

Handbook

Policy and Procedures for 2024-2025

Vision

Our goal at JMJ Cooperative is to provide homeschool families with educational support that is based on the Catholic faith and values. Our school model is to blend the best of homeschool and classroom instruction in a nurturing learning environment. JMJ Cooperative will offer quality academic courses in a small class size setting.

Educational Values

- A flexible educational environment, where students are exposed to the best of homeschool and classroom instruction via a hybrid schedule.
- A rigorous academic curriculum preparing all students for post-secondary education, meaningful employment, civic involvement, and a lifetime of service.
- A comprehensive education that honors the students' needs for unstructured play, time in nature, socialization, leadership, creativity, and personal accountability.
- A learning environment with high moral values as taught and exemplified by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- A family's right to be an integral and motivating force in their child's education; that children are ultimately accountable to their parents and to God for their learning and behavior.

Leadership

Directors: Michele Moynihan and Emily Roseo

Contact Information

Updated: 2/27/2024

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Admissions and Enrollment

Registering as a Homeschooler

All students who join JMJ Co-op will need to enroll with the state of Pennsylvania as homeschool students as we are a homeschool support group. In order to homeschool in the state of Pennsylvania, you need to do the following:

- 1. Pennsylvania law requires that the homeschooling parents have at least a high school diploma or its equivalent. Also, the parent cannot be a felon, nor can anyone in the household.
- 2. Submit a notarized affidavit and course objectives to your local school district's superintendent by August 1st (returning homeschool students). Please list your own home address and phone number on this affidavit; JMJ Co-op is a support organization.
- 3. If your child has been identified under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as needing special education services (not including those that are gifted and/or talented); you must have your program approved by a state-certified special education teacher or licensed clinical/school psychologist. The written approval must be submitted with your notarized affidavit.
- 4. At the elementary level, ensure the following subjects are taught: English, including spelling, reading, and writing; arithmetic; science; geography, history of the United States and Pennsylvania; civics; safety education, instruction in fire safety; health and physiology; physical education; music; and art. The family will just need to cover the assigned work-at-home materials.
- 5. At the secondary level ensure the following subjects are taught: English, to include language, literature, speech, and composition; Mathematics, to include general mathematics, algebra, and geometry; social studies, to include civics, history of the United

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States and Pennsylvania, and world history; health; physical education; music; art; geography; science; and safety education, to include fire safety. The list of courses are for the entire high school career, not one school year. The family will just need to cover the assigned work-at-home materials.

- 6. Required high school graduation courses: 4 credits in English, 3 credits in math, 3 credits in science, 3 credits in social studies, and 2 credits in art and humanities. A course tracking form can be requested from the Directors.
- 7. Track your time: Students must log 180 school days or 900 hours for elementary students or 990 hours for high school students. Attendance logs are kept by JMJ Co-op. All schooling completed outside of our program should also be logged.
- 8. Take standardized tests in grades 3, 5, and 8. Test results must be included in the portfolio. Testing will not be provided by the school. It is recommended that families use their at-home days to complete the testing. Most families choose to use the California Achievement Test (CAT). Any questions, please reach out to the Directors.
- 9. Prepare a portfolio, including a reading log and work samples from all required subject areas, to present to a certified teacher by the end of the school year. It is suggested that an item from the beginning, middle, and end of each course is added to the portfolio. When your student's work is sent home or you see progress in an area, please add it to your portfolio. Also, the student planner should be added to the portfolio as a record of work, student reading, and attendance.
- 10. By June 30 of each year, parents must submit a copy of the evaluator's certification that their child is receiving an appropriate education to your local school district's superintendent.

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Application

Enrollment is open to all students meeting the age requirements and based on classroom availability. An application must be submitted to the Directors with the non-refundable application fee. Applications for the upcoming school year can be submitted starting February 20th for returning students (and their siblings) and March 13th for new students. These dates are subject to change. To be considered for the Co-op, a \$100 non-refundable fee must accompany the application. The Directors will review the application and the applicants will be notified regarding acceptance. Acceptance will be based on teacher availability and class/grade sizes.

Volunteer Commitment/Pennsylvania Clearances

JMJ Co-op is a homeschool support organization seeking to assist families in their homeschool endeavors. Although we have a drop-off component to our program, to keep families learning together and to keep costs low, a volunteer commitment is required. Parents are expected to spend three days a month volunteering in the classroom. If parents are unable to volunteer, they may choose to have an able person, such as a grandparent, fulfill their duties. As long as the individual is at least 18 years of age, physically able to engage and teach students, and has their clearances on file, they can volunteer.

We want to encourage all families to meet their volunteer commitment as this is a fundamental feature of our program. If a family is not able to meet their volunteer commitment, our program may not be the right homeschool program for your family and may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

In order to volunteer at the co-op, all required clearances must be on file at St. Joseph's office. All clearances and background checks need to be renewed every 5 years (60 months). The Directors will be able to provide an informational document that gives more detailed directions upon request.

No student will be able to begin school until the person volunteering for their family has their clearances on file at the parish!

The following clearances are required:

- Federal Fingerprint Background Check (FBI)--for persons not a PA resident for 10 continuous years
- 2. Disclosure Statement Application for Volunteers–for persons who are a PA resident for 10 continuous years
- 3. PA State Police Criminal Background Check
- 4. PA Child Abuse History Clearance

The diocese further requires a <u>one-time</u> completion for all volunteers of the following:

- 1. Safe Environment Part 1: Protecting God's Children
- 2. Safe Environment Part 2: Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

Volunteer Expectations

Volunteers are expected to be present for the entire school day. We ask that volunteers look to arrive no later than 8:15am. This will allow for the head teachers to go over the expectations and needs for the day. Volunteers may park in the parking lot located next to the classrooms for the day, if you arrive by 8:15am.

Volunteers are expected to be actively engaged in the classroom throughout the day. To minimize distractions, siblings that are not attending the co-op are not allowed to be present. Please be sure to make other arrangements prior to your volunteer day.

The volunteer schedule will be sent out by the 15th of each month. If you know of prior obligations/vacations, please inform the Directors before this date. Otherwise, once the schedule is created you will be responsible to find your own coverage. If you are going to be absent on your assigned day, it is imperative that you inform the Directors as soon

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as possible. We kindly ask that you attempt to call other volunteers to secure a replacement.

Students with Disabilities

JMJ Co-op is not equipped to provide a high-quality education for those with significant disabilities—whether learning, physical, or behavioral. We would be happy to consult with families of students with special needs and offer resources in your educational journey. If a disability is mild, the co-op may be able to accommodate the student's needs. Each student will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students with a history of severe behavior problems will not be allowed to study with us. Families that are not transparent in their application about their student's academic and behavioral needs risk mid-year dismissal from the program. Please be upfront with us so we can best help your family.

Financial Policies

Tuition and Fees

Registration Fee: \$100 per student to reserve the student's spot for the upcoming school year. This fee is non-refundable, but will be applied to the tuition.

Books and Materials: This fee depends on the level of the student and what course is being taken. The exact fee is difficult to determine but every effort will be made to make this fee as affordable as possible. Books and materials typically will range from \$300 to \$400 per student per year. This covers all books and student supplies. We encourage families to have siblings share books where appropriate, as well as finding books used. Parents do need to supply daily lunches/snacks.

Payment Options

Tuition Fee: \$725/child

There are two payment options for tuition.

- 1. Pay in full on or before July 15th
- 2. Pay half on or before July 15th; Pay the second half on or before December 15th

Checks should be made payable to: St. Joseph's Church (Memo: JMJ Co-op). No discounts are given for siblings or early payments. The tuition costs are calculated at the actual cost of operations.

Withdrawal Policy

If you must withdraw your child from the co-op any time after your registration is received, we require a minimum of two weeks' notice prior to the end of the month. If notice is not received at least two weeks prior to the end of the month, you will be responsible for paying the next month's tuition in full. Tuition paid in advance will be refunded for the months the student is no longer attending. If two weeks' notice is not given prior to the end of the month, you will not be refunded the next month's tuition.

Example: A parent notifies the Directors that they will be withdrawing from classes on December 1st . They give this notice on November 10th . They will be responsible for tuition through the end of November. They will no longer be responsible for tuition passed November, and tuition money already paid will be refunded from December to the end of the school year. However, if the same situation transpires but notice is not given until November 20th , they would also be responsible for December's tuition. Notice of withdrawal must be given in writing and be signed by the parent. When received by the Directors, it will be signed and dated. The date on which the director receives the notification is the date used for tuition reimbursement and payment purposes.

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Policies and Procedures

Attendance

JMJ Co-op classes run from the day after Labor Day to the beginning of June. The detailed school calendar will be provided to parents. In-person classes are held Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:40 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. At-home work days are Tuesday and Friday.

Absence: Please inform the Directors before the start of the school day if you know your child will be absent. Students will need to be responsible for getting any missed work from their teachers upon returning to school. If a student needs to leave early, please send a note, call, or text the Directors. Email may not be checked during the day, so please do not use that method of communication for last-minute schedule changes. Refunds will not be given for absences or tardiness.

Excessive Absences: It is essential for all students to attend class each and every day we are in-person. Repeated or chronic absence from school results in the student missing coursework, thereby putting the student at a distinct disadvantage academically. It also puts more work and stress on our volunteer teachers. If a student misses more than 6 days, a meeting will be called with the directors to determine if this is the right program for that child.

Late: Students who arrive late to school are kindly asked to wait outside of the classrooms with a parent until the start of period 1 (9:00 am). This is to minimize disruptions during our morning prayer time.

Drop-off: Students may be dropped off starting at 8:25 am but should arrive no later than 8:35 am. Parents should remain with their students if they arrive before 8:25 am until the classrooms are open for the day. Early arrivals interfere with teachers preparing for the day. Please also ensure that students have used the bathrooms prior to the start of the day. Parents must accompany students to the bathrooms and they

should not go unattended, regardless of age. Parents are asked to park in the church parking lot for drop off and walk their students to the classrooms. Parents may not use the driveway in front of the Old House during school hours.

Pick-up: Students are to be picked up at 2:50 pm each day. Parents must come to the classrooms to retrieve their children. Students will not be allowed to meet parents at their vehicles due to safety concerns. Parents are expected to be punctual. If you are late arriving, please inform the Directors. You will receive a written notice of late pickup for each occurrence. The third time late, and any thereafter, will result in a \$50 fee. Please be considerate of the Directors' time. Please also be sure to inform the Directors of any authorized person picking up your child that is not a parent.

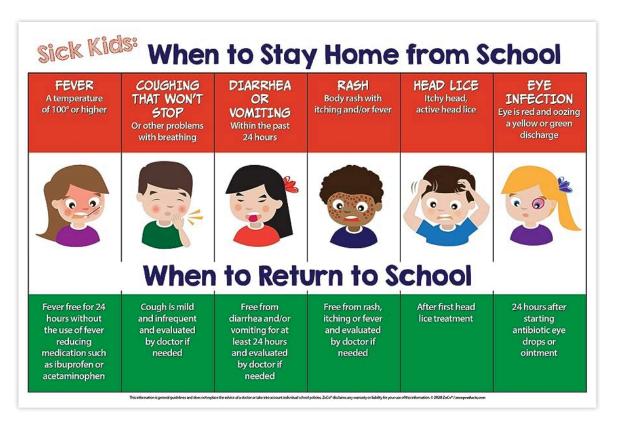
Medical/Illness

If a student becomes ill at school, the Directors will contact the parent to immediately pick the child up. The child will be allowed to rest away from other children until they can be picked up. If the parent cannot be reached, the people on the emergency contact form will be called.

Every effort should be made to give children their prescribed medication at home. When written authorization is given by the parent requesting a specific dosage of medication be given at school, the Directors will follow those directions. This authorization must be renewed each time there is a change in instructions. The written authorization from the parent must also include a signed order from the prescribing doctor to the school. The parent must provide the medicine and any measuring instruments. These items must all be labeled with the child's name and continued in a zip-top bag also labeled with the child's name. Medication will not be stored at JMJ Co-op. Doses will need to be provided daily. Over-the-counter drugs will need to follow the same procedure as prescription drugs but without the doctor's order. Students

are not permitted to take medicine by themselves without an adult supervision.

A student should stay home if they are not feeling well enough to participate in the educational process of the classroom day or if they have an illness that may be contagious. If an antibiotic has been prescribed for the treatment of an illness, the child may not return until the antibiotic has been taken for 24 hours. A clear, runny nose and/or mild cough are permitted at the co-op if the student is feeling well enough to participate. Please follow this chart for further guidelines:



Please make JMJ Co-op aware of any allergies your child may have when completing the registration packet. Although JMJ Co-op cannot be an allergen free space, efforts will be made to be sensitive and safe to all allergy concerns.

In the event of an illness or accident that requires immediate medical treatment, 911 will be contacted. Every effort will be made to contact the parent and other persons listed for emergency contact. If a parent cannot be contacted, JMJ Co-op staff may authorize emergency

treatment including transportation for the child to any hospital reasonably accessible. As part of the registration packet, parents will be asked to provide emergency contacts. These contacts will be a backup if the parent is not available in case of sickness, injury, or emergency. Please keep these contacts up-to-date

Snow Days (Delays and Closures)

In the event of inclement weather, we will make a decision regarding having classes by 7:00 AM. If you feel it is not safe to travel, please stay home. You can do classes at home that day. Log your time, and it can still "count" as a school day. If you are going to take a snow day or snow delay, please notify the Directors (call or text) as soon as this course is determined. Teachers may email assignments to students on these days.

Classroom Structure

The students will be separated into the lower and upper classrooms. The lower classroom will consist of grades K-5. The upper classroom will consist of grades 6-12. Within the classroom, students will do whole class instruction, as well as divided learning based on grade (K-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12). The type of instruction will be dependent on the subject. Math, ELA, and Literature will be taught based on grade level. Science, History, and Religion will be taught using whole class instruction. Each classroom will have 2 adults at all times. The adults will either be full-time teachers or an adult volunteer.

Assignments/Homework

JMJ Co-op is a homeschool support organization that will provide families with the coursework, pacing, and accountability needed for a successful school year. Typically, students should expect no homework on in-person days. However, occasionally students may need to complete assignments at home to ensure it is completed on time and

with adequate effort. Students will be keeping all work for their classes in their binder. Binders are to be kept organized and maintained. Occasional binder checks may count towards a graded assignment.

For at-home days, students will be given assigned work from their teachers that they will be expected to complete. Students will be using student planners to keep track of their assignments. The planner is a tool used to help teach students personal responsibility. Parents should be regularly checking that their child is using their planner books consistently and correctly.

Grading

Students will be receiving report cards quarterly. Teachers will be assessing students using a variety of methods, including tests/quizzes, homework, worksheets, projects, oral recitation, and participation. Any concerns with your child's grades should be presented to the Directors in a timely manner.

Grading System:

A + = 97-100

A = 93-96

A = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C + = 77 - 79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D = 66-69

F = 65 and below

<u>Late work policy</u>: Our goal is to raise responsible students who have a strong work ethic. Therefore, their grade should be reflective of their actual work ethic. We feel that students who are continuously handing in work late should not have the same grade as students who are being responsible and doing the work as instructed. These are life skills that

will only benefit them in the future regardless of the career they choose. All students are responsible for showing the teacher their missed work, the teacher will not be tracking students down.

- For the lower classroom, work that is handed in late will result in the loss of 10% of the grade for each in-person school day not completed.
- For the upper classroom, work that is handed in late will result in a loss of 25% of the grade for each in-person school day not completed.

State Testing

At the end of 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students must take a standardized test according to state homeschool law. Testing results must be included in the portfolio. JMJ will not be providing testing. An outside testing service, such as California Achievement Test (CAT) can be used to meet the needs of the family. A student not in the mandatory grades for testing may still test if the family desires.

Discipline

Classroom Rules

- 1. Listen carefully and follow directions.
- 2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- 3. Walk inside the Schoolhouse.
- 4. Raise your hand to talk or ask questions.
- 5. Stay within the sight and hearing range of an adult when outside.

Above all: Do unto others as you would have others do to you.

Behavior Management

<u>Lower Classrooms</u>: At the beginning of each class day, all students will start with three popsicle sticks. If a student is not obeying a classroom rule, they will be given a verbal reminder and be redirected (in private, if possible). If the inappropriate behavior continues the student will lose a popsicle stick. If further rule-breaking behavior continues, the student

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will lose another stick and then another. If three of the popsicle sticks are taken, the student will need to eat lunch with the teachers and lose recess. Parents will be notified of inappropriate behavior.

<u>Upper Classroom</u>: If a student is not obeying a classroom rule, they will be given a verbal reminder and redirected. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the student will have their name written on the board with a strike. Continued misbehavior will result in further checks. If a child reaches three checks in one day, they will need to eat lunch with the teachers and lose recess.

If the student's behavior becomes chronic, a conference will be called between the parents and the Directors and a behavior contract will be agreed upon. JMJ Cooperative reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time for severe behavior infractions as determined by the Directors. If a student is dismissed, tuition will be forfeited for the remainder of the month. Tuition that had been paid in full will be refunded starting with the month following dismissal.

Severe behavior infractions include, but are not limited to, habitual swearing (including taking the Lord's name in vain), violation of the dress code, violent behavior, grave disrespect (especially towards adults), possession or use of weapons, use and/or possession of controlled substances, and any other behavior that significantly disrupts the educational environment. We expect modesty in dress, language, and behavior!

Curriculum

The following subjects will be covered:

ELA: includes phonics, writing, spelling/vocabulary, literature, and grammar. Handwriting will also be reinforced at all grade levels. Curriculum used: IEW, Easy Grammar, Memoria Press, Vocabulary from Classical Roots. ELA will be 2 days a week, with literature being offered on the third day (Wednesday)

Math: Students are placed according to their appropriate level. Placement tests are given as needed. Grades K-3 use Abeka Math; Grades 4-12 use Saxon

Science: Taught as a whole classroom course. Both levels will use Apologia. Lower classroom will only spend 2 days on science, with the third day being an extra ELA period.

History: Taught as a whole classroom course. Both levels will use RC History–Connecting with History, appropriately scaled to each grade level. K-2 will be doing a separate history through literature during this class period. Course will cover geography and world history. Class is taught two days a week.

Religion: Taught as a whole classroom course. Class is taught one day a week during the history time period. Curriculum used: Ascension Press

Physical Education: a minimum of one hour of daily, active, outdoor (if possible), unstructured play which is supervised by teachers and volunteers.

Fire Safety: Fire safety will be covered at the St. Michael's Feast Day event.

Curriculum is subject to change without prior notice at the discretion of the directors. Subjects not studied at JMJ Co-op are the responsibility of the families to complete.

Student Placement

Students will be evaluated for placement into our programs prior to admittance. This will ensure that they are properly placed into the correct levels. The lower classroom grades will evaluate for reading and math. Upper classroom grades will be assessed for math. Families will be notified when the placement evaluations will be given. Please be aware that if your child is significantly below grade level, we may not be

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equipped to properly educate them and this may not be the best fit for them.

Portfolios/Logs

Portfolios are an important part of the learning process and help assess student learning. In addition to their educational value, the state of Pennsylvania also requires homeschool students to complete yearly portfolios. JMJ Co-op students will be encouraged to update their portfolios regularly. Work done at home should be added by the family.

It is important for the end-of-year portfolio required by the state that all reading material be logged. It is the responsibility of the family to log all classroom and outside-of-class reading material. (Read to/with/by).

Another important log sheet to keep is a "school-days" log. Attendance at JMJ Co-op is logged daily. All "school-days" done at home should also be recorded. Both attendance logs should be included in the end-of-year portfolio.

Event Days

Throughout the school year, there will be special event days to celebrate important dates, such as feasts days, solemnities, and holidays. The school calendar will provide you with dates for when we plan to celebrate those events. Each family is required to sign-up at the beginning of the school year to be the lead of one event. The lead will work alongside the Directors but ultimately be in charge of the event. Larger events will have more than one volunteer.

On event days, a special schedule will be used. Parents and siblings are welcome to join us during these times. Signups for volunteering/helping with the event will be made available at the beginning of the school year.

Snack and Lunch

Students should bring a snack and bagged lunch every day to school. Food should be ready to eat and require no preparation, heating, or adult assistance. Students should bring a reusable water bottle to class daily. Be sure personal items are marked with your child's name. Students will be responsible for cleaning up their own garbage and messes. Each student will be assigned a Clean Team task at the beginning of the school year with an age appropriate chore to complete to help with the clean-up efforts.

Recess

The safety of JMJ Co-ops students is of the utmost importance. When outside students, must stay within the field of vision and hearing of the supervising adult. Students are never permitted to use sticks as weapons, aggressively hold classmates, tackle classmates, or climb trees. We try to encourage "Family Friendly Play" so all ages can be engaged. Discipline during the school day may result in loss of recess. The student will be required to stay with an adult during the duration of recess. All adults will have charged and turned on cell phones for constant communication.

JMJ Co-op believes strongly in a child's need for unstructured play, especially outdoors. During our generous recess periods, students are generally expected to be outside, rain or shine. Parents are encouraged to purchase appropriate clothing for outdoor play in all types of weather. Students should practice putting on and taking off outdoor clothing independently. The temperature will be noted daily before recess times.

Personal Space

Each student will be provided with a personal cubby. The cubby should be used to store books that are not being used, as well as their pencil boxes containing their supplies. Each student's pencil box should contain the supplies indicated in the supply list. Please make efforts to

label your child's items with their name. Parents should check on their children's supplies on their assigned volunteer days to ensure no refills are needed. Students will also have a coat hook available to place any outerwear. Children will not be permitted to play with personal items, such as toys, except during recess. These items must remain in their cubby until that time or they will be taken by the adult at their discretion.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms are located in the Old House or the church narthex. To help reduce the amount of bathroom breaks needed during class, we ask that all students use the restrooms **prior to the start** of each school day. Students should not be left unattended when using the facilities and must be with a teacher or parent. We will have our first group bathroom break after period 1 during snack/recess. We will have a second bathroom break after period 2 during lunch/recess. If a child does need to use the facilities during class, they must ask for permission and be escorted by an adult.

Dress Code

Students should arrive to class in clothing that they can move and play comfortably. Please be respectful and modest in your clothing selections. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. Shorts or leggings should be worn under skirts to maintain modesty while playing. Legging must be worn with a skirt, longer shirt, or shorts that cover the upper thigh (fingertip rule). Shorts and skirts must be the appropriate length (fingertip rule). No tank tops or shirts that expose shoulders. Personal undergarments should not be seen at any time. Footwear should be appropriate for both indoor and outdoor activities. Even with play outside, clothing should always cover the child's underclothing and tummy. Pictures and logos should not distract from classroom instruction and should never be vulgar or offensive. Please refrain from cross-dressing and grooming extremes. Since students will be

encouraged to play outside as much as possible during recess, please make sure clothing is sent to school that will help children play comfortably outside in the current weather conditions. Snow clothes, rain suits, boots, gloves, and hats are encouraged. Students should practice taking on and off their outdoor clothing to build independence.

Please be aware that occasionally students may be asked to remove their shoes if they are muddy. This will require them to walk around the classroom without shoes, so plan accordingly. Parents of younger students who tend to get dirty at recess may also want to keep a backup outfit in a labeled bag in the classroom.

Electronics

Students will not be allowed to have cell phones or electronics (including call and text-enabled watches) in school. They need to be left at home and will be confiscated if taken out during class. Electronics will only be returned to a parent. If they need to contact a parent, they need to ask the classroom teacher or volunteer.

Once high school level math is started, please make sure your student has a calculator that is not on their cell phone. If a laptop computer is needed for a course, computer screens must always be positioned in a way that the teacher can see the screen. Essays and reports that need to be typed will be typed at home. Any use of video games, YouTube, social media, or inappropriate websites (violence, sexuality, pornography, language, etc.) will result in the loss of the ability to bring a computer or cell phone to the Schoolhouse and may also result in dismissal.

NOTICE:

The policies within this handbook can be updated at any time with or without notice.



I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Policy and Procedures Handbook for JMJ Cooperative.

Parent's Name:	
Parent's Signature:	
Date:	
Names of Students in Famil	ly: