, KACH is dependent upon members who volunteer their time in leadership. If each member volunteers to help in a small way, the load is considerably lightened for everyone. Following are opportunities for members to serve in leadership:

1. Field Trip Leaders identify a field trip opportunity, invite other KACH members to join in, and organize and communicate all aspects of the trip. Any KACH member can lead a field trip.
2. Event Organizers assist the Board of Advisors to plan special KACH-wide events. Any KACH member can assist the organization in this role.
3. Moms’ Night Out Organizers plan an opportunity for homeschool moms to get together for a night of socializing. Any KACH member can plan a Moms’ Night Out.
4. Small Group Leaders organize and lead the activities of KACH interest groups or “small groups.” Any member who has been in KACH for at least one year can assume the leadership of an existing small group or, with another KACH member, organize a new small group.

5. KACH Board of Advisors conducts the business of KACH. Board members serve a two-year term in the capacity of President, Vice President of Membership, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, or Advisor. Board members are required to have homeschooled for three years or more and to have been a member of KACH for at least two years.

FIELD TRIPS:

1. Any current KACH member can initiate and plan a field trip as the “Field Trip Leader.” Small groups can also plan field trips for their participants.
2. The Field Trip Leader is responsible for organizing and communicating all aspects of the trip.
3. Date, time, place, and registration deadline should be clearly communicated in the post to KACH members or small group members.
4. A completed, signed KACH Field Trip form is required of all participating families.
5. Payment of cash or check should be used to secure a reservation for a field trip. Field Trip Leaders should NOT hold a place for any member who has not paid. For an event that has no fee, Field Trip Leaders are encouraged to require a \$10 check made out to KACH to hold the reservation which will then be returned when the participants arrive. In the event of non-attendance, the check will be deposited into the KACH or small group account.
6. Field Trip Leaders are expected to handle all funds collected from members in a responsible and reliable manner at all times and to pay the field trip location in a timely fashion according to their deadlines.
7. Participants who consistently misbehave or disrespect the rules of the field trip location should be asked to leave by the Field Trip Leader.
8. Parents are expected to accompany their children to all field trips. Children are NOT allowed to be dropped off for a field trip unless previously approved by the Field Trip Leader. In this case, the parent should ask another parent in attendance at the field trip to be responsible for the child AND complete a KACH permission form to be given to the Field Trip Leader.
9. Field Trip Leaders are expected to represent KACH in a courteous, responsible manner, adhering to deadlines and policies of the field trip location, so that the next KACH group will be allowed to return.

MOMS’ NIGHTS OUT:

1. Any member can organize a Moms’ Night Out.
2. Date, time, place, and RSVP deadline (if needed) should be clearly communicated in the post to KACH members.
3. Non-members are allowed to attend this event.

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES:

1. KACH small groups are organized around a particular interest or around an age group and/or gender.
2. Members are encouraged to participate in small groups to get to know other homeschooling families with similar interests or similar-aged children.
3. Small groups are allowed to collect additional yearly dues from participants to cover supplies, facilities, refreshments, etc. in addition to entrance or participation fees for specific activities.
4. Small group communication will be directly to participating members through private email and/or their Big Tent subgroup.

SMALL GROUP LEADERSHIP GUIDELINES:

1. Any member who has been in KACH for at least one year can assume the leadership of an existing small group or, with another KACH member, organize a new small group. The exceptions to this policy will be leadership for the preschool group and the 5-8 year-old groups which will be considered by the Board of Advisors on a case-by-case basis.
2. To start a new small group, two members who are actively homeschooling and have been a member of KACH for at least one year must submit a plan to the Board of Advisors outlining the year's activities. The Board reserves the right to deny approval if the group plan does not further the object of KACH as outlined in the bylaws.
3. All small group leaders MUST be approved by the Board of Advisors, whether it is an existing small group or a new small group, BEFORE being placed in leadership or announced to the group. Leaders who are returning from the previous year do not need to be re-approved.
4. If a small group leader becomes ill, will be temporarily gone, or for any personal reason must leave their leadership position, it is that leader's responsibility to find a substitute. If a leader leaves the small group or moves, a new leader should be appointed. Replacement leaders need to be approved by the Board of Advisors before being placed in leadership or announced to the group.
5. If leaders are found to be not to be fulfilling the responsibilities that they agreed to upon accepting the position, the Board of Advisors reserves the right to replace the leader or, if necessary, dissolve the small group.
6. Small group leaders are expected to uphold and support the KACH Statement of Faith as well as the KACH bylaws and KACH Policies and Procedures as they apply to small groups.
7. The direction of a small group should be directed by the object of KACH as outlined in the KACH bylaws.
8. Small group leaders should always bring any issues of concern within the small group to the Board of Advisors.
9. Small group leaders may collect additional yearly dues from participants to cover supplies, facilities, refreshments, etc. in addition to entrance or participation fees for specific activities.

Leaders are encouraged to open a group bank account when feasible at the same bank used by KACH (currently Wells Fargo). One member of the Board of Advisors should be an additional signer on the account. Any remaining funds at the time the small group is dissolved should be deposited in the KACH account.

10. Participants in a small group **MUST** be KACH members. Non-members are not allowed to attend KACH small group functions. The only exception to this is a family who is visiting to see if they would like to join KACH. After one visit, that family will be expected to join KACH in order to continue attending small group events. Small group leaders should check to make sure that all participants are, in fact, current KACH members.
11. Parents are expected to accompany their children to all KACH events and activities. Children are **NOT** allowed to be dropped off for a small group event unless previously approved by the small group leaders. In this case, the parent should ask another parent in attendance at the event to be responsible for the child **AND** complete a KACH permission form to be given to the leaders. In the case of teens and mature tweens, these children can be left in the care of the small group leader **IF** a signed KACH permission form is completed and left with the leader.
12. If members of a small group are not upholding the KACH bylaws and/or KACH Policies and Procedures, the small group's leaders should address the situation and inform the KACH Board of Advisors.
13. If a small group meets in a private home, the home **MUST** be covered by liability insurance which provides for any unfortunate incident that may happen during the group event. This insurance is typically included with home insurance. Additional coverage beyond the typical amount is not necessary.

MISBEHAVIOR AT KACH EVENTS:

1. A child who is disruptive, disrespectful, or not following safety rules during any KACH event, field trip, or small group activity may be asked to leave the event.
2. Parents who are not properly supervising their children at a KACH event, field trip, or small group activity will be warned and may be asked to leave the event if lack of supervision continues.
3. The Board of Advisors reserves the right to terminate membership of any family that consistently violates points 1 or 2 above, or for gross misconduct such as, but not limited to, deliberate damage to a facility, stealing, threatening another with bodily harm or extreme disrespect to other members.