

GECO Handbook of Policies and Procedures

(Updated November 2023)

Welcome to GECO! This handbook is your guide to all things GECO. As a reference for members, the purpose is to clarify the duties and obligations of all members, outline policies and procedures for the co-op, and ensure everyone has an understanding of what to expect from the Board, other members, and students.

GECO has been a work in progress for over twenty years. To meet the increased need for homeschool support in our area, GECO is devoted to creating a harmonious, productive, co-operative atmosphere that enriches and encourages all our members and students.

Grace Enrichment Co-Op is a non-profit, volunteer organization that provides academic and social support to homeschool families with children in grades seven through twelve. GECO offers high academic standards at reasonable costs through a cooperative effort in an atmosphere that supports a Christian worldview.

<u>CONTENTS:</u>	<u>Page #</u>
Policies	2
Schedule	3
Parent and Student Responsibility	4 & 5
Bathroom Policy	6
Communication	7
Finding a Sub is your business	8
Code of Conduct and Incident Reports	9
Dress Code	10
First Thursday	11
Facility Use and Security	12
Governing Board and Committees	13

Policies:

All members are expected to read and understand the obligations and responsibilities for all family members who will participate in GECO.

Failure to comply with GECO rules, responsibilities, and commitments could terminate membership without refund of fees.

Regular members are expected to find their own substitutes and submit a “When You Need A Sub” form.

GECO is not a school and does not keep, maintain, or transfer grades or student work.

Pre-K and elementary students are never allowed to be dropped off or left at GECO without the parent present. Only seventh through twelfth grade students can be at GECO without a parent present.

Neither parents nor students will enter the building before GECO personnel have unlocked the building for classes.

Schedule:

Monday schedule: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (There is no lunch period scheduled for Monday classes)

9:50 AM doors open for students and members, classes begin.

Thursday schedule: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

(Classes begin on the hour and change at 55 minutes past the hour.)

9:40 AM - doors open for set-up.

9:50 AM - doors open for students and members, classes begin at 10:00 am. Please do not enter the building until the doors are unlocked. DO NOT ring the bell or knock on the door.

11:55 AM - release for lunch (**older students may leave campus only if WRITTEN PERMISSION is on file with GECO. Electronic permission is the same as written permission**). Packed lunches are recommended.

12:45 - lunch clean up begins; chairs and tables are cleaned and put away, floor is swept as designated by GECO and facility. Students are expected to clean up the lunch room, with adult guidance.

Parent and Student Responsibility:

Parental involvement is a hallmark of home education. As parent-educators, great responsibility is required to ensure a quality education and well rounded social experience. GECO supports both. Many hands contribute to the success of the co-op through a monetary AND time commitment, regular attendance, fulfillment of duties, and maintaining a pleasant attitude. Have you enlisted as a teacher's aide, lunch room monitor, or grader? It is absolutely imperative that you understand your duties and fulfill them. **There is no unimportant work at GECO.** Each job, done well, makes GECO work. Know your own obligations, and familiarize yourself with others. Job descriptions and requirements are available at registration.

ALL Members are expected to:

- Attend General Meetings. General meetings allow members to review the Board's financial decisions, policy changes, and future plans for the group. General meeting dates are announced via email. August general meeting is mandatory, the January meeting is for curriculum planning, and the April business meeting is our end-of-year meeting. All members are highly encouraged to attend.
- Maintain commitments, duties, and obligations set forth in membership guidelines.
- Pay all fees and provide books as needed for classes.
- Support students in course work at home and ensure students turn in work on time.
- Work with teachers to solve problems or get clarity of expectations.
- Record all grades and prepare transcripts as needed for each family's homeschool records.
- Ensure the punctual arrival of students and prompt departure at appropriate times.
- Demonstrate respect toward the diversity of Christian faith found among GECO. Our purpose is to promote education, not convert others to any religious, political, or economic view.
- PK-2 and Elementary students must have a parent on site and available at all times.
- **Adults and children with symptoms of illness are asked to stay home.** Symptoms may include but are not limited to sore throat, nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, headache, and rash. Illness includes but is not limited to head lice, ringworm, chicken pox, etc. **ADULTS & CHILDREN MUST BE FEVER AND/OR SYMPTOM FREE WITHOUT MEDICATION FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO GECO.**
- Take MinistrySafe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training and submit to a criminal background check upon joining. MinistrySafe is required every other year. GECO will pay for training for the one volunteer who will be on campus during GECO. If any other family member (18 years or older) will substitute teach during the school year, it is that person's responsibility to complete MinistrySafe training before registration at his/her own expense. GECO will be financially

responsible for all background checks.

REGULAR Members are expected to:

- Fulfill at least two (2) commitments or more during the school year. A list or chart of available positions is posted at registration.
- Be on time and prepared to fulfill responsibilities.
- Have no more than three (3) excused class days per YEAR.
- Find a substitute for his/her class if absent. Members can find substitutes by logging into the GECO website, clicking the "Directory", "sections" dropdown, and contacting someone on the list for that hour via text or a call . When a sub is arranged, the member is to fill out the "When You Need A Sub" form on the member home page of the website. If the class has an aide or helper, the aide may not substitute for the instructor of the class, unless there is a substitute for the aide.
- Volunteer to substitute for a fellow member who must be absent.
- Provide adult supervision at all times for their elementary student(s). In the event the parent of the elementary student must leave the co-op premises for a short time, the parent must notify the teacher of the student's class, let them know where the parent is going, leave a phone number, and who is responsible for the child in the absence of the parent. If the parent is absent for the day, the elementary student may NOT attend class that day.
- Provide adult supervision at all times for Pre-K students. If the adult leaves the premises, he or she must take the Pre-K student with them.

Students are expected to:

- Arrive to class at proper time, ready to participate, with assignments completed.
- Ask for help when needed; do their own work.
- Respect the authority of the teacher and contribute to a peaceful learning atmosphere.
- Abstain from using electronic devices during class.
- Clean up the lunchroom in an orderly and respectful manner.
- Follow dress code and safety procedures without issue.

Bathroom Policy:

Only one student at a time is allowed in any bathroom during normal school hours. Notices on every bathroom are to be posted on the outside of the bathroom door stating this policy.

Before and after school hours (during set-up and clean-up) parents are responsible to monitor their student's bathroom activity.

At no time will a student and adult occupy any bathroom at the same time.

Older students may at no time be allowed to accompany younger students to any bathroom.

Older siblings may at no time be allowed to accompany younger siblings to any bathroom.

Parents may only accompany their own child or children to any bathroom.

Hall monitors are to monitor who is in the bathrooms and ask students to wait outside if a bathroom is being occupied by another student or an adult.

For Pk-2nd classes; With adult supervision and main bathroom doors propped open, more than one student may occupy the bathroom with only one student per stall.

Students involved in sports may be in the bathroom to change while other students are in the bathroom, but only one student per stall.

Communication:

Clear communication is vital for a successful co-op. **Our primary form of communicating is electronic. Part of your commitment to the group is to check your email box and GroupMe regularly as well as classroom pages.** GECO maintains a directory, found on the GECO website, for use in communicating with members only. The GroupMe “GECO Business” is only for GECO business. **DO NOT USE GroupMe FOR FINDING SUBS.** Please communicate directly via email, text, or calls to find substitutes for your positions when needed. Official GECO information, homeschool related news, opportunities, and all other information is shared via the email, gecohomeschool@gmail.com. The GECO website is also available for communication through the Classroom dashboard and through the Forum tab.

Finding A Sub is Your Business:

Every successful GECO day requires all members to meet their designated obligations. GECO policy allows 3 reasonable absences during the school year. Reasonable absences include: illness, death, religious holiday, family emergencies. It is the member's duty to find a substitute to meet obligations when that member is going to be absent. The GECO Directory, "sections" dropdown is the place to find a sub. Absences and subs must then be reported through the "When You Need A Sub" form on the GECO website. Sickness, especially during flu season is unpredictable; do not wait until the last minute to find a sub.

*****GECO GroupMe is not the proper place to find a sub.*****

The Board does understand that illnesses and family emergencies occur and will take these contingencies into consideration if absences exceed three. However, excessive absences, even under these situations, will require review and possible reassessment of member status. Any member who has an absence will volunteer to substitute for a fellow member who must be absent.

Extenuating circumstances such as prolonged illness, family moves, or other unforeseen issues will be managed case by case. Absences beyond the 3 reasonable allowed per year (that are not extenuating circumstances or communicated to the Board) will be recorded and **will be used in determining deposit return and eligibility for membership the following year.**

Code of Conduct and Incident Reports:

GECO expects good things from all students and parent members. All participants are to behave in a manner that elicits respect for the organization, the facility, and one another. Students who are unruly, disrespectful, or otherwise out of hand will be written up on an incident form. Unregulated use of electronic devices in class may also be grounds for incident reports. Reports are reviewed by GECO Board members and action is taken based on the offense. It is in the best interest of all to reconcile issues peacefully, however, certain actions and attitudes will not be tolerated at GECO. These include:

- **Sexual misconduct**
- **Violent or threatening behavior or speech**
- **Vulgar speech or writing**
- **Vandalism**
- **Theft**
- **Cheating on tests or assignments**
- **Consistent discipline issues such as failure to turn in work, participate in class, or lack of respect for people and place.**

GECO reserves the right to terminate membership for families whose students incur repeated incident reports or are involved in any other above mentioned negative behaviors.

Dress Code:

GECO is a valuable work. **All members and students** are expected to arrive dressed in a manner that aligns with the importance of the work that is required of them. With due respect to one another and our facility, please bear in mind the following dress code requirements:

- No hats in the building, unless designated by a GECO “crazy” hat day. For dress up days, hats are permitted **if they are part of a costume**.
- Participants shall be covered whether standing, sitting, or bending.
- Sleeves shall be worn at all times.
- No spaghetti straps, halters, or tube tops are allowed.
- No visible cleavage.
- Hems for all shorts or dresses shall be no shorter than finger-tip length on the body while standing straight.
- Slogans and graphics on t-shirts must be non violent, non sexual, and not promote products or ideas that are contrary to a biblical worldview.
- For GECO sponsored field trips or social events, this dress code applies.

Students who are dressed inappropriately will be expected to leave campus and change or wear a GECO provided T-shirt.

Parents must send weather appropriate outerwear for their young children

First Thursday:

First Thursday Lunch is part of our fundraising system. All membership fees fund regular operations for GECO. This includes rent, professional fees, insurance, and supplies. Extra curricular activities, yearbooks, and special event costs are supplemented by GECO's monthly "First Thursday" lunch. First Thursday lunches are hot plate lunches planned and prepared by the GECO First Thursday Lunch Team. Participation in First Thursday Lunch is optional.

Reservation via email is required. Head count is required in your reservation. The cost per plate is set by the lunch committee every year. The meal includes a hot entree, dessert, and a beverage. The menu varies throughout the year. Husbands, grandparents, and other guests are encouraged to attend. Payment is due at the meal time in cash or check. First Thursday Lunch has become a considerable fundraiser and contributes to a growing sense of community among members.

Facility Use and Security:

GECO is a guest at Mission Dorado Church. At all times the church is to be honored and respected as the important place that it is. GECO will maintain the following rules of respect toward the facility at all times.

- GECO members and students will not run in hallways. GECO adults will encourage all little children to walk.
- GECO members and students will not eat or drink in hallways or classrooms. Water is permitted.
- GECO members and students will not vandalize, steal, or misuse church property.
- GECO members and students will use voices appropriate to business in halls, classes, and the lunchroom.
- GECO members and students will dispose of trash properly, including emptying liquid from cups and bowls before placing them in the trash receptacles.
- GECO members and students will use wifi only to access educational or inspirational material.
- GECO members and students will turn out lights and leave classrooms neat and orderly.
- GECO members and students will recognize that church employees are working and respect their needs for professional courtesy.
- GECO members and students will recognize that church guests are often present in the building and conduct themselves accordingly with quiet courtesy.
- GECO members and students will be aware that church events, including funerals, may pre-empt GECO schedules.
- GECO members and students will keep all firearms, knives with blades longer than 3 inches, and other weapons in their vehicle or at home. **Per church policy, only persons possessing a concealed carry license may carry a firearm on church premises.**
- GECO members and students will participate in active shooter drills and/or fire drills as outlined and designated by GECO board.

Governing Board and Committees:

The Board

GECO is governed by an elected, member nominated, volunteer board. All policies and procedures are established by the Board. The seats on the Board are for 3 years. Elections are held every year. Each member must be absent from their Board seat for 1 year before possible re-election. Members are eligible for Board nomination after 2 years as members in good standing.

The Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee, chaired by the Vice President, and the Board work together to set the schedule and determine class needs based upon projected enrollment. It was decided in June, 2022 by the Board, that committee positions will be posted on the job board at registration since serving on this committee meets one required member obligation. This commitment begins the second day of the current school year and ends the first school day of the following school year.

The Finance Committee

The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, and the Board work together to develop and review fiscal procedures, oversee fundraising, oversee the annual audit, and review and explain the annual budget to the full Board. The budget is approved by the full Board. Financial reports and updates shall be provided by the Finance Committee to the Board monthly. This commitment meets one required member volunteer hour. It begins the first month of the current school year and ends in July of the following school year.

A hard copy of GECO's handbook is available upon request.

The Board reserves the right to change policies and procedures as needed without notification.