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 our website (www.connectionsnw.org), 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 our website 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.
- **Signs in the Building:** We have A-frame signs as you enter the building with information and reminders for the week.
- **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. Posts promoting classes, co-ops, or groups that directly conflict with Connections offerings are also prohibited.
- **Website:** Our website at www.connectionsnw.org has a vast wealth of information. We occasionally post banners at the top of the page to remind people of important information.

Registration Timing

Registration for each academic year opens in April and permanently closes February 1. You may register for an open class until then. Registration temporarily closes during the month of July, but will reopen August 1. Registration dates are posted on the website in February. Make sure you fill out the **Family Job Form** (found on the Class Registration page when you log into the website) as soon as you register to ensure your preferences and limitations are considered when assigning you a job.

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 & Entrances

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) reserved for 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. Please leave the center row of spots in the south parking area (on the same side of the building where we enter) reserved for instructors. 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 signed into one of these. Your child may also be outside only 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. Registration is not required for The Hangout and Quiet Study, and there is no fee for utilizing these spaces. For safety reasons, students must sign in and out of the room, even if accompanied by a parent.

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 tiled area of the lobby.

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 & AI
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.

Academic integrity is valued at Connections. Academic integrity is the expectation that students complete their work honestly, without misrepresentation, plagiarism, or misuse of tools such as AI. Each instructor reserves the right to develop their own policies and guidance regarding academic integrity and AI usage. If an instructor has concerns regarding a student's academic integrity, including misuse of AI, a student could be removed from a class without a refund.

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 a former 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, and fabric items are NOT allowed to be left at the Free Table. Please consider whether your items are gently used and complete enough to pass along – loose papers and/or half-used workbooks are not usually claimed and clutter up the table. When you leave for the day, you *must* take all your unclaimed items home with you, as we do not have storage space for these items. All items left will be discarded.

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. If you register for a first or last hour class, you may be assigned a job that would require you to arrive 30 minutes before your first class or remain 30 minutes after your last class, so please keep this in mind when registering for these hours. 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 when you log into 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.

Leadership

There are other leadership roles whose family jobs require more than a daily task while at Connections. This team works with board members to facilitate operations at Connections throughout summer and during the school year. When selecting leadership teams, board members consider factors such as family seniority at Connection, history of joyful service to Connections, and awareness of/compliance with Connections policies. Please talk with a board member if you are interested in serving on a leadership team.

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 usually 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. The restrooms across the hall from The Hangout are reserved for the dental clinic staff and patients; please do not use these restrooms.
- **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. Drones are also not allowed to be flown on campus.

- **Animals** – The churches have asked that we not have dogs or pets of any kind on campus (including in your car) unless they are working service animals required because of a disability. This does not include emotional support animals. Please notify the Facilities Board Member if your family member requires a service animal.

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 wear a visitor badge and also 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.

Tours

Families interested in touring Connections or visiting our campus prior to joining must contact the Community Board Member to schedule a visit. Please do not invite your interested friends to come visit Connections without going through the proper protocol. Because coordination and communication are needed with the instructors, security team, and welcome team, any tours that are not scheduled properly will not be allowed. If you see someone wearing a visitor badge with a green "tour" badge, please welcome them!

Nametags

All adults on campus must wear a nametag at all times, either around their neck or clipped to the front of their chest/shoulder. 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 visibly at all times, either around their neck or clipped to the front of their chest/shoulder. A nametag and lanyard will be provided for these students on the first day of class. Student nametags are kept at Connections. The replacement fee for lost or broken lanyards is $10.

When Not in Class

If students are not in class, they must be in The Hangout, Quiet Study (Wednesdays only), Open Playroom (Mondays only), at the tables in the open area with an adult, or in a car/outside with a parent. When outside, all students must be accompanied by their parent or another adult who is responsible for the student. Students are not allowed to loiter or congregate in the hallways or stairwells; this keeps the noise down to both avoid class disruption and to respect the church conducting business during the day.

Parents are welcome to sit in The Hangout, Quiet Study, or in the open areas of the lobby. During class hours, empty classrooms are only to be used for approved Connections-related activities. 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 parents also sit in their cars. On Wednesdays, parents and students are not allowed to sit in the hallways.

Outdoor Play

When a parent is willing and 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 them, students (including teens) 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. Drones are not permitted. 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 outside the typical Connections school day.

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. We are all made in the image of God and our conduct and treatment of each other should reflect that truth.

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.

Working Parents
Some parents may choose to work remotely while on campus. However, as unforeseen needs occasionally come up, *all* parents must be available to help with additional job

needs that may arise. These may include, but are not limited to: subbing as a facilitator in your child's class, completing a restore or setup family job, or stepping in to help cover another family job for part of the day. Please ensure your outside obligations can accommodate these potential needs.

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. Tuition 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 once annually at registration. 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.

Seniority
Family seniority for registration is determined by number of years continuously enrolled as an active member at Connections from the year the family joined. Active membership includes attending class, paying tuition, and completing your assigned family job for the entire school year.

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) or allowing them to drive themselves without following one of the following policies is not allowed.

- **Parent Off-Site Emergency**: If an emergency arises and you must be temporarily absent for the day or part of the day, ask another Connections parent to be your temporary parent in charge. Let your student(s) know; fill out and put a Emergency One-Time Off-Site Emergency Form in your mailbox folder and in the corresponding Jobs Coordinator Board Member's folder. This form can be found at the Check-In table or on our website once you log in.
  Note: Only a Connections parent or a close adult family member (grandparent, etc.) may act as your parent in charge. An emergency one-time parent in charge may be responsible for all your students (regardless of age) that are currently registered and taking classes at Connections.
- **Annual Substitute Parent**: For parents of students 15 years and older: if it becomes an extreme hardship for a parent to be present on a consistent basis, he/she may apply for an exemption to have another parent be consistently in charge of their student(s). This exception is not guaranteed, is *only* for returning Connections families, and only for students 15 years and older. Please email the designated Jobs Coordinator Board Member for an Annual Substitute Parent Application Form.

Changing Classes

- **To add a class** – This may be done through the Class Registration page 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 online once you register. For more information, see the Fees page on our website.
- **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 on the Class Registration drop-down menu. 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 registered class.
  - 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.

Last updated 8/10/2026