

GECO Handbook (Revised 2021)

Welcome to GECO! Now what? 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 Co-op days, and ensure everyone has a real understanding of what to expect from the Board, other members, and students.

GECO has been a work in progress for twenty years, and as such has experienced significant growth in the last five. 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.

Our Purpose:

Grace Enrichment Co-op is a non profit, volunteer organization that provides academic and social support to home school 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.

GECO IS NOT A SCHOOL AND DOES NOT KEEP, MAINTAIN, OR TRANSFER GRADES OR STUDENT WORK.

1. Schedule

Monday schedule: 10 AM - 2 PM (There is no lunch period scheduled for Monday classes)

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

Thursday schedule: 10 AM - 3 PM

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

9:40 AM doors open for set up

9:55 AM open doors for students and members, classes begin

11:55 AM release for lunch (**older students may leave campus only if WRITTEN**

PERMISSION is on file with GECO). Packed lunches are recommended.

12:45 lunch clean up begins; chairs and tables are put away as designated by GECO and facility.

Students are expected to clean up the lunch room, with adult guidance.

2. 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.
- 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.
 - ***GECO does not keep grades and records from year to year***
- 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.
- Keep children with symptoms of contagious illnesses at home. Nasal discharge, communicable disease, fever that requires medication, head lice, ringworm, chicken pox, etc. **CHILDREN MUST BE FEVER OR SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO GECO.**
- Take Ministry Safe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training and submit to a criminal background check upon joining. MinistrySafe is required every other year.

REGULAR Members are expected to:

- Fulfill at least two (2) commitments 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. The member may do so by logging into the GECO website, clicking the "Directory", "sections" dropdown, and contacting someone on the sub list for that hour. When a sub is arranged, the member is to fill out the "When You Need A Sub" form on the member 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 students. 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 elementary class 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.

3. 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 app is only for GECO business. **DO NOT USE GROUP ME 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 misc. 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.

4. 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. 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 GROUP ME 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) will be recorded and **will be used in determining deposit return and eligibility for membership the following year.**

5. 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.

6. Dress for the Occasion - Dress Code Matters

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
- 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

7. Fundraising Lunches - First Thursday

GECO does not have an external fund raising 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 Lunches is optional.

Reservation via email is required. 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. Head count is required in your reservation. 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.

8. 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 preempt GECO schedules.
- GECO students will keep all firearms, knives with blades longer than 3 inches, and other weapons in their vehicle or at home. These are not permitted inside the building.
- GECO members and students will participate in active shooter drills and/or fire drills as outlined and designated by GECO board.

9. The GECO Board and Curriculum Committee

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 reelection. Members are eligible for board nomination after 2 years as members in good standing. 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; all members are encouraged to attend.

General Meetings are as follows:

August Orientation - Mandatory

January/February Curriculum Planning

April Annual Business Meeting

The Curriculum Committee is appointed by the Board each fall for the following school year. Curriculum Committee appointments do meet one required member obligation. The committee and the board work together to set the schedule and determine class needs based upon projected enrollment.

GECO Member Handbook/Commitment Contract

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

I have received a copy of GECO's handbook.

I have read and understand the obligations and responsibilities for myself and my children who will participate in GECO.

I understand that failure to comply with GECO rules, responsibilities, and commitments could terminate my membership without refund of fees.

I understand that I am to find my own substitutes and submit a "When You Need A Sub" form.

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