

# COTTAGE GARDEN Bylaw HANDBOOK

May 2024 – April 2025

## Article 1

Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of Cottage Garden shall be from May 1st to April 30th.

The name of the Corporation shall be Cottage Garden Homeschool Co-op (herein referred to as CG). It was created in Tyler, TX.

## Statement of Faith

We give thanks to Jesus Christ, the one and only manifestation of God in the flesh, for Cottage Garden (“Cottage Garden”). He alone has provided for all our needs. He alone is our Savior and Lord, and we want this co-op to honor Him. Cottage Garden is an overtly Christian organization and is operated as a Christian non-profit ministry for the benefit of member families.

The following statements represent a good summary of some of the fundamental religious beliefs that are at the core of the ministry and operation of this Co-op:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God. [See, e.g., 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21 and 3:14-16]

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. [See, e.g., Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; I John 5:7]

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through his shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory. [See, e.g., John 1:14; Luke 1:26-38; Heb. 2:14-18 and 4:15; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 3:18; I Cor. 15: 3-4, 20; Mark 16:6-7, 19; Acts 1: 9-11]

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential, and that salvation is by grace alone received through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord and not as a result of good works. [See, e.g., John 3:3; Ro. 3:19-26; Eph. 2:1-9]

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by who's indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life and to perform good works. [See, e.g., Ro. 8:15-16, 26-27; Eph. 2:10; I John 3:9]

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation. [See, e.g., Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:25-29; Acts 17:30-31; Ro. 14:10, 12]

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. [See, e.g., Eph. 2:11-22 and 4:1-6, 11-13]

For purposes of our religious foundations and application of same to the operation of this co-op, our Board is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application in any given issue.

## Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning which is a “marriage sanctioned by God which joins only one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, where two shall become one flesh as defined and delineated in Scripture.” We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur

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only between one man and one woman who are legally married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, or any attempt to change one's gender, or disagreement with one's biological gender, is sinful and offensive to God. [See, e.g., Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18-25; Ex. 20:14, 16, 22:18; Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16; Deut. 22:5; Matt. 15:16-20, 19:4-6, 9; Rom. 1:26-31; I Cor. 6:9-20, 15-20; Eph. 5:5-10; Phil. 2:14-16; Col. 3:5-8; I Tim. 1:8-11; Heb. 13:4; Jude 7] We believe that, in order to preserve the function and integrity of the purposes and mission of this co-op and to provide a biblical role model to the member families we serve, members of Cottage Garden and the community as a whole, it is imperative that all members of, persons employed by or acting in any capacity for, and/or all who serve as volunteers with, should agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ alone. We believe firmly in the Biblical principle of "speaking truth in love" and that every person must be afforded a Biblical view of God's standard of right and wrong with compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. We believe that in dealing with people in this co-op, we should encourage confession and repentance from sin, but hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the mission of this co-op.

## Statement on Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including all pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. [See, e.g., Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:4-5]

We are therefore called to defend, protect and value all human life.

## Article 2

### Constitution and Bylaws

Cottage Garden is a non-profit corporation and shall have all of the powers, duties, authorizations, and responsibilities as provided in the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act; provided, however, Cottage Garden shall neither have nor exercise directly or indirectly in any activity, that would invalidate its status as a corporation that is exempt from federal income taxation as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

### Goals of Cottage Garden

Cottage Garden is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code") or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code. To engage in any and all lawful activities incidental to the foregoing purposes, except as otherwise restricted herein.

Through Cottage Garden, we seek to:

- A. provide classes, activities, and teaching assistance for one another.
- B. expose our children to the concept of authority outside of the home.
- C. enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents,
- D. provide training for new co-ops.
- E. provide a system of academic accountability at the secondary school level.

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## General Guidelines for Achieving Our Goals

- A. Provide classes, activities, and teaching assistance for one another-
  1. The Cottage Garden will seek to offer physical education, science, math, language, and elective courses for all school-age (kindergarten or older) children. Preschool classes are designed to emphasize gross and fine motor learning.
  2. Children receive instruction one day a week at Cottage Garden in a classroom setting. Older children generally have homework assignments to complete during the rest of the week which are assigned at age-appropriate levels.
  3. Parents stay on-sight for the entire school day, assisting in a variety of ways.
  4. The vast majority of classes are taught by returning, parent volunteers. Paid instructors are occasionally recruited, but simply provide an additional option regarding class selection.
  5. Cottage Garden meets one day a week (Mondays), following a calendar that has been approved by the membership. Older students continue to complete their assignments at home during these "off" weeks.
  6. Students register for at least three periods of classroom instruction. Please see section "High School Policies," for attendance options of older high school students.
  7. Class sizes, age appropriateness, and any prerequisites are determined by the teachers of each class.
- B. Expose our children to the concept of authority outside of the home-
  1. Students are expected to obey and respect authority figures at school, which would include their teachers and any parent on campus. All adult members are encouraged to correct any misbehavior they observe.
  2. Children who create a distraction to learning will be taken to their parent by the teacher assistant for the remainder of that class period. A hall monitor is also available to assist teachers in this way.
  3. Public displays of affection that become a source of discomfort or distraction to other members are to be avoided.
  4. The advisory council **board** reserves the right to possibly expel a family if disciplinary problems create a continuing threat to stability and learning.
  5. Parents must repair or replace any property damaged by a family member.
  6. Students are not allowed to bring toys or electronic games or devices to Cottage Garden (unless instructed to do so by a teacher) since these items can create distractions. If a student has a cell phone, the cell phone needs to be turned off and put away while at Cottage Garden. Parents are asked to stay off of their phones as much as possible.
- C. Provide training for new co-ops
  1. Cottage Garden members occasionally begin new co-ops in nearby communities. Support and training is available to assist in these endeavors, if desired.
  2. When requested to do so, a Cottage Garden administrator provides training for individuals who are interested in starting new co-ops.
- D. Provide a system of accountability at the secondary school level
  1. High school teachers grade student assignments and tests and keep parents informed regarding their child's progress. Students must pass subjects at Cottage Garden in order to register for the next level of that training.
  2. Please see section IX, "High School Policies," for a detailed description of the accountability program for secondary school classes.
- E. Enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents-
  1. Relationships among children are developed through the cooperative experience of the classroom setting. Students treat one another respectfully.
  2. After registration, Cottage Garden mothers are assigned a period to attend women's group. Women's groups play an important role in fostering strong, supportive

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- relationships among families. Fathers who attend are simply assigned an off period.
3. Offenses are inevitable in a diversified group, but they can often be avoided with forethought and planning. Listed below are some preventative ideas concerning three general areas of offense (student behavior, clothing, and teaching styles) that have arisen in previous years.
    - a) student behavior  
Please think about your child's response at home to correction and the language that your family uses. Responses and language that are acceptable in your home may not be considered acceptable among some families at Cottage Garden. Please prepare your child to make adjustments before classes begin at Cottage Garden.
    - b) clothing  
Cottage Garden has a dress code. Students are asked to dress in a modest and neat fashion that will help maintain a safe and orderly atmosphere. Parents are also asked to model the same appropriate dress. Thank you for your careful consideration regarding modest clothing. (1 Corinthians 8:13)  
Guidelines listed below.
    - c) teaching styles  
Please address students respectfully. What is considered playful teasing or correction in your home could be hurtful to others. If you are a teacher, communicate with the students and parents in a timely fashion concerning assignments or problems that have arisen.
  4. When an offense does occur, Cottage Garden members have the Biblical responsibility (Matthew 18:15) to address the issue privately with the other parent as gently as possible. Other individuals are not to be brought into the issue until this initial appeal has been made. Guidelines are listed in our Code of Conduct below to help you if you find that it is necessary to seek assistance in conflict resolution.  
Most importantly, please prepare yourself for the possibility that you may be the recipient of a message appealing to you to adjust your family's freedoms for the sake of others.
- F. Support and care for hurting families.
1. Advisory board may extend grace to Cottage Garden families who present themselves to have extenuating circumstance. This may result in temporary waiver of policies until the situation is resolved. But only after prayerful consideration and unanimous approval of the advisory board.

## Article 3

### Cottage Garden Attendance Policies

#### A. Parental attendance

1. A Cottage Garden member is defined as a parent or legal guardian with at least one kindergarten or older aged student.
2. The normal operating hours for Cottage Garden class days is 8:40am to 3:00pm. Since Cottage Garden is a cooperative effort, a commitment to attendance for the full day is very important. Which at minimum is from 8:40am to 2:00pm. Attendance for the day is required on Cottage Garden class days, including opening assembly and all the responsibilities in which you have committed. Three occurrences of arriving later than 8:40am or leaving prior to 2:00pm on Cottage Garden class days will count as one absence.
3. Absences should only be in association with sickness, emergency, or other unusual circumstances. Individuals that are ill with a contagious disease, including fever and/or vomiting in the previous 24 hours, thick nasal discharge, or head lice, do not attend

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Cottage Garden. Fever must be absent for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducers, such as Tylenol or Advil. If live lice or nits are found on you or a family member, let a board member know immediately. You may return to Cottage Garden once lice has been treated and no live lice are found. You will need to retreat 7-10 days after initial treatment to get any nits that may have been left behind and hatched.

4. A student who is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade or above may attend with another Cottage Garden parent in rare situations when their parent cannot attend if a parental absence form (available on the website) has been turned in to the communications coordinator. Students cannot attend without this form in place. In the event an emergency arises during the school day and the parent must leave Cottage Garden for even a short time, a parental absence form must be filled out and turned in to the communications coordinator or hall monitor in order for the student to stay on campus without the parent. These forms are available at school through the hall monitor.
5. A maximum of five absences are allowed each school year in order to volunteer to teach in the coming year. **Three tardies and/or leaving early three times will count as an absence.** If the member provides another adult (such as a grandparent) to attend in their place, fulfill their work responsibilities, and take responsibility for their children for that day, the absence will not be counted. No more than 6 substitutes for an absence are allowed.
6. Members who are absent more than six times during a school year or who have had on-going disciplinary issues must receive permission from the advisory board to register for a new school year. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
7. If you know you will be absent, contact the communications coordinator as soon as possible. Due to the hardship that unreported absences place on Cottage Garden, parents who do not contact the communications coordinator about an absence even once will forfeit early positions in registration for the following year. Three such unreported absences will prohibit registration.
8. If a member provides another adult (such as a spouse or grandparent) to attend in their place as a substitute, a \$10.00 background fee check is required and must be completed before a sub can be approved. After this is completed, the approved sub can fulfill your work responsibilities and take responsibility for your children for that day. The absence will be excused.

## B. Student attendance

1. Students do not attend Cottage Garden on a regular basis without their parents. Please see information above regarding parental absences and emergencies.
2. All registered students must be the children, or under the legal guardianship, of Cottage Garden members. Bringing occasional guests must be cleared in advance with the Cottage Garden administrator.
3. In case of an absence, it is the responsibility of a student or their parent to contact the teacher regarding missed assignments.
4. If a teacher assigns homework, students will be expected to complete the homework unless the teacher indicates that it is optional. Students who do not complete homework assignments on a regular basis may be reassigned to a different class or study hall.
5. Student attendance records are only kept at the high school level by individual teachers. Please see section "High School Policies" for details.
6. Students who are 16 years old or older are allowed to attend partial days at Cottage Garden. The parent of the student must assist at Cottage Garden while their child is there. Please see section "High School Policies".

## Registration and Enrollment Guidelines

- A. Reservations for registering for a new school year are made in the spring through an online

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reservation process. Members register in blocks according to the number of absences and tardies they have accumulated during the school year. Members with the best attendance register first. A pattern of leaving early may also affect registration.

- B. New members are admitted according to the number of parental working positions that need to be filled, not according to available space for students. New members must:
  - a. be screened through an on-line questionnaire and background check before being invited to join. A \$10 application fee will be charged to cover the cost of the background check
  - b. understand that Cottage Garden is a Christian organization. Instructors are expected to teach from a Biblical perspective. New members pledge to in no way proselytize children or parents away from the Christian faith.
  - c. personally attend an orientation meeting to discuss the policy form.
  - d. have at least one school-age child (defined as kindergarten age 5 by September 1st or older) who will be attending Cottage Garden.
- C. Through the on-line process, members reserve classes for each of their children. These reservations do not equate to registration. Registration is complete once reservations are verified, and fees are collected.
- D. Each member's reservations are verified by email, fees are then collected by the active CG treasurer only.
- E. Relative continuity of ability level is important to the success of classes. Students will follow their normal grade and age level. If a parent desires to register a child out of their normal grade and age level, the registrar will first check with the grade-level coordinator before the reservation is secured.

## Costs

- A. Fees for the fall semester are collected in early spring before the semester ends on or before the last class day.
- B. Fees for classes that are taught by an outside professional teacher will be collected in full for the school year before classes begin.
- C. Dues are paid per family, not per individual. Dues vary in amount from year to year but are generally very reasonably priced.
- D. Your family may not be allowed to attend Cottage Garden if all fees are not paid in full by the given due date.
- E. No refunds are given after registration. Unusual circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis regarding exceptions.
- F. There will be a \$5 transfer fee per class for any transfers other than to study hall after registration.
- G. Fees for the spring semester are collected in the fall before the semester ends on or before the last class day.
- H. Class Fees and Cottage Garden fee may be paid in cash or check.

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## Article 4

### Governing policies and administrative positions

#### A. The Bylaws

These Bylaws are the governing policy for Cottage Garden. The Bylaws are reviewed, discussed, and revised each year during the second semester by a vote of the membership.

#### AMENDMENTS

Amendments: These By-Laws may be amended by a 75% majority of the Memberships present at a properly announced Member Meeting. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Executive Director or Assistant Director 14 days before the first January meeting. A majority vote by the Board is necessary to send the proposed amendment to be presented before the membership. The membership will be notified of the proposed amendment along with the annual board meeting notice.

Quorum- The members present at any properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Any potential changes to the policy form must pass the approval of the voting membership by a 75% or greater vote. Proposals for changes to the policy form are generally presented by the advisory board, but individuals may propose changes as well. All proposals for change are turned in to the advisory board in writing by the end of January and are then added to the proposed policy form.

The potential changes will be discussed in the women's group meetings or in called meetings outside of regular school hours. All discussion meetings concerning possible changes will be held with the consent and under the guidance of the advisory council.

#### B. General Powers and Responsibilities-The advisory board

Cottage Garden shall be governed by a Board of Directors ("the Board"), which shall have all of the rights, powers, privileges, and limitations of liability of Cottage Garden directors of a nonprofit corporation organized under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act. The Board shall establish policies and directives governing business and programs of Cottage Garden and shall delegate to the Executive Director and other board members, subject to the provisions of these Bylaws, authority, and responsibility to see that the policies and directives are appropriately followed.

An advisory board, consisting of returning members who wish to serve Cottage Garden in an administrative position, serves as a leadership team. The advisory ~~council~~-board provides long term direction for Cottage Garden, monitors, and meets needs that arise during the school year, and seeks to represent the concerns of the entire group. Early in the second semester, the currently serving board will select a director from among themselves for the upcoming school year. This individual will be a person with two or more years of experience on the advisory board who has also been a member of Cottage Garden for the previous four years. This individual must also have met policy form requirements to qualify to teach in the coming year. If the current board is unable to agree upon a director for the coming year, an advisory board alumni may be asked by the current board, and by majority vote, to serve as director for the coming school year.

After the director has been selected by the current advisory board, the general membership will select the remaining ~~council~~ board members for the upcoming school year by nomination. This nomination process will be based on the directive of Acts 6:3- **choose individuals of good, attested character and repute who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**-and will be conducted in a private, controlled setting under the supervision of the communication coordinator and assistant. Nominees will be individuals who have indicated a

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willingness to serve on the council, who have attended Cottage Garden for the full two consecutive previous years, and who have also met the requirements for teaching in the coming year.

The six individuals who receive the highest number of nominations will meet with the newly appointed director and will have the responsibility of wisely assigning their own roles and the remaining roles on the board, assigning these positions to the individuals who have received the next highest tallies.

If the first six nominees cannot clearly be determined because of a tie, the communications coordinator will set up and direct a runoff nomination. In the runoff nomination, only the names of the individuals with the highest tallies, for the tie up, will be listed. If ties remain after a second nomination, the currently serving advisory board will break the tie after discussion and by secret ballot. Newly elected board members will be appointed to the board on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

Board members will act in an advisory capacity to each other, but final decisions are made by the member who has been assigned a specific responsibility.

Resignation- Each Board member shall have the right to resign at any time upon written notice thereof to the Board Executive Director, Secretary of the Board, or the Assistant Director. Unless otherwise specified in the notice, the resignation shall take effect upon receipt thereof, and the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

Board members may register before general members in the spring registration process. This will be considered a benefit of serving on the board.

Board positions **may** include, but are not limited to, the following roles.

1. Executive Director-
  - a. acts as a public representative of Cottage Garden
  - b. acts as the liaison with host church, fielding communications between the two organizations.
  - c. turns in the calendar and building requests to host church.
  - d. sees that background checks and liability waivers are completed and turned in to host church.
  - e. works closely with the communication coordinator to set up and oversee registration.
  - f. works with the building supervisor to assign classrooms for the coming school year
  - g. provides and updates a hall monitor folder.
  - h. directs and oversees all aspects of opening assembly, including the seating arrangement for classes during assembly.
  - i. plans and oversees all aspects of Meet the Teacher Day
  - j. works with the communication coordinator to oversee the general workings of the co-op each week, as needed.
  - k. leads advisory board meetings- seeks out and initiates discussions in board meetings regarding topics that affect the co-op.
  - l. works with the building supervisor to plan and fire and safety drills, as needed.
  - m. seeks to act as a support to all other advisory board positions.
2. New Member Coordinator (Assistant Director)-
  - a. shall assist the Director and serve in the absence of the Director.
  - b. oversees all aspects of new member contacts.
    - i. responds to new member questionnaires from the website.
    - ii. checks references given on the questionnaires.
    - iii. schedules visits of prospective new members
    - iv. conducts an orientation for them when they visit.
    - v. introduces them at opening assembly, so classroom visits will be expected.
    - vi. introduces them to curriculum coordinators at appropriate anticipated worker



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level.

vii. fields future contact with these individuals

- c. sets worker schedules for the new year, working closely with the curriculum coordinators
- d. works with curriculum coordinators to invite new members to fill positions.
- e. attends planning meetings for the upcoming school year and assists curriculum coordinators, as needed, in setting the school schedule.
- f. the assistant director may appoint instructors outside the normal method of teacher selection if an emergency vacancy arises, working closely with the curriculum coordinator in this appointment.
- g. visits women's groups on a regular basis to field concerns and ideas from members- sees that these ideas/concerns are addressed.
- h. fields input concerning the new school year calendar- makes and communicates final decisions regarding the calendar.

### 3. High school, middle school, and elementary coordinators-

- a. initiate and field ideas from the membership concerning potential classes for the upcoming school year.
- b. coordinate the planning of classes and placement of teachers in the grade levels for which they are responsible.
- c. collect and help write class descriptions, as needed- review/adjust these descriptions prior to website posting.
- d. consult with parents, teachers, and assistant director to set the schedule of classes for the coming school year- this may include planning for and leading parent planning meetings.
- e. see that class descriptions and schedules are posted on the website prior to registration.
- f. seek to oversee all aspects of successful instruction/learning for these grade levels.
- g. help facilitate communication between teachers and parents.
- h. responsible for seeing that all Cottage Garden curricula are maintained and not misplaced.

### 4. N-K coordinator-

- a. helps the assistant director choose and place teachers and helpers.
- b. acts as a coordinator of the curriculum and sees that materials are cared for if not in use.
- c. works with the teachers to set the daily schedule, as needed.
  - i. plans times with shared equipment or rooms.
  - ii. looks at the best ways to maximize workers, especially during free play and nap times.
- d. makes a master schedule of the daily activities and gives this to the communications coordinator for floaters' use.
- e. floats and assists in classrooms to help as needed with absences, lunch times, or special needs.
- f. works with children who may need special attention on days when they are having trouble adjusting to the classrooms.
- g. helps facilitate communication with the parents, which may include-
  - i. a report sheet for parents (when baby napped, skills achieved, etc.)
  - ii. communication of monthly themes, if used
  - iii. keeping parents informed as needed during the day, including bringing the mother to the child if needed on any given day.

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## 5. Communication coordinator (Secretary)-

- a. serves as the registrar during registration.
  - i. counts annual absences for all members and divides them into registration groups.
  - ii. prepares email reservation forms.
  - iii. communicates with members regarding how the registration process works.
  - iv. works with the director to lead and monitor registration.
  - v. checks with teachers or curriculum coordinator before reserving a place for a student that does not fit the class description (older, younger, skills possibly lacking, etc.)
  - vi. sends family contact information to the technical director for the directory.
- b. makes class lists of student and worker assignments for future references.
- c. Updates binder at front door with copies of student and parent assignments for future reference and with extra copies of parent absence form, class transfer form, liability waivers and a printed directory.
- d. updates the email list after registration.
- e. forwards/screens group emails throughout the school year
- f. fields contact from absent members each week and fills worker positions as needed.
- g. acts as a general overseer of class days and brings attention to needs.
- h. The Secretary shall (a) cause the minutes of all Board and Executive Committee meetings and proceedings to be recorded, (b) certify the accuracy of such minutes, (c) cause notice of all meetings to be given, (d) attest the signatures of Cottage Garden's officers and Board members as required, (e) sign correspondence on behalf of the Board, and (f) have all other powers assigned by the Board, the Executive Director, or these Bylaws.
- i. Minutes- At meetings of the Board, business shall be transacted in such order as the Board may determine from time to time. In the event the Secretary is unavailable, the Executive Director shall appoint a person to act as Secretary at each meeting. The Secretary, or the person appointed to act as Secretary, shall prepare minutes of the meetings which shall be delivered to Cottage Garden to be placed in the minute books of Cottage Garden.

Committee Chairs. The Chair may designate and appoint committees of the Board as deemed necessary. Each Board committee shall be under the supervision of a Board member appointed by the Executive Director or, at the Chair's discretion, selected by the committee's members, subject to the approval of the Board. Non-Board members may be appointed to any Board committees at the discretion of the Executive Director/Chair.

## 6. Assistant communications coordinator-

- a. assists/supports the communications coordinator.
- b. serves as the communications coordinator in case of absence.

## 7. Treasurer-

- a. keep up to date financial records and provide financial reports to the Board at its regular meetings. Expenditures shall remain within the approved budget, Unless the board determines that the budget needs to be amended.
- b. shall disburse funds from membership dues for expenses incurred by Cottage Garden, including but not limited to the cost of the yearly Website subscription and building needs.
- c. shall provide the written fiscal "year-end" financial statement to the Board at the regular meeting. The Treasurer shall also receive donations and if donations are designated for purposes other than the general operation of Cottage Garden, they shall retain those funds separately from the General Operating funds and disbursement of donated designated funds shall be made only for the cause and intended purpose stated by the donor. In the

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event, the Board desires to redirect donated funds to other causes or the cause for which the funds does not come to fruition or is in violation of the standards set forth in these By-Laws, the Treasurer shall receive written permission from the donor(s) and provide such to the Board, prior to redirection of any donated funds that are designated for any purpose other than the General Operating Fund. In the event the donor does not wish to grant said permission, the Treasurer shall return all donated funds to the donor(s). The treasurer shall file the required government reporting to the State of Texas and the Internal Revenue service.

- d. prepares the fee schedule for registration.
- e. collects and manages money collected during registration.
- f. pays building usage fees and other costs associated with the co-op.
- g. keeps accurate financial records.
- h. conducts a needs assessment among the teachers during the second semester to see what purchases may need to be made for the coming school year that are beyond regular class fees.
- i. makes financial decisions about expenditures that potentially affect entire co-op.

## 8. Women's ministry director-

- a. communicates with women's group leaders on a regular basis to see if there are any pressing needs among families.
- b. makes and executes plans to help meet these needs.
- c. works with other advisory board members in the planning of parent meetings not held during regular co-op hours.
- d. acts as hostess of these meetings.
- e. fields interest from the membership and hosts special parent events, such as baby showers and Mom's Night Out activities.
- f. Acts as a new member liaison, checking with new members to see if there are adjustment problems or questions that might arise.

## 9. Special events coordinator-

- a. plans special events and field trips that are offered for the families on Mondays that are not class days.
- b. may field ideas from members about these events but makes final decisions regarding the number and types of activities that will be offered each school year.
- c. recruit's volunteers to help with these activities, as needed.
- d. consults with the treasurer and makes necessary purchases for the events.
- e. attends events and serves as the leader and public representative of Cottage Garden at the event.

## 10. Building supervisor-

- a. communicates with teachers for the upcoming school year concerning particular classroom needs (running water, overhead projectors, bathroom facilities, etc.)
- b. with this information, works with the director in assigning classrooms for the upcoming school year.
- c. works with the assistant director in scheduling cleaners for the last two hours of the school day.
- d. creates work assignments and trains the building cleaners in their tasks.
- e. as needed, recruits volunteers to help set up the building each week before classes begin
- f. arrives early each week to supervise building set-up.
- g. oversees cleaning and building restoration duties each week.
- h. makes a final check each week to see that the building is completely restored for the church.

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- i. collects items that have been left at school and places them in the lost and found container for parent pick up on Wednesday evenings when the church is open.
- j. sees that items that are not claimed are donated to charity, as needed.

## 11. Technical director-

- a. creates the directory, working with the registrar to make sure that all members have created and updated profiles on the website director.
- b. makes all updates to the website.
- c. acts as a technical assistant as needed in co-op events and operations.

## Service Positions

- A. Teachers- plan and teach the appropriate number of lessons each semester, provide substitute lesson plans for the communications coordinator to use in case of absence, and turn in any supply fees to the treasurer prior to registration. Teachers are usually returning members who have met the attendance requirements for early registration, but occasionally new members are brought in to teach classes when a teacher is otherwise not available. Volunteers who are not members of Cottage Garden occasionally teach classes as well. Classes with paid instructors are possible option for some classes.
- B. Assistant teachers- act as a “hands on” helper for the teacher and as a substitute teacher if the teacher is absent.
- C. Floaters- work under the supervision of the communications coordinator to fill in as necessary for absent members.
- D. Nursery and preschool workers- supervise the safety, needs, and behavior of children, clean and reorder classrooms and playground areas as needed, and monitor the care of equipment.
- E. Building clean-up- Clean and restore the building at various times during the school day. All members who are not teaching or assisting in teaching during the last class period of the day generally help clean the building.
- F. Hall monitors- monitor building safety during class and help contact parents when they are needed by their children.
- G. Women’s group leaders- lead a women’s group during a class period at Cottage Garden, facilitating and helping build supportive relationships among the group members.

## Article 5

### MISCELLANEOUS

1. Annual Budget- The Board shall adopt an annual operating budget, which specifies major expenditures by type and amount.
2. Books and Records- Cottage Garden shall keep correct and complete books and accounting records and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Board.
3. Contracts and Grants- The Board may authorize any officer(s) or agent(s) of Cottage Garden to enter into contracts, leases, and agreements with and accept grants and loans from the United States; its departments and agencies; the State of Texas; its agencies, counties, municipalities, and political subdivisions; and public or private corporations, foundations, and persons; and may generally perform all acts necessary for a full exercise of the powers vested in it. The Executive Director shall have authority to enter into such contracts and expend such funds on behalf of the organization as the Board may specify.
4. Checks, Drafts, or Orders for Payment- All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of Cottage Garden shall be signed by such officer(s) or agent(s) of Cottage Garden and in such manner as shall

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from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board. In the absence of such determination by the Board, such instruments shall be signed by the Executive Director or the Treasurer.

5. Deposits- All funds of Cottage Garden shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of Cottage Garden in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board shall select.
6. Acceptance of Gifts- The Board may accept on behalf of Cottage Garden any cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes, or for any special purpose, of Cottage Garden. Prior to acceptance of a significant non-cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise, the Board shall determine, by resolution thereof, that the acceptance of such non-cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise by Cottage Garden would be consistent with and further the purposes of Cottage Garden.
7. Contracts Involving Board Members and/or Officers- Upon full disclosure of a direct or indirect interest in any contract relating to or incidental to the operations of Cottage Garden, members of the Board and officers of Cottage Garden may be permitted to maintain a direct or indirect interest in any such contract, notwithstanding that at such time they may also be acting as individuals, or Cottage Garden trustees of trusts, or beneficiaries of trusts, members or associates, or as agents for other persons or corporations, or may be interested in the same matters as shareholders, trustees, or otherwise; provided, however, that any contract, transaction, or action taken on behalf of Cottage Garden involving a matter in which a trustee or officer is personally interested as a shareholder, trustee, or otherwise shall be at arm's length and not in violation of the proscriptions in the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws which prohibit Cottage Garden's use or application of its funds for private benefit; and provided further that no contract, transaction, or act shall be taken on behalf of Cottage Garden if such contract, transaction, or act would result in denial of Cottage Garden's exemption from federal income taxation under the Code and its regulations, as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended. In no event, however, shall any person or entity dealing with the Board or officers of Cottage Garden be obligated to inquire into the authority of the Board and officers to enter into and consummate any contract, transaction or take other action. Any Board member who would directly or indirectly benefit from a contractual relationship as described above shall not participate in the decision on whether that Board member shall be permitted by the Board to maintain such an interest.
8. Exempt Activities- Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, no Board member, officer, or representative of Cottage Garden shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of Cottage Garden which is not permitted to be taken or carried on by an organization exempt from federal income taxation under sections 501(a) and 501(c)(3) of the Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended, or by an organization contributions to which are deductible under section 170(a)(1) of the Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended, by virtue of being charitable contributions as defined in section 170(c)(2) of the Code and its regulations as they now exist or as they may hereafter be amended.
9. Captions- Captions (i.e., article and section headings) are inserted in these Bylaws for convenience only and in no way define, limit, or describe the scope or intent of these Bylaws, or any provision hereof, nor in any way affect the interpretation of these Bylaws.
10. Severability of Clauses- If any provision of these Bylaws is held illegal or unenforceable in a judicial proceeding, such provision shall be severed and shall be inoperative, and the remainder of these Bylaws shall remain operative and binding.
11. **DISSOLUTION**  
Dissolution Procedure: Any action to dissolve Cottage Garden must be approved by 75% of Memberships present at a Member Meeting called to specifically consider such action, for

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which written notice has been issued to all members.

Distribution of Property: Upon the dissolution of Cottage Garden, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for public purpose. Distribution will be determined by the members by a majority vote at the Member Meeting.

## School Policies

### High School Policies

#### A. Grading System

1. Grades are generally based on a 50/50 split between daily work and test grades. This split helps ensure that students who turn in daily assignments on time have very little chance of failure.
2. Because of the generous split between daily work and test grades, and in order to assure that an additional burden is not added to the teacher's workload, no grades will be dropped.
3. The grading system will be as follows:  
90-100: A  
80-89: B  
70-79: C  
below 70: failing.
4. Extra credit will be offered only at the teacher's initiative and will consist of predetermined assignments offered to the entire class.

#### B. Responsibilities of Teachers

1. Teachers will provide accurate class descriptions before registration. The class description will include information about prerequisites, the amount of anticipated homework, class fees, and textbooks.
2. Teachers will also provide a clear syllabus that includes homework assignments and deadline dates. Changes to the syllabus will be made rarely, if at all. The syllabus allows students to plan ahead so their assignments can be turned in on time.
3. Teachers will generally contact parents about student progress every three weeks, on non-class, field trip weeks. This contact may be made in a variety of ways: personally, by email, by phone, with a note in the parent's mail file at school, or with an updated grade account in the student's folder. If a student shows signs of failure for two weeks (or two science modules) in a row, the parent will be contacted earlier.
4. Teachers will offer many daily grade opportunities at the beginning of the school year so that any failure to turn in work can be identified and corrected quickly.
5. Teachers are not allowed to accept late work from students unless instructed to do so by the high school coordinator.

#### C. Responsibilities of Parents

1. It is important for parents to carefully read class descriptions of any class before registering their child. The class description will include information about the format and amount of homework required for the class.
2. In the rare incident that a child may need special provisions made, it is the responsibility of the parent to discuss possible options with the teacher before registering for the class. The parent and teacher must come to a mutual agreement about this arrangement prior to registration. For example, if a child cannot take notes in class, the parent might send a recording device with the child each week. Any agreement that is reached is not to create an extra burden for the volunteering teacher.
3. If a child's photograph should not be published (Cottage Garden website, newspaper,

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etc.), parents will bring this need to the attention of the advisory board.

4. Parents assume ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of their child's progress and are encouraged to frequently contact teachers.
5. Parents are responsible for high school transcripts. Records of grades at Cottage Garden will be kept for registration prerequisite purposes, but Cottage Garden in no way seeks to prove accreditation.
6. Parents are aware that assignments are due by the due date and late work is not accepted.
7. When absent, assignments can be sent to school by a friend, emailed or scanned, or mailed to the teacher if postmarked by the due date. In the case of an emergency, parents can contact the high school coordinator, who will decide if a special provision will be made for the late work to be accepted.

## D. Responsibilities of Students

1. The bulk of learning will occur at home and is the responsibility of the student. It is not unusual for each high school class to require one to two hours of study at home each day.
2. Students are encouraged to contact teachers if they need help or clarification in understanding an assignment.
3. Students need to complete and turn in assignments by their due date in order to succeed. Students who turn in assignments on time have very little chance of failure. Late work is not accepted except in unusual situations that have been approved by the high school coordinator.
4. Students who are consistently failing a class will be removed from the class and reassigned to study hall when it is no longer mathematically possible to pass the class. This action will be taken so that the other students in the class will not be hindered. The student who has been relocated to study hall will not be readmitted to the class but can finish the class at home under the guidance of their parent.
5. Students are not allowed to audit classes.
6. High school students are allowed a maximum of five absences each school year. Students with more than five absences may be pulled from the class.

## E. Responsibilities of the high school curriculum coordinator

1. Initiate, field suggestions for, and coordinate the planning of classes and the high school schedule for the upcoming school year.
2. Recruit and place teachers for the classes.
3. Seek to oversee all aspects of successful learning throughout the school year.
4. Monitor student progress in all high school classes.
5. Communicate with parents and teachers concerning student progress, as needed.
6. Make decisions about excused absences for high school students.

## F. Dual credit option for 16–18-year-olds

Many home school students take dual credit courses during their junior and/or senior years of high school. Special provisions are made for these students, so they may better access the courses they need for graduation.

1. A student who is at least 16 years old may register for a partial school day at Cottage Garden as long as the parent is in attendance with the student while at Cottage Garden.
2. The parent cannot leave Cottage Garden to transport the high school student to classes.
3. This partial day option is available only to returning Cottage Garden members and new members who will present for the school day with younger children. Cottage Garden is not available for drop-off students.

## G. Additional opportunities for high school students

1. Honor roll

Students who have an A for the semester in at least 3 of their designated Cottage Garden

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high school classes and passing grade in other classes will be acknowledged as honor roll students in special recognition ceremonies.

## 2. Student council

The student council is a service organization that offers an open membership for all high school students. The student council is governed by their own policy form document, which they review, revise, and vote on each year. A member of the advisory board serves as an adviser and liaison for the student council.

## 3. Student Helper

A student can apply to be a teacher's helper for a class. The student helper would have to complete an application. Teacher would need to be willing to have a student helper that they would mentor. Student Helper could not be left alone in the class, but always have a supervising adult. Student helpers cannot take younger children to the bathroom.

## Code of Conduct

### Guidelines to Assist in Conflict Resolution

Our policy form states that we will follow Biblical guidelines in our efforts to resolve conflicts. The first step is to talk to the other individual privately. If the conflict is not resolved after you have spoken to the individual privately, members are asked to follow the guidelines below so that a peaceable agreement for all parties can be arrived at.

### **Chain of support for teachers when there are unresolved behavior issues with students:**

1. When a child does not respond to your efforts for behavior correction in the classroom and continues to be disruptive, the child should be taken to the parent by your classroom assistant. If you do not have a classroom assistant, call a coordinator for assistance. Be sure to speak to the parent as soon as possible about the problem after class is over. It is much better to do this in person (as opposed to email, text, or a phone call) to avoid misunderstandings. Your grade level coordinator will also check with you on a regular basis to see how things are going in your classroom in an effort to support you. A teacher may take a grade level coordinator to speak to the parent about their child if they are uncomfortable.
2. If you have spoken to the parent and the behavior change you have desired has not occurred, please talk to your coordinator. The coordinator will set up a meeting between the three of you to discuss the situation and help formulate a workable plan for change. The coordinator will keep a record of the date of the meeting and the plan that was put into place. You as a teacher may need to make adjustments, but generally the child needs to adapt to you and your teaching style.
3. You (the teacher) and the coordinator need to continue to stay in touch to be sure the student is adjusting. If so, the plan was a great success! If not, the coordinator will set up another meeting with the three of you (you, the coordinator, and the parent) and also the director. Concrete expectations will be decided upon and recorded, with the possibility of a temporary suspension of the family if the disruptive behavior issues continue.
4. Communication will continue between you and the coordinator. If disruption of the classroom continues, the director will contact the parent and temporarily suspend the family. The director and curriculum coordinators involved with the care of this family will make those who need to know (the other teachers of the child, the teachers of the siblings, the communication coordinators) aware of the temporary suspension and clarify any questions the teachers may have.
5. If the behavior resurfaces and continues after the temporary suspension, the director will convene the advisory board to discuss possible expulsion.

***If the behavior problem involves the child of the coordinator or the director, please seek the assistance of another board member.***

**Chain of support when there is an unresolved offense between two adults, not involving a child:**



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1. If you are in conflict with another Cottage Garden member, go to the individual privately and address the issue.
2. If your effort to resolve the matter with the other person one-on-one is not effective, ask an advisory board member to help mediate the issue. The advisory board member will hear your side of the story but will then go to the other person and speak to him or her privately to hear his or her version of the conflict. The board member will then prayerfully seek a solution.
3. When the board member believes she/he has a workable resolution in mind, she/he will meet with the two individuals again. Peace will hopefully be made between the two individuals.
4. If the needed changes are not successfully implemented and the conflict continues, the board member and the two individuals will meet and the director will give a final warning concerning the need for a peaceful resolution.
5. If the director finds that the problem is continuing, a meeting of the board will be called. Both individuals will then be dismissed from the meeting and the board will then make a decision about how the problem will be resolved, with the possibility of a short-term suspension.

If the problem continues after this, then the board will convene again to discuss and perhaps implement a suspension of one or both families.

## Background Check

Background checks and Child Protection Training are required for all adults at Cottage Garden. This includes substitutes. These are obtained from the church before you participate in the co-op.

## Dress Code

1. No clothing with inappropriate or disrespectful writing or pictures; or clothing with distracting lights or sounds is not permitted. No pants or shorts with writing across the seat.
2. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than their middle fingertips. For High school and adults, your shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than a dollar bill held longwise to the top of the knee. Shorts or tights must be worn under skirts or dresses for the playground. No holes in jeans above middle fingertips.
3. Leggings or legging-style pants (not thin tights) or capri leggings are also acceptable if they are worn with shirts/tops that are midhigh length or longer in the front and back. Shirts should be at least finger-tip length.
4. Necklines should be modest. Midriffs and backs should be covered.

## Violation of Policy and Bylaws

You have read and understand our statement of faith, our biblical position of marriage and sexuality, all families and their students will conduct themselves in manner, speech, lifestyle, and dress, in accordance with those statements, by signing our waiver, you are agreeing that you and your student(s) will abide by these principles and will conduct yourselves accordingly. If your student is found to violate these principles, the first incident will result in a meeting between you and your student and the Board regarding the violation. A second incident will result in your student and/or family being removed from our co-op program.