

Connections Family Guide

Connections is a Christian organization and thus while on-site, all families, instructors, and visitors agree to be respectful of the beliefs and values reflected in the [Statement of Faith and Beliefs](#). The information in this guidebook reflects our belief that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity.

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Information & Guidelines

Connections is designed for families. You must be the parent or legal guardian of any children you bring to Connections, and one parent must always be present on-site with their children.

Guiding Principles

- **Purpose:** To empower homeschooling families to educate their children.
- **Mission:** To partner with parents to educate and equip students by providing arts and academic classes in a supportive, Christ-centered community.
- **Vision:** Well-prepared young adults who pursue Christ and courageously impact their world.

Board Positions

The volunteer members of the Connections Board of Directors and a brief overview of some of their responsibilities are as follows:

- President – provide vision and direction, strategic planning & organization, empower board members to operate in their roles
- Instructor Liaison – support and advocate between teachers and board/families, interview new teachers, manage class proposals and class schedule
- Jobs Coordinator/Facilities Manager – coordinate between facilities and Connections, assign and supervise family jobs, manage security team, handle sub parent forms & emergency off-site forms, oversee emergency procedures/drills
- Treasurer – financial management and oversight, budget creation and maintenance, address tuition issues
- Registrar/Technology Manager – registration and website maintenance, age exceptions and waitlist management, oversee tech team
- Community & Events Coordinator – promote community, plan and execute community-wide events, oversee social media/advertising and communications, manage welcome team, support domus system

The official board positions must also include the roles of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. These roles are filled by members of the board and are voted on by the board each year.

Communication

Most communication in Connections happens through three methods: direct email, our weekly e-newsletter that is emailed to families and posted in Newsletters on Homeschool Life, and the a-frame sign boards near the entrances. Please check your email on a regular

basis and notify us if your email address changes. You are also provided with a mailbox folder to facilitate paper communication. Please check your folder weekly. Events may also be advertised on our closed [Facebook group](#).

- **Weekly Newsletters:** Every weekend the weekly newsletter will be emailed to you and posted on Homeschool Life in the Newsletters link under Communication. This is a short one-page document with many important dates and information. If you only read one piece of communication from Connections throughout the week, please ensure you read this.
- **Family Mailbox Folders:** Each family at Connections has a family folder “mailbox”. The family folders work like a communication system for paperwork. They are located near the Check-In Table at each building and are in alphabetical order. Be sure to check your family folder each week as there may be important information for you. Your student is welcome to check your family mailbox for you. You are welcome to use them as a way to leave items or information for other families or teachers.
- **Events and Calendar:** On the main website, visit the Calendar page for general information on start/end dates and breaks. Once you have logged into your account, visit the Calendar page for the same information and a list of the events and theme days throughout the year.
- **Facebook Group:** We have a closed [Facebook group](#) where families can list events they would like to invite others to. You can also ask questions or post items for sale. Politically related items are not allowed, as we are a non-profit.
- **Signs in the Building:** We have A-frame signs as you enter the building with information and reminders for the week.

CLASS DAYS

Campus hours

Campus hours are 8:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Because of the sheer number of people on campus at any one time, we ask that you do not arrive more than 15 minutes prior to your first class and leave in a timely manner after your last class. The exceptions: 1) you have been assigned a family job that requires you to be on campus at an earlier/later time, you must be on campus to complete your family job; 2) if your last class is 3rd hour, or your first class is 4th hour, we encourage you to have lunch at Connections (which is in-between 3rd and 4th hour). It's a great time for you and your children to be social. At the end of the day, all families must vacate the campus promptly. A board member has to stay on campus until the last person has left, and we need to get home to make dinner, too!

Parking

On Mondays you can park in either the north or south lots, except for the coned-off play area in the north lot. Please leave the east parking area (on the same side of the building where we enter) for the instructors. Please do not park in the west parking lot. The east entrance is the only one we may enter or exit the building on Monday.

On Wednesday, you can park in the south or east parking lots. Please do not park in the spots on the west parking lot (back of the building), or in the coned off area on the west side. The south entrance is the only one we may enter or exit the building on Wednesday (this is not the main church entrance).

Parents and Siblings in the Classroom

We encourage parents to attend classes with their children, but please know that cell phones that have not been silenced, as well as whispering in the back of the room, can be disconcerting to the instructor and distracting to students. If you do not attend your child's class, be sure to check in with them and stay in contact with their instructor so you can track assignments and progress.

Only children who are enrolled in the class are permitted to be in the classroom, with the exception of infants. The rooms provided on-site for students or siblings without classes are: The Hangout, Wednesday Quiet Study, or the Monday playroom. Each hour your child is not in a class, they should be registered for or signed into one of these. Your child may also be outside if supervised by a responsible adult.

Study Hall

On Mondays, The Hangout is the designated study hall. You are welcome to be in there with your student or send them in by themselves as long as they meet the minimum age requirement of 8 years old. On Wednesdays, we have Quiet Study (which doesn't mean no talking; just quieter) and The Hangout. The Hangout is a great place to bring a board game or a place for two students to work on homework together. Students may register for The Hangout and Quiet Study but are not required to be there each week. For safety reasons, students must sign in and out of the room regardless of registration status. There is no fee to register for The Hangout or Quiet Study.

Navigating the Action

We understand that some students might find Connections overwhelming. There are a lot of moving adults and students. You may find it helpful to have your student arrive a few minutes early to school each day and find a centralized area (like The Hangout) where their

parent can sit and they can leave some of their belongings. They can sit for a few minutes and take in their surroundings. In between classes, your student will know where to find you and can come back to the centralized location.

Items Left on Tables

Please do not leave your personal belongings on tables or chairs if you are going to be gone for the hour, even if you'll be back afterward. This allows others a space to sit down and work, rather than having empty tables reserved for people who are not currently using them.

Lunchtime

On Mondays, if the weather is nice, feel free to eat outside! This is a great way to connect with other families. If the weather isn't great, the designated room that serves as the lunch room is the Student Center. You may also eat at the open tables in the lobby area.

On Wednesdays, the designated lunch rooms are 110 (Quiet Study), 111, 112, 122 (The Hangout), and the open tables in the lobby area. You are also welcome to eat outside – feel free to bring picnic blankets or camping chairs for the covered area just outside the entrance, or eat in the coned off area while kids play. Students may not hang out in or eat lunch in a classroom without adults present.

Food

On Mondays, eating is only allowed in the main lobby area, The Hangout, or outside. Please only eat on the tiled areas, NOT on the carpet. On Wednesdays, no food or drink (except water in a closed container) is allowed in the gym, but may be eaten in the other main areas of the campus. Please remember to clean up after yourself and your children.

Drinks

All drinks in classrooms must be in a closed container. Please clean up spills and report them to the Cleaning Team Lead (ask at the Welcome Table if you need help finding her). On Wednesdays, no liquids other than water are allowed in the gym, and water must be in a closed container.

Also on Wednesdays, absolutely no liquids are allowed in any garbage can. There will be designated "Liquids Only" buckets next to each garbage can. Anything with liquids must be emptied into these buckets, and not into garbage cans.

Technology

Many instructors choose to use Microsoft Teams for communication with classes, homework, grading, virtual meetings, etc. Instructors will inform their classes if they plan to utilize this, and students will receive a Connections email address to sign up for Teams. For help with Teams, click [here](#).

Grades

Most high school instructors will offer a semester and end of the year-grade. If you do not receive one, please ask. Instructors do not provide transcript assistance, but lots of parents write their own, and we have an instructor with an outside business who is able to provide help with an accredited high school transcript for a fee. Middle school and elementary teachers do not typically provide grades. Please communicate with your child's instructor for feedback on your child's progress and classwork.

All course descriptions are on the website. Some teachers will note if their class is worth a full high school credit. For others, you will need to determine that. The beauty of homeschooling is that you determine what your individual child needs. Some parents add extra work to their student's homework. Other parents feel the assigned coursework is enough. Instructors are usually happy to suggest additional assignments if asked.

Welcome Table & Check-In Table

The Welcome Table is a place where you can find answers to your questions, share a concern, locate a classroom, ask for prayer, or alert us to an urgent need. The Welcome Team is a group of parents who have been trained in how to address your concerns and assist you. You will often find a board member not far from the Welcome Table if you need further assistance.

For safety and security, the Check-In Table will be your first encounter when entering the Connections campus. For more information, see the "Visitors" and "Nametags" sections below.

Free Table

The Free Table is a place where you can give away or take educational items that a family wants to pass along. Only items such as curriculum, books, games, school supplies, and other academic-related materials are allowed. Clothing, shoes, or fabric items are NOT allowed to be left at the Free Table. When you leave for the day, you must bring all your unclaimed items home with you.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located near the Welcome Table in a Rubbermaid container. If you do not find the item in the Lost and Found, feel free to post on the [Conversations](#) forum or [Connections Facebook group](#). Please note there is a different bin at each location; they do not travel between locations.

JOBS AND FACILITIES

Jobs

To ensure that Connections runs smoothly, every family in Homeschool Connections is required to perform a job each day while on-site. A job may require that you arrive 30 minutes before your first class, or remain 30 minutes after your last class, so please consider this when registering for first or last hour classes. All other jobs are completed during the hours your students have classes. If you are absent, please find a replacement. Make sure you fill out the **Family Job Form** (found on the Class Registration page on the website) to ensure your preferences and limitations are considered when assigning you a job.

Job Substitutes

All families are responsible for finding a sub for their job should they need one. Please do *not* post on the "Conversations" tab. Reach out to your Team Lead to communicate if you have not been able to find a sub. You can also find job sub info on the [Jobs Coverage](#) page once you have logged into our website.

Church Facilities

- **Church Staff** – Please do not ask the church staff for help; instead, direct all questions to the Welcome Table or a board member. They will be happy to help, or to assist you in finding a solution.
- **Wednesday Facility Additional Occupants:** A dental clinic is located on the 2nd floor of our Wednesday location. It will be open from 8:30-4:00 every Wednesday. Their patients will be entering and exiting the building through the north entrance only. There will be a church volunteer at the front desk of the north entrance to direct all patients to the proper stairwell/elevator. We will also have 3 hall monitors stationed in designated areas on the 2nd floor, north entrance, and the stairwell/elevator throughout every hour of the day to oversee the safety of our families.

- **Church Grounds** – We do not rent the entire church grounds; please be considerate in only using those areas at the churches that are designated for Connections’ use. When outside, stay off fences and out of landscaping.
- **Parking Lot Safety** – Please drive safely and slowly through the parking lot, as you would in a school zone. Scooters, in-line skates, or similar items may be used in the coned-off area of the parking lot if a parent is supervising. These are not allowed in the buildings. The churches have determined that skateboards are not allowed at either location.
- **Animals** – The churches have asked that we not have dogs or pets of any kind on campus (including in your car) unless they are service animals.

SAFETY

Closed Campus

Connections is a closed campus. Students may not leave campus between classes without parental consent.

Visitors

We welcome occasional adult visitors, such as grandparents visiting their grandchildren’s classes. Please have them check in and out at the Check-In Table, and they will be given a visitor badge. During their visit, all visitors must be accompanied by a Connections parent. Please ask permission from the instructor if they plan on attending class. Bringing children for whom you are not the legal guardian is not permitted.

Nametags

All adults on campus must wear a nametag at all times. For safety and security, this helps us easily know who is supposed to be in the building and who is not. A nametag and lanyard will be provided for enrolled families. At Fall Kickoff or on your first day of class, you will fill out your Family Mailbox Form and trade it for your nametag at the Welcome Table. You may take this nametag home with you. If you have forgotten your nametag, you may sign in at the Check-In table to receive a temporary one.

All students over 13 (as of the first day of classes) will be a part of our [House System](#), and will be provided with a lanyard and nametag that must be worn at all times in a visible location. Student nametags are kept at Connections.

When Not in Class

On Mondays, students must be in The Hangout, the [Monday Playroom](#), in a car or outside with a parent. Parents are welcome to sit in the Hangout or in the open areas in the lobby. When the sun is out, feel free to bring a lawn chair or blanket and sit outside. It's a great way to meet other parents! Some moms also sit in their cars. Neither students nor parents are allowed to loiter in hallways during class time.

On Wednesdays, students must be in The Hangout or Quiet Study, at the tables in the open area with an adult, or in a car or outside with a parent. Parents are welcome in all these spaces as well. When outside, all students must be accompanied by their parent or another adult who is responsible for the student.

Students may not be in the hallways during class hours in order to keep noise down. This is due to both avoid class disruption and to respect the church conducting business during the day.

Outdoor Play

When a parent is present to supervise, students may play ball games only in the coned-off area in the parking lot at the churches at any time during the day. If there is no parent directly supervising, students will be asked to return to their own parents.

The churches have given us permission to allow scooters, inline skates, etc. in the coned off area of the parking lots. However, riding on the sidewalk or in other areas of the parking lot is not allowed. Skateboards are not allowed at either location. Helmets are highly recommended for wheeled activities. Remember that a parent must be present when children are playing outside.

When a parent is present to supervise, students may play in the coned-off area in the parking lot at either church at any time during the day.

Out-of-Class Activities

Monday and Wednesday classes, as well as band, choir, and drama performances are official Connections events and are the only activities covered by our liability insurance.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Attire

Clothing should reflect that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and should be modest, appropriate, and not distracting to others on campus. Please consider length of shorts, hemlines, and necklines. Shoes are required. Attire should not be vulgar, suggestive, or degrading to the integrity of individual groups. If not dressed appropriately, you may be asked by a board member to change.

Conduct

Public displays of affection between couples are not allowed. Physical aggression, bullying, or foul language is not acceptable.

Student Conflicts

1. If the issue is related to the safety of your child or another student, contact a board member.
2. If the issue is relational, please talk to the parent of the other child and share your concern. See if there is something you can do to work with the students. If you do not know who the parent is, we can help you figure that out.
3. If the concern is happening in class, please talk with the instructor.
4. If the issue is needing more attention, please contact a board member. We are happy to mediate a conversation between parents or parents and students, to talk with parents, or to help you make a plan with an instructor.

Instructor Conflicts

Please speak with the instructor first. If you do not feel like your instructor is responding to your concern appropriately, please talk with the Instructor Liaison or another board member. We can talk with you about the concern that you have.

Tutoring and Other Businesses

Due to state law governing church use, tutoring for the exchange of money (payment) may not take place on campus. Additionally, other business transactions exchanging money (payment) in exchange for goods and/or services are not permitted on campus during Connections hours.

Fees

Registration fees are paid annually to cover administration, insurance and facility expenses. Tuition is set by and paid to the instructors. It is the cost for each class for the

YEAR and is broken into 6 monthly payments, beginning in May after registration, and then in September, October, November, January, and February. Supply fees are set by the instructors and paid annually. These are used for materials utilized by students during the class. Some classes require the outside purchase of textbooks, books, or other supplies listed in the class description. Late fees are paid if tuition payments are not received on time. Drop fees are paid when withdrawing from a class on or after September 1st to offset the loss of tuition for the remainder of the school year. Classes dropped prior to September 1st will not incur a drop fee; however, any registration/tuition/supply fees already paid will not be refunded if a class is dropped at any point.

Age Exceptions

An age exception is required if your student's age **as of September 1** does NOT fall within the required age range for a particular class that they would like to enroll in. For more information on this policy, see the [Age Exception page](#) on our website.

Dangerous items

According to RCW 9.41.270 (1), "It shall be unlawful for any person to carry, exhibit, display, or draw any firearm, dagger, sword, knife or other cutting or stabbing instrument, club, or any other weapon apparently capable of producing bodily harm, in a manner, under circumstances, and at a time and place that either manifests an intent to intimidate another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons." As with all Connections policies, each parent or legal guardian has primary responsibility for enforcing the policy with their own student(s). If a violation of the policy is reported to a board member, the parent of the accused student will be notified and action will be taken as deemed appropriate. In addition, any illegal acts occurring on campus will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Additional Policies

Please refer to the [Policies](#) tab on the website for additional policies.

UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

Illness

Please keep sick family members at home. If you contact the facilitator and/or instructor, they will be happy to provide assignments and information missed. Often the facilitator will put the homework in your mailbox folder, so don't forget to check it regularly!

Snow Days

If there is snow in the greater Puget Sound area, check your email or the Connections website for information on whether classes are being held or cancelled. We generally follow the Everett School District on Mondays, and Edmonds School District on Wednesdays.

If, due to inclement weather, the corresponding district cancels school *or has a late start*, Connections will *cancel* all in-person classes, and our campus will be closed that day. In case of cancelled in-person classes, individual instructors will determine whether their classes will meet on Teams that day. Please make sure to check your email and student Teams accounts for communication from your instructors.

Parent Absences

A parental presence on-site is mandatory. Dropping off your student(s) without following one of these policies is not allowed.

1. If an emergency arises and you must be temporarily absent, ask another Connections parent to be your temporary parent in charge. Let your student(s) know; fill out and put a [Parent Off-Site Emergency Form](#) in your mailbox folder and in the corresponding Jobs Coordinator's folder. This form can be found at the Check-In table or on Homeschool Life. Note: Only a Connections parent may act as your parent in charge. However, an emergency parent in charge may be responsible for all your students (regardless of age) that are currently registered and taking classes at Connections.
2. For parents of students 15 years and older: if it becomes a hardship for a parent to be present on a consistent basis, he/she may apply for an exemption. Please email the designated Jobs Coordinator for a Substitute Parent Application Form.

Changing Classes

- **Registration timing** – Registration for each academic year opens in April and permanently closes December 31. You may register for an open class until then. Registration temporarily closes during the month of July, but will reopen August 1. Make sure you fill out the **Family Job Form** (found on the Class Registration page on the website) as soon as you register to ensure your preferences and limitations are considered when assigning you a job.
- **To add a class** – This may be done through the registration link on the website. If classes have begun, please check with the instructor to make sure that he/she is accepting students. Please pay the tuition and supply fees promptly. Tuition (which is prorated for added classes) and supply fees are paid to Homeschool

Connections. Please pay online through Homeschool Life. For more information, see the [Fees](#) page in Homeschool Life.

- **To drop a class** – If you drop a class, be sure to do so before the next tuition due date or you will owe the next tuition payment. Beginning September 1st, please drop your student from class by completing the online Class Drop Form found within the registration system. When you drop, your student is immediately removed from the class roster and may no longer attend class. Students will not receive physical copies or supplies for dropped classes. The drop fee is due at the time of the Class Drop Form submission.
- **To withdraw entirely from Connections:**
 - Complete an online Class Drop Form for each class (including any Hangout/Quiet Study registrations, though there is no fee to drop these "classes").
 - Pay the drop fees for each class.

Extenuating Circumstances

All our rules apply to everyone to help make Connections run smoothly. Some are based on requirements from our church facilities or our insurance company, while others are based on past experiences. The rules apply to everyone; however, occasionally we have a family or student who may need an exception to a rule. If you feel you have extenuating circumstances and would like an exception to a rule, please email a board member explaining your situation. All exceptions require a board vote. We cannot always promise an exception will be granted, but we realize there are times when grace is needed.

Compliance

Failure to comply with these policies and guidelines may jeopardize your privilege to participate in Connections' classes. Please feel free to talk with a board member if you have extenuating circumstances regarding these policies. The board reserves the right to deny participation to any family or student.