

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Article 1, pages 2-3

[Fiscal Year, Statements of Faith, and Beliefs as a Co-Op](#)

Article 2, pages 3-5

[Constitution, Bylaws, Goals, and Guidelines of Goals](#)

Article 3, pages 5-7

[CG Attendance, Sick Policy, Registration, Schedule Changes, and Class Fees Policies](#)

Article 4, pages 7-13

[Governing Bylaws, Amendments, and Administrative Positions](#)

Article 5, pages 14-17

[CG Grading Policies, Educational Responsibilities of CG Members, Electronic Devices, Cell Phones and Artificial Intelligence Policy](#)

Article 6, pages 17-19

[Code of Conduct – Behavior & Guidelines, Dress Code, PDA, and Violation of CG Bylaws Handbook](#)

Article 7, pages 19-20

[Miscellaneous](#)

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

## Article 1

### Fiscal Year, Statements of Faith, and Beliefs as a Co-Op

**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 (“CG”). He alone has provided for all our needs. He alone is our Savior and Lord, and we want this co-op to honor Him. CG 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 whose 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 the 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.

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

## Article 1, continued

### Statement of Beliefs 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 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 CG 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 of Beliefs 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, Bylaws, Goals, and Guidelines of Goals

#### Constitution and Bylaws

CG is a non-profit corporation and shall have all the powers, duties, authorizations, and responsibilities as provided in the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act; provided, however, CG 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

CG 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

# **COTTAGE GARDEN**

## **Bylaws Handbook**

### **May 2025 – April 2026**

“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. Provide training for new co-ops.
- D. Provide a system of academic accountability at the Junior High and High School level.
- E. Enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents.
- F. Support and care for hurting families.

### **General Guidelines for Goals of Cottage Garden**

- A. Provide classes, activities, and teaching assistance for one another
  - 1. CG will seek to offer physical education, science, math, language, and elective courses for all school-age (K-12<sup>th</sup>) children. Preschool classes are designed to emphasize gross and fine motor learning.
  - 2. Children receive instruction one day a week at CG in a classroom setting. Students may have homework assignments to complete during the rest of the week which are assigned at age-appropriate levels.
  - 3. Parents stay on-site for the entire school day. 8:40am to 3:00pm, assisting in a variety of ways.
  - 4. The classes are taught by parent volunteers. Paid instructors are occasionally recruited, under specific circumstances.
  - 5. CG meets one day a week (Mondays), following a calendar that has been approved by the membership. Students continue to complete their assignments at home during these "off" weeks.
  - 6. All students, Nursery-12<sup>th</sup> Grade, must register for entire school day. Please see section "Junior High & High School Policies," for attendance options of 16–18-year-old, high school students.
  - 7. Class sizes, age appropriateness, and any prerequisites are determined by the teachers of each class, with approval of Grade Level Coordinator (GLC).
- B. Expose our students to the concept of authority outside of the home-
  - 1. Students are expected to obey and respect authority figures while at school and school sanctioned events. This includes teachers, any parent or adult. Please see Articles 6 and 7 for detailed explanations.
- C. Provide training for new co-ops
  - 1. CG members occasionally begin new co-ops in nearby communities. Support and training are available to assist in these endeavors, if desired.
  - 2. When requested to do so, the CG Director provides training for individuals who are interested in starting new co-ops.
- D. Provide a system of accountability at the Junior High and High School level
  - 1. Please see Article 5 for detailed descriptions of the accountability program for JH/HS school classes.
- E. Enjoy close fellowship and support among children and parents-
  - 1. Fellowships for students are often planned within CG through various events – dress up days, Valentine’s Day in the Park, CG Dances, to list a few. Families are encouraged to plan field trips, park meet ups, etc. outside CG Mondays.
  - 2. After registration, CG mothers are assigned a required women's group. Women's groups

# COTTAGE GARDEN

## Bylaws Handbook

### May 2025 – April 2026

play an important role in fostering strong, supportive relationships among families. As schedule allows, fathers will be assigned a men's group.

3. Offenses are inevitable in a diversified group, but they can often be avoided with forethought and planning. Please see Article 6 on how to handle parent and/or student support/offenses.
- F. Support and care for hurting families.
1. CG Board may extend grace to CG 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 Cottage Garden Board.

## Article 3

### CG Attendance, Sick Policy, Registration, Schedule Changes, and Class Fees Policies

#### Attendance

##### A. Parental attendance

1. A CG member is defined as a parent or legal guardian with at least one kindergarten or older aged student.
2. The normal operating hours for CG class days is 8:40am to 3:00pm. Since CG is a cooperative effort, a commitment to attendance for the full day is very important. Attendance for the day is required on CG 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 3:00pm on CG class days will count as one absence.
3. Absences should only be in association with sickness, emergency, or other unusual circumstances. Please see our sick policy, Article 3, for further explanation.
4. In rare situations when a parent cannot attend, their student, who is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade or above, may attend with another CG parent and a parental absence form must be turned in to the Communications Coordinator. Please see our Sick Policy, Article 3, for further explanation.
5. In the event an emergency arises during the school day and the parent must leave CG, even for a short amount of time, a parental absence form must be filled out and turned in to the communications coordinator or door monitor in order for the student to stay on campus without the parent. These forms are available at school through the door monitor.
6. A maximum of five absences are allowed each school year in order to be eligible to return as a CG Member 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 husband or 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.
7. Members who are absent more than five times during a school year or who have had on-going disciplinary issues must receive permission from the CG Board to register for a new school year. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
8. To ensure the smooth operation of Cottage Garden, families are required to notify the Communications Coordinator in advance of any absences. Notification should be made as early as possible and ideally no later than the Sunday preceding the absence. First unreported absence – defined as an absence for which no prior notice was given – will result in a meeting with Communications Coordinator and 2-documented absences. Any

# COTTAGE GARDEN

## Bylaws Handbook

### May 2025 – April 2026

subsequential unreported absences, will require permission from the CG Board to register for the upcoming school year.

9. 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. Please note, no more than six substitute arrangements are allowed per member absences, per calendar year.

#### B. Student attendance

1. Students attend CG on a regular basis with their parents. Please see Article 3-A regarding parental absences and emergencies.
2. All registered students must be the children, or under the legal guardianship, of CG members. Bringing occasional guests must be cleared in advance with the CG Board.
3. Absences should only be in association with sickness, emergency, or other unusual circumstances. Please see our Sick Policy for further explanation.
4. In case of an absence, it is the responsibility of the student's parent to contact the teacher regarding missed assignments. Please see Article 5, E8.
5. Student attendance records are only kept at the Junior High and High School level by individual teachers. Please see Article 5, D3.
6. Students who are 16 years old or older are allowed to attend partial days at CG. Please see Article 5, B.

### Sick Policy

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 CG. Fever must be absent for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducers that are over the counter or natural homeopathy (Tylenol or Boiron Belladonna, etc.). If live lice or nits are found on you or a family member, let a CG Board member know immediately. You may return to CG 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.

### Registration and Enrollment Guidelines

- A. Reservations for registering for a new school year are made in the spring through an online 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 arriving late or leaving early will also affect registration.
- B. New members are admitted according to the number of parent working positions that need to be filled, not according to available space for students. New members must:
  - a. be screened through an on-line application and complete a \$10 background check upon invitation to join CG.
  - b. understand that CG 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 a New Member Dinner to discuss the policy forms.
  - d. have at least one school-age child (defined as kindergarten age 5 by September 1st or older) who will be attending CG.
- C. Through the on-line process, members reserve classes for each of their children. These



## COTTAGE GARDEN

### Bylaws Handbook

May 2025 – April 2026

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 parent will first check with the Grade-Level coordinator before the reservation is secured.

### Schedule Changes and Class Fees

#### Fall Semester, Schedule Changes

- A. No Schedule changes will be allowed 21 days prior to the start of CG for the Fall Semester.
- B. First Monday CG returns in September is when a parent can request a meeting to drop a class and/or make a schedule change. That meeting must include, GLC, Teacher, Parent, and Student (JH/HS age) to come to a resolution for the student.
- C. The first CG Monday in October, there will be no more schedule changes for the year.

#### Spring Semester, Schedule Changes

- A. Classes that are only offered in the Spring, no schedule changes will be allowed the Monday before class fees are collected for the Spring Semester.
- B. First Monday CG returns in February is when a parent can request a meeting to drop the *Spring Only Class*. That meeting must include, GLC, Teacher, Parent, and Student (JH/HS age) to come to a resolution for the student.
- C. The First CG Monday in March, there will be no more schedule changes for the *Spring Only Classes*.

#### Class Fees

- A. Class fees for the fall semester are collected in early spring before the semester ends on or before the last class day.
- B. Classes that are taught by an outside professional teacher class fee will be collected in full for the school year before classes begin.
- C. Member Registration Fees are paid per family, not per individual. Fees vary in amount from year to year but are generally very reasonably priced.
- D. Your family will not be allowed to attend CG 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.
- G. Class 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 Member Fees may be paid in cash or check.

## Article 4

### Governing Bylaws, Amendments, and Administrative Positions

#### Governing 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.

# COTTAGE GARDEN

## Bylaws Handbook

### May 2025 – April 2026

#### 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 14 days before the first January meeting. A majority vote by the CG 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 CG Board.

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

CG shall be governed by a Board of Directors (“the CG Board”), which shall have all of the rights, powers, privileges, and limitations of liability of CG directors of a nonprofit corporation organized under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act. The CG Board shall establish policies and directives governing business and programs of CG 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.

The CG Board, consisting of returning members who wish to serve CG in an administrative position, serves as the leadership team. The CG Board provides long term direction for CG, 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 CG 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 CG board is unable to agree upon a director for the coming year, a CG 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 CG Board, the general membership will select the remaining 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 willingness to serve on the board, who have attended CG 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



# COTTAGE GARDEN

## Bylaws Handbook

### May 2025 – April 2026

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.

CG 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.

CG 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.

## Administrative Positions

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 GLC to assign classrooms for the coming school year
  - g. provides and updates a door 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 CG 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.
  - n. helps govern the student council meetings.
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.

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

- vi. introduces them to curriculum coordinators at appropriate anticipated worker 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 new member coordinator 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 Grade Level Coordinators (GLC)-

- 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 Grade Level Coordinator (GLC)-

- 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.)

## **COTTAGE GARDEN**

### **Bylaws Handbook**

**May 2025 – April 2026**

- 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.

#### **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

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

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 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.

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

**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, recruit's 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.
- 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. Helpers- 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. Door Monitors – ensure door security by verifying each visitor's identification and requiring them to sign the visitor log in accordance with established safety protocols.
- 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.

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

**Article 5**

**CG Grading Policies, Academic Responsibilities of CG Members, Electronic Devices, Cell Phones and Artificial Intelligence Policy**

**Junior and High (JH/HS) School Academic and Grading Policies**

**A. Grading Policy**

1. Grades are generally based on a split between daily work and test grades. Specific grading breakdowns may vary depending on individual teacher.
2. JH/HS may have work that begins August 1<sup>st</sup> and due on the first Monday of Cottage Garden.
3. No grades will be dropped.
4. The grading system will be as follows and reported as percentage based:  
90-100: A  
80-89: B  
70-79: C  
below 70: failing.
5. Extra credit will be offered only at the teacher's discretion and will consist of predetermined assignments offered to the entire class.
6. No late work will be accepted. See Responsibilities of Parents, Article 6 - G8, in case of an emergency regarding late work.

**B. Dual credit option for 16–18-year-olds**

Many homeschooled 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. Parent must be in attendance for complete school day at CG, 8:40am to 3:00pm.
2. The parent cannot leave CG to transport the high school student to classes.
3. This partial day option is available only to returning CG members and new members who will be present for the school day with younger children. CG is not available for drop-off students.

**C. Additional opportunities for high school students**

**1. Honor roll**

Students who have an A for the semester in at least 3 of their designated academic core CG high school classes and passing grades in other classes will be acknowledged as honor roll students in the End of Year (EOY) program.

**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. The Director of CG serves as an adviser and liaison for the student council.

**3. Student Helper (SH)**

High school students can apply to be a teacher's helper for a class. The SH would have to complete an application. Teachers would need to be willing to have a SH that they would mentor. SH will not be left alone in the class, always having a supervising adult. SH are not to assist with bathroom or diaper changes. SH are used in PS3 through 12<sup>th</sup> grade classes.



**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

4. Graduation

To graduate with CG the student needs to attend CG 75% of their high school years and have left in good standing.

D. 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 approved curriculum.
2. Teachers will also provide a clear syllabus (that includes homework assignments and deadline dates) to GLC and Parents/Students by August 1st. If changes are made to the syllabus, all parents and students must be notified immediately. The syllabus allows students to plan so their assignments can be turned in on time.
3. Teachers will upload and report, to the grading portal on the website, student attendance, grades and/or progress every six weeks during the school year. With final cumulative grade, for the academic year, to the High School GLC by the Wednesday following the last CG Monday.
4. If a student shows signs of failure for two weeks (or two science modules) in a row, the parent will be contacted.
5. 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.
6. Teachers will not accept late work from students without communicating with the GLC.

E. Responsibilities of Parents

1. Parents must adhere to the Bylaws of CG (Statement of Faith, Attendance, and Dress Code Policy, etc.).
2. Nametags are to be always worn.
3. It is important for parents to carefully read class descriptions of any class before registering their child.
4. In the rare event 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.
5. If a child's photograph should not be published (CG website, newspaper, etc.), parents will bring this need to the attention of the CG Board.
6. Parents assume ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of their child's progress and are encouraged to frequently contact teachers.
7. Parents are responsible for high school transcripts. Records of grades at CG will be kept for registration prerequisite purposes, but CG in no way seeks to prove accreditation.
8. Parents are aware that assignments are due by the due date (even if absent) and late work is not accepted. In case of an emergency, parents are to contact the teacher immediately, and the teacher (upon discussing with GLC) will decide if special provision will be made for late work.

F. Responsibilities of Students

1. Students must adhere to the Bylaws of CG (Statement of Faith, Attendance, and Dress Code Policy, etc.).

# **COTTAGE GARDEN**

## **Bylaws Handbook**

### **May 2025 – April 2026**

2. Name tags will always be worn.
3. 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.
4. Students are encouraged to contact teachers if they need help or clarification in understanding an assignment.
5. Students need to complete and turn in assignments by their due date. Late work is not accepted (even if absent). In case of an emergency, see Responsibilities of Parents E8.
6. Students who are not completing assignments and/or 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. The student who has been relocated to study hall will not be readmitted to the class but will finish the classwork at home under the guidance of their parents.
7. Students are not allowed to audit classes and must remain in their registered class.
8. Junior and High school students with more than five absences for the calendar year, your ability to remain at CG will be reviewed by the CG board.
9. The use of AI/ChatGPT, plagiarism, and cheating will not be tolerated. First offense, will result in a zero for the assignment. Second offense, your ability to remain at CG will be reviewed by the CG board.

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are not allowed to bring toys or electronic games or devices to CG (unless instructed to do so by a teacher). Laptop usage during study hall is for educational purposes only and will be monitored by the Study Hall Monitor and/or a CG Board member. Once class or study hall is over, laptop is to be powered down and stored in student's backpack.

### **Cell Phones**

1. Student cell phones must be turned off and left in a backpack during the day at CG. A student's cell phone will be confiscated if used on campus, exception is Study Hall, see #4.
2. If student is caught with cell phone out of backpack, first offense, cell phone is taken and given to parent immediately. Second offense, parent must pick up the cell phone from the CG Director (at end of the day) and pay a \$20 fine.
3. In Study Hall, cell phones will be allowed with the following guidelines.
  - a. Cell phone is to be used for educational purposes only (no social media, pictures, etc.).
  - b. Cell phone being used during study hall will be monitored by the Study Hall Monitor and/or a CG Board member.
  - c. If study hall monitor or CG Board member catches the cell phone being used for non-educational purposes, the cell phone is taken and given to the CG Director. The student's cell phone privileges for study hall will be revoked for remainder of the CG school year. Parent of student may collect student cell phone at the end of CG Day from the CG Director.
  - d. Once study hall is over, cell phones are to be powered down and stored in student's backpack, for remainder of the day.
4. Parents are asked to use discretion when using their personal cell phones.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI/ChatGPT) and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is to "steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own without crediting the source." The use of AI is considered plagiarism at CG. The use of AI/ChatGPT and Plagiarism is

# COTTAGE GARDEN

## Bylaws Handbook

### May 2025 – April 2026

considered cheating at CG and will not be tolerated. In very rare cases, a teacher may use AI as a tool to explain an idea or part of the curriculum. Teachers are to use discretion and adhere to CG Bylaws and seek wisdom from GLC if have questions. See Article 5, F9 for further explanation, on student offense.

## Article 6

### Code of Conduct – Behavior & Guidelines, Dress Code, PDA, and Violation of CG Bylaws Handbook

#### Behavior Code of Conduct

##### Students:

1. Students must use appropriate Godly language, be respectful, kind, and helpful to all adults and peers. No bullying or intentional cruelty towards any adult or peers will be tolerated.
2. Students are expected to be quiet, attentive, and participate when adult or peers are speaking to the class.
3. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and have all required classroom materials specified by the teacher.
4. Students will practice self-control by not running or using loud voices when indoors.
5. Students will respect the property of church, adults, and peers.
6. Students agree to adhere to the Bylaws Handbook of CG.

##### Parents:

1. Parents must use appropriate Godly language, be respectful, kind, and helpful to peers and students. No bullying or intentional cruelty towards any peers or students will be tolerated.
2. Parents are encouraged to correct any misbehavior they observe.
3. Parents must repair or replace any property damaged by a family member.
4. Parents agree to adhere to the Bylaws Handbook of CG.

### Guidelines to Assist in Classroom Management and Conflict Resolution

Our policy form states that we will follow Biblical guidelines, Matthew 18:15 and 1 Corinthians 10:31, 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. **First offense**, if a student does not respond to correction, classroom helper is to escort them to parent, immediately. If there is no helper, teacher is to contact GLC immediately for them to assist.
2. Teacher must speak with parent as soon as possible, ideally in person to avoid misunderstanding, about student's behavior.
3. **Second offense**, if behavior continues after initial conversation, teacher informs GLC immediately. The GLC arranges meeting with parent, teacher, and CG Director. At this meeting, plan for improvement is created and documented. Teacher may adjust expectations, but student is expected to adapt.
4. GLC will check in regularly with teacher. Will offer support and monitor classroom dynamics. Continued communication between teacher and GLC is required to monitor progress.
5. **Third offense**, if no improvement, a follow up meeting with CG Director, parent, teacher, and

## COTTAGE GARDEN Bylaws Handbook May 2025 – April 2026

GLC will take place. The CG Director will initiate a temporary suspension from CG, 2 consecutive CG Mondays. All classroom work will be collected by parent, work is to be done at home, turned in by assigned deadlines during the temporary suspension.

6. Director will check in regularly with parent, teacher, and GLC. Will offer support and monitor classroom dynamics once student has returned from suspension.
7. **Fourth offense**, if issues reoccur after suspension, the CG Director convenes with CG Board to consider expulsion from CG. CG Director and GLC will meet with parent to discuss final decision made by the CG Board.

*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 adults, not involving a child:**

1. Unresolved offense, seek help from a CG Board member. The CG Board members will hear both sides and will then prayerfully seek resolution. The CG Board member brings both parties back together to discuss reconciliation.
2. If the offense continues, the CG Board member arranges meeting with the CG Director and adults. CG Director will give final warning and urges peaceful resolution.
3. If the offense is still unresolved, a meeting with the CG Board will take place. The concerning adults will be dismissed from the meeting and the CG Board will discuss issuing a temporary suspension, 2 consecutive CG Mondays, for one or all concerning families.
4. If there is no progress after suspension, the CG Board will convene to consider expulsion of one or all concerning families from CG.

## Dress Code

Thank you for your care, modesty, and respect to our CG Dress Code (1 Corinthians 8:13).

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. Shorts or tights must be worn under skirts or dresses for the playground. No holes in jeans above middle fingertips. No form fitting shorts, skirts, dresses, or jeans. Undergarments are not to be visible.
3. Leggings or legging-style pants (not thin tights) or capri leggings are acceptable if they are worn with shirts/tops that are middle finger-tip length.
4. Shirts are not to be/or have spaghetti straps, tank tops, mesh, form fitting, low cut shirts/blouses. Midriffs and backs must be covered. Undergarments are not to be visible.
5. **Violations of Dress Code** - a combined 3 violations of the dress code will count the same as an absence and will affect family's registration for the following year.

*Due to variety in clothing styles, CG Board reserves the right to make final determination of what dress is considered inappropriate.*

## PDA

All students and adults are expected to uphold Christian values and help maintain a respectful environment. Interactions should reflect modesty, purity, and self-control as outlined in 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5. Romantic gestures such as kissing, cuddling, and prolonged hugging are not allowed during CG hours or events. All are expected to maintain appropriate physical boundaries and model Christ-like relationships. Repeated disregard for these guidelines may result in a meeting with the CG Board and impact future CG Membership.

# **COTTAGE GARDEN**

## **Bylaws Handbook**

### **May 2025 – April 2026**

#### **Violation of Bylaws Handbook of CG**

Parents and Students 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, abide by our Bylaws Handbook and will conduct yourselves accordingly, at all sanctioned CG events. If you or your student is found to violate these principles and/or our Bylaws Handbook, the first incident will result in a meeting between you, your student and the CG Board regarding the violation. A second incident may result in your student and/or family being placed on a temporary suspension or expulsion, decided by the CG Board.

#### **Article 7**

##### **Miscellaneous**

1. Annual Budget - The CG Board shall adopt an annual operating budget, which specifies major expenditures by type and amount.
2. Books and Records - CG 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 CG Board may authorize any officer(s) or agent(s) of CG 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 CG shall be signed by such officer(s) or agent(s) of CG and in such manner as shall 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 CG shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of CG in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the CG Board shall select.
6. Acceptance of Gifts - The CG Board may accept on behalf of CG any cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the general purposes, or for any special purpose, of CG. Prior to acceptance of a significant non-cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise, the CG Board shall determine, by resolution thereof, that the acceptance of such non-cash contribution, gift, bequest, or devise by CG would be consistent with and further the purposes of CG.
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 CG, members of the CG Board and officers of CG 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 CG 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 CG 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

**COTTAGE GARDEN**  
**Bylaws Handbook**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

proscriptions in the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws which prohibit CG'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 CG if such contract, transaction, or act would result in denial of CG'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 CG Board or officers of CG be obligated to inquire into the authority of the CG Board and officers to enter into and consummate any contract, transaction or take other action. Any CG Board member who would directly or indirectly benefit from a contractual relationship as described above shall not participate in the decision on whether that CG Board member shall be permitted by the Board to maintain such an interest.

8. Exempt Activities - Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, no CG Board member, officer, or representative of CG shall take any action or carry on any activity by or on behalf of CG 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 CG must be approved by 75% of Memberships present at a CG Member Meeting called to specifically consider such action, for which written notice has been issued to all members.  
Distribution of Property: Upon the dissolution of CG, 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.