

Cornerstone Families

Member Handbook

2022-2023

Table of Contents

Foundations:

Goals and Purposes	3
Statement of Faith	3
Values for the Classroom	4
Class Content	4
Classes and High School Credit.....	4

Expectations:

Parental Commitment	5
Parent Service Guidelines	
Classroom Helper Guidelines	
Teacher Commitment.....	6
Forms, Registration, Fees, Room Location & Class Times	
Class Roster & Attendance, Class Syllabus, Teacher Absence Procedure, Class Cancellation Plan	
Group Standards.....	8
Student Behavior Policy.....	9
Dress Code	10
Basic Dress Code Guidelines	
Physical Education Class Dress Code	
Church Use.....	11
Health and Wellness.....	11
Visitor Policy	11
Charter School Policy	11

Procedures:

Communication.....	12
Refund Policy.....	13
Registration & Payment Policy.....	13
Cancellation Policy	13
Check In/Out Requirements.....	14
Temporary Guardian Procedures	14
Absence/Illness Procedures.....	14
Illness, Planned Absences, Emergencies	
Graduation.....	15
Security Procedures.....	15
Tardy Policy	15
Lost and Found.....	15
Meeting with the Committee.....	15
HSLDA Discount Group.....	16

<u>Limited Liability</u>	16
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<u>Modifications</u>	16
-----------------------------------	----

<u>Committee Contact Information</u>	17
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Foundations

Goals and Purposes of Cornerstone Families

The primary focus of Cornerstone Families is to provide Christian based academic and supplemental classes for homeschooling families with an emphasis on high school. As resources and space permit, we offer enrichment classes for the students of our teachers and the siblings of the high school students. Cornerstone does not give credit for the classes it offers; that is the responsibility of the parent. All classes reflect a Christian viewpoint and many are scripturally integrated. Please read course descriptions carefully and be willing to commit to the specified requirements before enrolling. Academic courses must be a cooperative effort by the student, parent, and teacher for successful completion.

Cornerstone Families Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe in one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that this salvation is received through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and not as a result of good works.
- We believe that all people will experience eternal life – those who are saved will live eternally in God’s presence, and those who are lost will live eternally apart from God’s presence.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- We believe that, at all times, all Christ-followers sin, and that there is forgiveness through His redemptive plan.
- We believe that followers of Christ should not be practicing anything that is contrary to Biblical mandates.
- We believe God created marriage to mirror the love of Christ and His Church, and that it was ordained to be between one man and one woman in a lifelong relationship. Sexual relationships before or outside of marriage are sinful as they are not in accordance with God’s plan.
- We believe that God created male and female with distinct characterizations which should be honored and upheld.

(Adapted from the National Association of Evangelicals Statement of Faith.)

Values and Teaching Ethics for the Classroom

1. The literal Biblical account of the creation and fall of man is to be upheld.
2. Because all people are created with value and worth, we will endeavor to treat them in a way that would honor the Creator.
3. The presence of evil forces in our world is a reality. Therefore, any discussions involving demons, ghosts, magic, etc. and any discussion dealing with sexual behavior, immorality, or profanity must be done in a way that adheres to orthodox Christian teaching. These topics are not to be taken lightly, and parents should be notified of the potential for these topics in a particular class either in the course description & syllabus, through mailboxes, through email or social media, or through personal communication.

All teachers and committee members have agreed to abide by these rules.

Class Content Policy

Teachers will not teach anything that is contrary to our Statement of Faith and will conduct every class according to the policies outlined within this handbook. As aesthetic classes can be subjective in their interpretation, we advise teachers to prayerfully consider resources, class material and assignments throughout the planning process, and to make parents aware via course descriptions & syllabus of any content which could be objectionable. In so doing, parental discernment can be exercised, and parental consent can be indicated by the registration process.

Classes and High School Credit

As Cornerstone Families is a supplemental activity to your homeschool, we do not give credit for any classes; parents determine credit. We do not, therefore, provide transcripts. Most teachers, however, provide documentation detailing the grades the student earned on various assignments, for use as reference by the parent in determining the grade for the subject.

Expectations

Parental Commitment

Parent Service: Cornerstone is an organization of like-minded families coming alongside one another to support, encourage, and supplement our individual homeschools. It is neither a school nor a child-care service nor a ministry. The success of this group depends on the presence and participation of all the other member families. Each family is required to have a parent present while the children of that family are in class(es). During that time, the parent will fulfill *at least two hours* of “parent service,” either as a teacher, a classroom helper, or a helper in the Narthex with the Snack Shack, Welcome Table, Hallways or Playground. Parents may also be assigned to the Sub Table to be available in case a position needs filled that day.

Depending on our registration numbers from year to year, parents may need to help out more than two hours of the day. Our primary focus is to be fully present and serve one another during our Tuesdays together, so priority is given to Cornerstone needs. We ask that parents please not use our day together for work related issues, teaching lessons outside of Cornerstone, or any other activities that might distract from Cornerstone needs or the purposes for which the church has graciously allowed our presence.

This level of participation helps to ensure the success of Cornerstone Families. Opportunities to fulfill your commitment are addressed at registration and handled by our Parent Helper Coordinator.

Classroom Helpers are not only to assist the teachers, but also because we are committed to a two-adult per classroom situation. Each teacher is in charge of what is required for his/her helper. The parent helper may be required to help keep discipline in the classroom, to assist with record keeping, to clean up, or to do other things helpful to the teacher. Please refrain from cell phone use in the classroom. It is important to be on time.

If you are aware in advance that you will not be at Cornerstone, you are responsible to arrange for your own sub. Once arrangements have been made, please notify the Parent Helper Coordinator of your planned absence and of the person who will be filling in for you, even if it is your spouse.

We understand that last minute things happen (illnesses, car trouble, etc.). In these cases, you should call the Parent Helper Coordinator cell phone number so someone may be found to cover for you.

Unexcused parent helper absences may result in your family being dismissed from Cornerstone.

Teacher Commitment

Teachers are “hired” by the parents themselves, as set forth in the Teacher Agreement, through payment of fees for the class(es) being taught. The Committee serves only to administer the process of bringing qualified teachers and homeschooling families together in pursuit of 7th-12th grade instruction first and foremost, and pre-school through 6th grade level classes when space and resources permit.

Forms

All potential teachers are asked to pray over their decision to teach at Cornerstone. Each teacher is asked to sign a Statement of Faith form and Teacher Agreement form. Anyone may submit a Class Proposal Form to the Teacher Liaison for consideration. The information provided is necessary for developing the grid and registration information for the parents. Please submit one form for each class proposed. A request to teach a class does not automatically result in that class being offered.

Registration

Early registration is offered to teachers. Each semester teachers will be notified as to what registration procedure to follow. A mandatory teacher meeting takes place at Fall Semester registration. Teachers should attend member registration in order to answer questions from parents and students as well as collect fees for your class(es). Class minimums and maximums are influenced by room sizes as well as teacher preference. It is up to the teacher’s discretion to cancel a class that does not meet the minimum number of students.

Fees

Each teacher sets class fees and supply fees for his/her class(es). Supply fees are to be used for consumable items for your students or for permanent supplies, which become the property of Cornerstone. Class fees belong to the teacher. Supply fees and class fees must be paid at registration to hold a student’s spot in the class. Please note that while supply fees include the cost of making copies, if you make copies at home, you should “reimburse” yourself at the rate that it would cost if you went to a copy shop. Also, the supply fee is not to be used to purchase or fix your personal computer, or purchase a printer, or ink.

Room Location & Class Times

Every effort is made by the Teacher Liaison to accommodate the needs and preferences of each teacher in regard to what time the class is offered and to what room the class is assigned. There are many factors involved, and the more flexible you can be, the easier it is to please everyone.

Class Roster & Attendance

By the first day of class you should have an up-to-date list of the students enrolled in class. Please take weekly attendance and notify a committee member if a student is not there 2 weeks in a row or misses class often. Students are expected to be on time to class. Teachers are expected to take attendance and deal with tardiness in the following manner:

- First occasion, the teacher will speak to the student and request he/she make every effort to arrive on time.
- Second occasion, the teacher will speak to the student’s parent to make him/her aware of the problem.
- Third occasion, the teacher will arrange a meeting with the student, parent(s), and committee.

This same sequence of intervention is deemed appropriate to deal with any other violation of the student behavior policy, as well.

Class Syllabus

A syllabus for 12 weeks of instruction is requested of every teacher by registration day. In the event of unexpected absence, a syllabus, in most situations, can help us provide a basic level of instruction to continue in your absence. A syllabus should be made available to every parent of your students by the first day of class.

Teacher Absence Procedure

If you know ahead of time you will miss a class, contact the Teacher Liaison immediately to make her aware of the date and your plan to provide instruction during your absence. Because we meet only 12 times in a semester, we discourage teacher absences. If you will be arranging a substitute, it will be necessary for you to provide the Teacher Liaison with all the pertinent information regarding this person for approval. It is necessary that we be able to identify and confirm the identity of every person who has contact with our students. If you must miss class unexpectedly, please contact the Teacher Liaison as soon as possible. In the event that we need to supply a substitute teacher, you may need to compensate your substitute for the class(es) covered.

Class Cancellation Plan

In the event that classes need to be cancelled due to weather conditions or other emergency, please have an existing plan in place to provide make-up instruction/materials to your students. This plan may include Zoom, group email, meeting at an alternate location, or simply sending materials home with the student the following week. A cancellation plan will look different for each teacher and for each level of classes, but as long as necessary instruction/materials have been provided to the student, the goal has been met. We will not be changing the semester calendar to include class make-up days.

Group Standards

Each parent is expected to maintain disciplinary responsibility for his/her child(ren) at all times while participating at Cornerstone. “At all times” means before, during, and after regular classes on Tuesdays, as well as at Showcase.

Because we believe in the family as the foundation for all socialization, including boy/girl relationships of all ages, we expect each family to supervise their children in that area. It is our policy that couples need to be in the presence of others at all times and there should be no public displays of affection by couples. For example, a quick squeeze and release hug between friends is acceptable, but a longer embrace hug between boy & girl is not acceptable.

We believe that sexual relationships before or outside of marriage are sinful, and that God ordained marriage to be a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Therefore, we do not admit members who are living outside of those bonds. Since God created male and female with distinct characterizations, members are expected to honor and uphold these distinctions in dress, appearance, and behavior.

High school seniors, regardless of when they turn 18 years old, are required to adhere to all policies.

Please no food or drink on couches in Narthex or in the Dome; water is the only exception. Students are not permitted to slide down stairway banisters, run in the building, block the Narthex entrance or hallway, or eat in undesignated areas.

Students may only attend classes for which they are registered.

Students may not remain in vehicles in the parking lot during Cornerstone hours unless under the direct supervision of a parent.

Students are to be in class or in the Narthex while in the building. They may be outdoors only if accompanied by an adult. To this end, we may have “playground monitors” for certain hours of the day, depending on the number of parent helpers available. (This decision will be made after registration each semester.) Students 12 or under must be signed out by a parent; students 13 and older may sign themselves out. The Playground Monitor will wait by the back door of the Narthex for the first 7 minutes of class to allow parents to sign out their children, or to allow the older students to sign themselves out. Monitors will bring the students back 100-15 minutes prior to the beginning of the next class. It is at the discretion of the Monitors if the weather is deemed unfit. Parents may also pick up a “playground pass” from the Welcome Table when they sign in. This signed pass can be given to the student to turn in to the monitor at the top of the hour. The exception to this playground policy is the covered area outside the Narthex doors where students age 13 and up are allowed to be unaccompanied by an adult.

Use of skateboards, rip-sticks or similar items is prohibited.

Student Behavior Policy

The Cornerstone Families membership has a very high standard for student conduct. It would be impossible, however, to anticipate a rule for every incident or behavior that may transpire while your student is at Cornerstone. If we are faced with behaviors or situations that do not have a specific rule, we will adhere to biblical principles regarding authority, respect, and loving our brother. We are committed to cultivating a “culture of respect” and would ask that you review that concept with your children.

If your child’s behavior becomes disruptive at any time while at Cornerstone, and a gentle reminder from a teacher, committee member, or parent helper does not solve the problem, he/she will be taken aside privately, in the presence of an adult witness, to be reminded of expectations. If a student is disrespectful (in word or deed), or uncooperative at any time during this process the parent will be notified immediately. If removal from a class is required, the parent will also be notified immediately. Afterwards, a Committee member will enter a behavior incident report into a record, and the parent will be notified as soon as possible with a complete explanation. If parental intervention does not ultimately rectify the problem, the child will not be allowed to continue at Cornerstone.

Negative social media internet postings referring to Cornerstone will not be tolerated. No physical threats will be tolerated and may necessitate immediate dismissal from Cornerstone, at the discretion of the Committee.

Dress Code

Because we are a diverse group of people, we recognize that not everyone will be in total agreement with our dress code standards. We have endeavored to set reasonable standards which take into consideration concerns expressed by our membership. These standards are not intended to insinuate judgement on any family's personal standards, but rather, they are intended to help us work and live together in a way that is peaceable and pure. These guidelines apply to all of our Tuesday classes as well as Showcase. These are the guidelines for other Cornerstone functions unless specifically noted otherwise.

If you are offended by someone's attire, please be sure that you gently speak to that person (or a parent, if that person is a minor) first before involving the committee. There are a limited number of loose-fitting scrub tops and bottoms kept at Cornerstone which can be utilized if appropriate. The person will be required to comply with the guidelines, even if that means a trip home. Continual offenses could result in the person being asked to leave Cornerstone.

Basic Dress Code Guidelines

- Modesty is the goal of all members, both students and adults.
- Neither gender should wear clothes which reveal undergarments.
- Tops must have some kind of sleeve, tank tops are not permitted for either gender.
- The midriff area must be covered at all times.
- Shorts should fall at least mid-thigh in length, around fingertip length.
- Holes in pants should be mid-thigh and below, unless layered.
- Skirts and dresses should fall at 2" above the knee or longer.
- When leggings are worn as pants, tops must be mid-thigh in length.
- Form-fitting clothing like yoga pants, track pants, and tight dresses are not allowed.
- No pants with words written across the backside.
- Female's tops or dresses must have necklines that do not reveal cleavage.
- No obscene or questionable decals or messages on clothing, accessories, notebooks, jewelry, etc.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.

Physical Education Class Dress Code

- Please dress appropriately
- Loose fitting shirts and shorts that fall to at least mid-thigh
- Athletic shoes must be worn
- No jewelry or chains

Church Use for Cornerstone Classes

The Pataskala Church of the Nazarene (PCN) has graciously provided their facility for our Tuesday classes. Please do not contact staff for personal use unless you are a member of PCN. If you have any questions about this policy or any other concerns about the church, please contact our Church Liaison committee member.

Very few of us are members at PCN, so we believe it is especially important to honor their generosity by treating this facility, all its equipment, and the personnel with great respect. All doors are to remain locked at all times. Only members of Cornerstone Families may enter the building through the Narthex during our class hours. Members can be identified by their name tag. Please enter and exit the building through the Narthex entrance only. The playground equipment may be used by younger children, but requires parental supervision.

Health and Wellness Policy

Attendance at Cornerstone is prohibited if signs of contagious illness (ie: green nasal discharge, fever, wet cough, draining eyes, stomach aches, vomiting, diarrhea, pink-eye, lice, etc.) have been experienced in the last 24 hours prior to classes. Adults or children with a contagious illness do not belong at Cornerstone. Parents should use their own judgement.

Visitor Policy

Cornerstone has a “no visitor” policy. Families interested in Cornerstone should contact a committee member for more information and to arrange a tour of the facility. Friends are not allowed to come unless permission is obtained from the committee.

We understand that many of our members babysit during the week. For a number of reasons, space and legalities heading the list, those children are not allowed to come on Tuesday.

Special permission can be obtained from the committee if a graduate would like to visit for a day.

Charter School Policy

While Cornerstone respects the fact that individual families have unique needs and may customize their education accordingly, we cannot register children who are currently enrolled in e-school or charter schools (online public school). Those students are technically enrolled in public school and are not recognized as “homeschoolers” by the State of Ohio’s revised code. Membership in Cornerstone is, therefore, limited to those students who meet the official definition of “homeschoolers” by the State of Ohio. If you send a yearly notification to your local school superintendent, then you have fulfilled the state’s definition of a “homeschooler.” Having one child enrolled in a charter/cyber school does not exclude other children in the same family who are not enrolled in a charter/cyber school from participating at Cornerstone. This policy is in keeping with the position of organizations such as HSLDA and CHEO.

Procedures

Communication

Email

Our primary means of communication to members is through email. Messages will be in your inbox from the following address: committee@cornerstonefamilieshomeschool.com. We will send notifications of registration, cancellations, or other important information, so please read all the messages that come through this venue. All members will be added to the email listserv using the email address provided at registration. In addition, members can reach the committee at any time by sending an email to the above address.

Website

Our primary means of communication to the public is through our website. Members and non-members alike may visit our website at www.cornerstonefamilieshomeschool.com for up-to-date information regarding the semester calendar, registration details, downloadable forms, and more.

Mailboxes

Another vital means of communication during the school year is the filing system located at the Welcome Table. Each family has a file folder in the boxes at the table. Teachers and other members use this to communicate with other members. Grades, notifications, and opportunities to participate in activities are often shared through these “mailboxes.” Each family is responsible for checking the folder weekly to maintain communication.

Social Media

Members are able to post and reply to communication on our private [Facebook](#) group and our [Slack](#) workspace. We will gradually be phasing out our Facebook group in preference of the downloadable Slack app, but for now both platforms are in use. Facebook users may request access to our private group via the platform. The admin will ask that you verify the name that you are registered under at Cornerstone. An invitation to join our Slack workspace will be sent to the email address provided at registration, just follow the instructions provided within the email to accept the invitation. Be sure to check your spam folder if you do not see the invitation shortly after registration. The Slack app is available on most mobile and desktop devices.

Please feel free to email the committee with any questions: committee@cornerstonefamilieshomeschool.com

Please note that teachers communicate primarily through the mailboxes, phone, email, or Slack channel. The Committee communicates primarily through the broadcast email listserv.

Refund Policy

Class fees are refundable up to one week before the first class if a student withdraws. If a student withdraws from a class after the semester begins, no portion of the class fee is owed as a refund. Supply fees are non-refundable.

Registration and Payment Policy

Registration information is made available on our website before each semester. Class and supply fees are due at registration. Parents write one check for each class to each individual teacher for the total of the class fee plus the supply fee. Siblings in the same class may be combined on the same check. Payments must be made by check or money order only – no cash.

Please note that if you register for a year long class (two semester) class, you are committing yourself to pay for that course both semesters whether or not the student participates in the class during the second semester.

Students will not be allowed to attend classes if their fees have not been paid. Students who are waitlisted should go ahead and provide payment so that if/when a spot opens up they will be fully registered. Waitlisted students who are not able to be added to class will have checks returned to them.

The membership fee (\$40) is also due at registration for each semester (August and November). The membership fee is refundable only if a member's entire family withdraws from Cornerstone prior to the first class of the semester. This fee is used primarily as a gift to the church, to pay insurance fees, and to cover costs associated with running Cornerstone. Cornerstone Families is a not-for-profit group and so we carry only a small balance for emergencies.

Cancellation Policy

Every effort is made to avoid cancellation of classes during the year. However, weather conditions or other emergencies may necessitate that classes be cancelled. Cancellation will be determined by the Committee, and members will be notified via email, the website, and social media platforms. Cancellation for weather conditions will primarily be determined by Licking County (and/or surrounding counties) reaching a Level 2 Snow Emergency. If classes are to be cancelled that day, the determination will be made by 7:00am. No make-up days will be added to the calendar, rather teachers will reach out to students with a plan for how to receive instruction/materials for that day.

Check In / Check Out

The parent or guardian of children attending classes is required to check in at the Welcome Table upon arrival at Cornerstone, and to check out when leaving. If the parent intends to be outside or in the car, please note that and leave a cell phone number in the comment section at check in. This is so that we know where to find you should your child(ren) need you.

Temporary Guardian Policy & Procedure

Temporary Guardians may be appointed to be responsible for children whose parent is absent due to illness or an emergency which requires leaving the premises temporarily. This is not to be used for trips to the store, working a job, doctor appointments that could be scheduled on another day, or other similar types of needs. Cornerstone functions best when all parents are present and doing their share. Each family is allowed to utilize this option no more than three times per semester. Children must be informed of who their Temporary Guardian is. The parent must stop at the Welcome Table to fill out the proper paperwork before leaving and must check back in upon return. Or, if the parent is absent for the whole day, the Temporary Guardian must check in upon arrival.

Absences and Illnesses Procedures

Illness

If a parent is unable to attend Cornerstone due to an illness or other urgent circumstance, please call the Parent Helper Coordinator as soon as possible. Healthy children who will still attend classes can be assigned to a Temporary Guardian who must check in at the Welcome Table and present a completed Temporary Guardian Form. The form may be printed from the Cornerstone website and is also available at the Welcome Table. A separate form must be completed for each day.

Planned Absences

If a parent must be out of town but their children will still attend classes, the Temporary Guardian Form must be completed and presented by the guardian at the Welcome Table upon arrival. The guardian would need to fulfill the parent's duties for the day. If both parent and children will be absent, please notify the teachers as a courtesy and find someone to cover the parent's duties for the period of absence. Please find a friend so that the subs are available for last minute absences. The parent is responsible to find coverage for his/her duties; however, the Parent Coordinator may be contacted for suggestions.

Emergencies

In the event that a personal emergency arises while at Cornerstone, parents are expected to take their children with them or follow standard Temporary Guardianship procedures. Please also let someone on the committee or at the Welcome Table know so that we are aware of your absence.

Graduation

Students who are active members at Cornerstone are eligible to participate in graduation. Others may participate with permission from the committee. Graduation is held the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Rehearsal is usually the Thursday or Friday immediately preceding graduation. This is a mandatory rehearsal so please keep your Memorial Day weekend open if your student is a senior. Seniors should sign up at registration. Graduation does involve extra fees.

Security Procedures

The Narthex doors will be locked during the day of classes. This is to ensure that no one is able to enter or leave the building unobserved. All adult members will be issued a nametag that should be worn while at Cornerstone. Please leave your nametag in your mailbox folder when you leave; make it a part of your signing out routine. If you see someone without a nametag, please inquire about their presence, as everyone who belongs to Cornerstone should have a nametag.

Tardy Policy

Students are expected to be on time for class. Teachers will be taking attendance and will deal with tardiness in the following manner:

- First occasion, the teacher will speak to the student and request he/she make every effort to arrive on time.
- Second occasion, the teacher will speak to the student's parent to make him/her aware of the problem.
- Third occasion, the teacher will arrange a meeting with the student, parent(s), and committee.

Lost and Found

Check the table in the Narthex each Tuesday. Do not call the church. Unclaimed items will be disposed of or donated at the end of each semester.

Meeting with the Committee

The committee meets each week to cover various situations or questions that arise. If you would like to meet with the committee, please contact a committee member and let them know what you would like to talk about. We will schedule a meeting for you or make time for you at a regularly scheduled meeting. Depending on the agenda for any given week, we may not be able to meet that particular day.

HSLDA Discount Group

Cornerstone Families is registered with HSLDA as a Discount Group. We highly encourage our member families to join HSLDA, and when you enter our Discount Group number 301575 you will receive a discount off of your HSLDA membership fee. HSLDA provides legal representation and advice to homeschooling families to keep homeschooling available as a freedom in this country. In their effort to support homeschooling families, HSLDA also supports homeschooling groups, making grant applications available to Discount Groups who have a certain number of HSLDA member families. Any grant monies received are then used by the group to support member families, for example through financial aid, or additional class equipment or other resources.

Limitation of Liability

A committee of volunteer parents administers Cornerstone Families. Member parents assume all risks and hazards incidental to participation in the program, and must sign a form each semester stating that the Cornerstone Families organization shall not be liable for any loss, claims, demands, injuries, damages, etc. to persons or personal property; neither shall the church where classes are held be liable.

Modifications to Policies

We may modify any of the terms and conditions contained in this handbook at any time and at our sole discretion. If any modification is unacceptable to you, your only recourse is to terminate your participation. Your continued participation at Cornerstone following our posting of a change notice or new change to our policy constitutes a binding acceptance of the change.

Cornerstone Families is a private organization; membership is a privilege and not a guaranteed right. Noncompliance and/or abuse of Cornerstone privileges may result in dismissal from Cornerstone.