

Policies and Procedures Manual
SEEK Homeschool Co-op
The Shepherd's Church
Cary, NC

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SEEK Policies and Procedures Manual

Spiritually and Educationally Enhancing Knowledge

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness . . .
Matthew 6:33

Welcome to SEEK! We are so thankful you are a part of the ministry and we look forward to walking alongside you on your homeschooling journey.

Mission Statement

The ministry of S.E.E.K. is designed to provide support and encouragement for homeschooling mothers through weekly Bible study and fellowship. In addition, it is the desire of this ministry to also provide enrichment classes for the children that are educational in nature and enhance the learning that is already taking place in the home.

Thursday Morning Schedule

9:00 Opening Assembly: Praise Songs, short Devotional and prayer, announcements and dismissal. **Please note: opening assembly is not optional.** Important announcements and information is communicated during Opening Assembly.

9:30 1st Hour classes begin

10:40 Bell to signal the 1st hour has ended. Leaders: do not dismiss children until the bell has rung. **Nursery workers: please get to the nursery as quickly as possible to replace 1st hour workers. All Early Elementary and Elementary children should be escorted to their second hour group and supervised at all times.**

10:50 2nd Hour classes begin

12:00 Bell to signal the 2nd hour has ended. Do not dismiss children until the bell has rung.

Dismissal/Pickup

Early Elementary leaders or assistants should escort all children to the K1 Assembly Room (first floor of the Children's Center) and assist the children in finding a seat. Adults should remind the children every week at dismissal time to remain calm and seated until they are picked up.

Elementary leaders or assistants should escort all children to the gym each week.

Middle/High leaders can dismiss the students to meet their parent.

Children should be picked up in the following order:

1. Nursery: A parent with a security sticker must pick up children from the nursery. Please do not send a sibling to pick up nursery aged children. **All nursery children must be picked up no later than 12:15.**
2. Early Elementary: A parent or older sibling (middle school or above) can pick up a child from the K1 Assembly Room. **All Early Elementary children must be picked up no later than 12:15.**
3. Elementary: A parent or older sibling (middle school or above) can pick up a child from the gym. Be aware that the gym monitors are allowed to leave at 12:15 so move quickly to pick up all your children.
4. Middle/High: Please meet your child at a pre-arranged location.

To ease congestion in the dismissal locations, we request middle and high school students remain outside of dismissal locations.

Once you have picked up your children, please leave the K1 Assembly Room or gym as soon as possible so leadership is aware of children remaining for pick-up.

Alternate pick up locations

Early Elementary and Elementary children should be picked up from the assigned dismissal room. Please do not ask children this age to meet you at another location or pull your child from line while the child is being escorted to the gym or K1 Assembly room.

If for some reason you need to leave SEEK quickly and you cannot wait until your child arrives at the proper dismissal location, make arrangements to pick up your child directly from their room **before** the bell rings.

If you have made arrangements with **another parent or an older child** to pick up your Early Elementary or Elementary children, please make sure that the child being picked up knows who is coming to get them.

Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, SEEK will operate under the direction of The Shepherd's Church. If The Shepherd's Church is closed, SEEK will not meet. If the church has a delayed opening, SEEK will operate accordingly. All closings or adjusted schedules due to weather will be communicated to members via email.

Attendance

The ministry of SEEK operates as a cooperative, which by its very definition requires the participation of each adult member enrolled. Attendance is crucial in providing efficiency and effectiveness. A limited number of absences are allowed for reasons other than illness as specified below. Attendance will be closely monitored by attendance records.

Absence Procedure

Absences are counted for the service hour of the parent only. Though Bible Study absences are not counted toward family absences, it is expected that members attend all sessions of their study when they are present. Reporting the absence of a child when the parent attends is not necessary.

If a member will be absent, he or she is required to notify us of the absence by emailing the SEEK email prior to the SEEK day on which the absence will occur. Phone or verbal notifications are not sufficient – an email must be sent. Parents are also required to indicate the reason for their absence in order to determine whether the absence is excused or limited (see below). Absences without proper notification or with notification but without a reason given will automatically be counted as a limited absence.

To report an absence, email:

SEEK email: absences@seekatsheperds.org

Emails must be received by 8:30am and should include the following information:

- Your name
- Date of absence
- Service assignment
- Hour of service
- Reason for absence

Absent class leaders are responsible for getting a lesson to their assistant. It is helpful if assistants notify the class leader if they will be out, but it is not required. Parents may want to contact their children's teachers sometime during the following week to check on missed assignments and homework, but notifying class leaders is also not required.

Excused vs. Limited Absence

Excused Absence: There is no limit to the number of times a family can be absent for an excused reason. Absences for the following reasons only are considered excused:

- illness of the member, member's child, or member's spouse that requires their care
- sudden, unexpected (not chronic) illness of member's parent or spouse's parent that requires immediate care
- pregnancy related issues, childbirth, and reasonable period of adjustment after childbirth
- adoption related travel and a reasonable period of adjustment after adoption
- a death in the family

Limited Absence: Each adult SEEK member is allowed two limited absences per semester. Three or more limited absences will result in the family being placed on probation for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester. Examples of reasons for absences that will be counted as limited absences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- home, car, or pet emergencies
- non-urgent or pre-scheduled medical appointments not associated with sudden illness
- care of a member's parent or spouse's parent for chronic or non-emergency related illness
- vacations, conferences, and training sessions
- public/private/homeschool related educational activities, conferences, competitions, or events
- member employment related absences
- travel or other absences related to spouse's employment
- mission trips or other ministry related events
- visitation of a sick family member
- care of child not registered in SEEK

Alternate Service for Limited Absences

Should a member know in advance that they will be absent, arrangements can be made for an alternate person that is not currently serving at SEEK to fulfill their service. This person will need to be pre approved by the SEEK director and to fill out a Shepherd's Kids Ministry application two weeks prior to serving. When an approved alternate serves for the member, the absence will be considered excused and will not count toward the two limited absences. An alternate for a limited absence can be used no more than twice during any semester.

Surrogate Parent

Should a parent be unable to attend, an attending SEEK member can accept responsibility for healthy children in the Middle and High School departments (grades 6-12). Nursery/Preschool aged children and any child registered in the Early Elementary (K-2nd grade) or Elementary (3rd-5th grade) departments cannot attend SEEK unless the parent is on campus and fulfilling their assigned service.

The surrogate parent is responsible for signing the surrogate parent sign-in sheet at the welcome desk so they can be contacted in case of an emergency.

Tardy Policy

SEEK begins at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday mornings with Opening Assembly, therefore anyone arriving to class after 9:30 will be considered tardy.

Tardiness will be closely monitored by attendance records, which are completed by class leaders for children and adults in all children's groups and in women's Bible Studies. Class Leaders will be instructed to mark as tardy any member who arrives after the start time of each hour.

Each parent and child will be allowed two tardies. Three or more tardies for any member of the family will result in the family being placed on probation for the remainder of the current semester and the following semester.

A combined total of more than three limited absences and/or tardies will also result in the family being placed on probation.

Terms of probation

Should a family be placed on probation, one additional limited absence or tardy during that semester will result in dismissal from SEEK. If there are no additional limited absences or tardies during that semester, the probation is carried over to the following semester. If more than two limited absences or tardies occur during that semester, the family will be dismissed from SEEK with no additional warnings.

Healthy Child Policy

As representatives of Christ, we commit ourselves to obey Jesus' command to love all persons and welcome all persons into the church. However, we also need to take reasonable care not to jeopardize the health of others.

A communicable disease will be defined as an illness, departure from health; a particular destructive process in an organism, with a specific cause and characteristic symptoms that may be transmitted to others with the threat of jeopardy to their health.

No child will be allowed into the nursery when he or she has a communicable disease or any of the following symptoms:

- acute cold
- fever
- sneezing (that is not associated with allergies)
- coughing
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- sore throat
- earache
- runny nose (that is not associated with allergies or that is not clear)
- red or discharging eyes

- skin rash
- chills

We ask that parents not bring their children to our program if he/she has had any of the previous symptoms in the last 24 hours.

Medications

In accordance with The Shepherd's Church policy, children should not carry medication and leaders and volunteers should not administer any medications, including ointments or pain relievers. The one exception is when failure to medicate is life threatening, such as in the case of severe allergic reactions.

In this case, the child may carry the medication securely in his/her backpack and away from other children. The parent must notify all class leaders and communicate directly with them regarding administration of medication. Medication administration forms must also be completed and submitted prior to the first day of SEEK.

Homework Policy

It is expected that if a participant signs up for a class with homework that the participant has agreed to complete all assigned homework. In the event that homework is not being completed, the following policy will apply:

- If homework is not completed for any **two** sessions, the class leader will call the parent to make them aware of the situation.
- If homework is not completed for a **third** week the class leader will contact the appropriate committee member, who will then call the parent again.
- A **fourth** week of incomplete homework will result in the child being placed on probation for the rest of the semester. Any additional days of missed homework during that semester may result in the child being removed from the class.
- Probation will continue to the following semester.

Behavior Policy

Participants are expected to behave in a kind and respectful manner to class leaders and each other and to obey the adults in authority. Physically or verbally aggressive behavior toward adults or other children in the class will not be tolerated. Behavior issues will be handled as follows:

- If **three** or more incidents of behavior issues or continued direct disobedience occur during a session, the class leader will call the parent to inform them of the behavior and solicit possible solutions.
- Should the **behavior reappear during a second session** and correction by the class leader does not stop the behavior, the parent will be called to remove the child from the group to discipline the child directly. The child will remain with the parent the remainder of that week's session.
- If the **behavior continues a third session**, the parent may be required to serve in the class with their child or the child may be removed from the class. This will be decided on a case by case basis. Should this prohibit the parent's ability to serve at SEEK as required, the family's membership may be affected.

Handling Discipline when the Parent is Present

Responsibility for the discipline and instruction of a child belongs in the hands of the parent. It is not our goal at SEEK to replace the authority of the parent in the raising of their children, but to come alongside them and offer an opportunity for children to learn new skills in a classroom setting. When the parent is not in the room, discipline of children should focus only on classroom behavior issues.

When the parent is in the room, it is always the parent's sole responsibility to attend to discipline issues with their own children. If another adult notices a behavior issue, they should first wait for the parent to notice the behavior. If the behavior continues and is disruptive to the class but for some reason the parent does not notice, the adult should approach the *parent* with the issue, not the child. An exception to this would be a situation where a child is putting another child in danger and immediate, urgent intervention is required. Responsibility should then quickly be returned to the parent to deal with the situation.

Adults should never approach a child with a discipline issue when the parent is present without permission from the parent. Any ongoing discipline issues with a child in a classroom where the parent is present should be discussed with the parent outside the classroom.

Should a situation arise when there is a disagreement between the parent and another adult in the room regarding the behavior of a child, the Department Coordinator should be brought into the situation to observe and conclude if the child's behavior needs to be addressed. This should occur *after* the adult has first approached the parent. The parent should be made aware that their child is being observed that day.

Physical Contact Guidelines

As a general rule, always maintain the highest integrity when dealing with children. Innocent situations are sometimes misunderstood. Therefore, avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. Your physical contact with children should be in the presence of other adults. Appropriate physical contact includes handshakes, "high fives", brief hugs or a brief touch on the shoulder. Leave

the window blinds in your room open unless the room must be darkened for a specific purpose. Do not cover or obscure the door windows, unless in the event of a lockdown.

Dress Code

Writing and printing on shirts, blouses, and sweatshirts is acceptable as long as it does not contain anti-Christian logos, symbols, pictures or groups, does not have an anti-Christian meaning, or does not give an appearance of anti-Christian activity. Writing on the backside of pants, shorts or skirts is also prohibited.

No strap tops, halter tops, “muscle” shirts, or midriff blouses exposing the stomach area are permitted. Straps on sleeveless tops must be at least two inches wide. Necklines must be modest.

Shorts may be worn, but must be at least thumb-tip length. Skirts may be worn, but must be within 3 inches of the knee.

Visitors

Children are not allowed to visit the SEEK children’s classes. SEEK members may not bring children to the program unless the child is officially registered.

Adults are welcome to attend Opening Assembly, but may not visit a Bible Study or a children’s class. Spouses may briefly visit with prior permission from the class leader. Spouses that are interested in serving in a class must fill out a Volunteer Application and be approved by the Director.

Visitors that are interested in our program may participate in a tour offered each semester.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency requiring assistance from a parent, a committee member, or security personnel, contact SEEK leadership via the mobile numbers provided at registration or by calling the SEEK Welcome Desk phone at **(919) 573-1592**.

Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation route from each classroom will be posted on the wall near the room exit. Familiarize yourself with this map at the beginning of each semester. Notify us immediately if the evacuation map is missing from your classroom.

Should the fire alarm sound or another emergency require evacuation, use the following procedures:

1. Leaders should keep an accurate and up to date attendance copy via the SEEK Portal at all times in the event of an emergency.

2. Before you evacuate, count the children in your room. Bring your device with access to the SEEK Portal with you when you leave the building.
3. Evacuate the building quickly via the posted route.
4. Once out of the building, move north and away from the building toward the fields along Tryon Road. Do not remain in the parking lots or near the building.
5. Do not return to the building until instructed to do so by SEEK leadership. SEEK leadership cannot instruct you to return to the building until we have confirmed with The Shepherd's Church safety personnel that it was a false alarm and the fire department is not coming, or until cleared for reentry by the fire department if they do arrive.
6. When returning to the building, count your children and consult with your attendance record to confirm that all the children in your class have returned.

Qualifications for Leadership

Class Leaders must be members in good standing that have demonstrated the desire to comply with attendance policies and other requirements of membership. Classes will be selected by the committee each semester depending on need.

In addition to the above requirements, the **SEEK Leadership Committee** and **Women's Bible Study and Support Class Leaders** are also required to be in agreement with The Shepherd's Church Doctrinal Statement.

Service Requirements

Each SEEK member is required to serve each semester in one of the following assignments:

Class Leaders

- Leaders must be punctual.
- Each leader is responsible for the set-up and clean-up of his or her room. If a basic drawing of the room is not posted, return the room to its original set-up when you entered the room. Wipe down all surfaces and try to clean up the floors as best as possible. Empty trash cans. For larger messes there are sweepers if needed, in the supply closets. It is a good policy to leave the room neater than you found it.
- Leaders are required to take attendance.
- An incident form must be filled out if a student is injured during class. These forms can be found at the welcome desk, in the blue box.
- Leaders will provide specific duties for their assistant to carry out allowing them to fulfill their hour of service.
- All leaders are responsible for providing a copy of the lesson plan of the day for the assistant/substitute in case of illness.
- Leaders will uphold the discipline and homework policies outlined in this manual. Please address issues privately with students, not in front of the class.
- Refer to the Leader Handbook for additional information.

Class Assistants

- Assistants must be punctual.
- Each assistant is responsible for their active participation in the class.
- Your leader should give you specific duties. If you **do not** have a specific assignment, find ways to help. This is your hour to serve.
- Assistants are the automatic substitute if the leader is absent.
- Assistants may offer to help with class preparation activities outside of SEEK time, but should not be expected to do so.

Nursery Worker

- Nursery workers must be punctual. Second hour workers should leave right at the dismissal bell and go immediately to the nursery so that first hour workers have time to get to their second hour classes.
- Each worker should be familiar with The Shepherd's Church nursery policies and follow them.
- Workers should actively attend to the children and assist with any tasks assigned.

Floater

- Floaters are required to report to the SEEK Welcome Desk promptly to be checked in and assigned to classes as needed.
- If the assigned class indicates that the floater is not needed, the floater must return to the SEEK Welcome Desk for another assignment.
- Unassigned floaters must remain near the SEEK Welcome Desk in case they are needed to serve and should not consider the hour "personal time".

Additional Service Assignments

SEEK members may also be assigned one or more of the following responsibilities based on the criteria noted:

Opening Assembly Escorts

All Early Elementary and Elementary classes will be assigned an escort, whose job is to lead the children to their first hour class. Escorts will be assigned based on the following criteria:

- Escorts are parents without nursery age children
- Escorts are not first hour class leaders (second hour leaders may be assigned)
- Escorts are not first hour nursery workers (second hour workers may be assigned)
- Escorts are not first-time SEEK members (previous SEEK members may be assigned)

Escorts need to arrive at Opening Assembly on time in order to be in place between 9:15 and 9:20.

Two escorts will be assigned per class. Signs will be available at Opening Assembly to help gather the children. Room numbers will be written on the sign and will be on all the children's name tags. Once dismissed from the Chapel, children should be escorted directly to the classroom. Escorts are to wait

with the children until an adult assigned to the class arrives. Signs may be left outside of your class or Bible Study and a member will pick them up.

Dismissal Attendants

All members who are not leading a class (with the exception of second hour nursery workers) will also be assigned as dismissal attendants either in the K1 Assembly room or the gym three to four times during the semester.

Dismissal attendants will need to leave their 2nd hour class before the bell and arrive in their assigned room by 11:55, picking up any nursery-aged children early, if necessary. Attendants should make arrangements with other SEEK members to pick up older children or instruct children aged 8 and up to meet them in the room they are monitoring.

Should you be assigned to a day you know you will be absent, we ask that you make arrangements with someone else to switch days with you. Should an unexpected absence occur on your assigned day, please let us know when you email your absence.

EE Dismissal Details

All EE children will be escorted by their class leader to the K1 Assembly Room on the 1st floor of the Children's Center. Attendants should help EE class leaders seat the children. Make sure the children remain calm and seated until their parents come to get them.

Parents are expected to pick up their EE children by 12:15 at the latest. Attendants may leave when all children have been picked up.

Gym Dismissal Details

Gym attendants should keep a watchful eye on the children in the gym, making sure there is no rough play and keeping the doorways clear of backpacks and other items. Gym attendants should also enforce the following rules:

- No sports equipment (basketballs, footballs, jump ropes, etc.) is allowed in the gym during dismissal.
- Children must stay off the stage, including the stairs leading to the small extension in the center.
- Children may not climb on or under the stacked chairs on the edges of the gym.
- Children must not touch the lights or divider curtains.

Parents are expected to pick up their Elementary children by 12:15 at the latest. Gym attendants may leave at 12:15.

Opening Assembly Announcements

If you would like to make an announcement or have something announced, please submit your request at least 1 week in advance. This is to allow time for approval, if necessary. Please keep in mind that

announcements are primarily limited to information related to SEEK, homeschooling, and/or The Shepherd's Church.

Personal Time

Our primary mission at SEEK is to provide an opportunity for Bible Study for homeschooling moms. We understand and respect that members may not feel led to participate in or are not able to make the commitment to a women's group at SEEK every semester, however all members are required to participate in a Bible Study one semester per school year.

If you do choose to take Personal Time, keep the following requirements in mind:

- You must remain on campus at all times.
- You must either have a working cell phone with you at all times OR remain near the SEEK Welcome Desk in case we need to locate you.
- Finally, should all floaters be assigned and we have additional service needs, members with Personal Time will be assigned to fill those needs first rather than members participating in women's groups. Members not leading a class will be at the top of our assignment list, followed by leaders.

Membership Doctrinal Statement

SEEK is a distinctly Christian Homeschool co-op. Our membership is made up of parents who have been saved by the grace of God, who worship and serve the one, eternal, triune God, and who embrace the Bible as the authority for life and godliness.

SEEK is a ministry of The Shepherd's Church and is governed by the beliefs and policies of The Shepherd's Church. Please see <https://www.shepherdschurch.com/who-we-are/> for the Doctrinal Statement of The Shepherd's Church. SEEK is not limited to members of The Shepherd's Church. However, SEEK operates from a perspective and philosophy that is evangelical and when Scripture is taught, it will be taught from that perspective. If you have questions about whether your spiritual views align with SEEK, please contact Scott Wylie (swylie@shepherds.org) before applying. The following are areas upon which all SEEK members agree:

The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible (the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments) as originally written, was inspired by God, is the product of spirit-controlled men, and, therefore, is truth without any mixture of error. We believe the Bible to be the center of true Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried.

The Triune God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. He is glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are equal in every divine perfection and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, having not been created, but being the eternal Second Person of the Trinity, came into this world as foretold in the Scriptures to manifest God to mankind and to be the Redeemer of the sinful world. The Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature.

The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the laws of his Maker; but, by voluntary transgression, Adam fell from his sinless and happy estate. In Adam as our representative head, all men have sinned, the consequence of which, all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and, therefore, are under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Grace and the New Creation

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus. Salvation is instantaneous and not a process. In the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sin is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. The new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. The proper evidence of true salvation appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life.

Faith and Salvation

We believe that faith alone in Jesus Christ is the only condition for salvation.

Student Pledge

I agree to take responsibility for my own education in the following areas:

1. I will attend my classes prepared and complete my assignments on time.
2. If I am absent, I will contact my leader for all missed assignments.
3. I will show my parent(s) all assignments I receive and will review my work with them.
4. I agree that my classes are important to my home education program.
5. I will respect my parents, teachers and peers.
6. I will take care of my class's equipment and the property of The Shepherd's Church.

Membership Contract

1. I agree to read and understand all SEEK policies outlined in the Policies and Procedures Manual and to abide by them, including homework and attendance policies.
2. I agree to oversee my child's work and to instruct them in appropriate classroom etiquette and proper behavior when in a church facility. I will make sure my child understands his/her responsibilities. I understand that I am responsible to make sure my child completes all required assignments.

3. I understand that Opening Assembly is not optional and will make every effort to arrive by 9:00 a.m. every Thursday to receive pertinent information and participate in worship and fellowship.
4. I agree to read and understand all information sent to me and to fulfill any service that has been assigned to me to the best of my ability.
5. I understand that payment for registration and class fees is final and that a refund will not be issued should I decide to withdraw from SEEK or a class after registration night.
6. I will maintain a testimony that reflects the will and desire of my Lord Jesus Christ in both conduct and attitude. I will seek unity in relationships and resolve to deal positively with conflicts considering the value of all those around me by avoiding gossip or slander.
7. I acknowledge that current membership in SEEK does not guarantee future enrollment should I decide to leave the program. If I desire future membership in SEEK, I will need to reapply to the waitlist. I also acknowledge that withdrawing mid-semester and failing to follow through with my semester commitments may jeopardize future membership.