

# Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

## NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION PACKET

### Welcome to HAA!

We are excited to welcome you to our secular homeschooling community in Ann Arbor, MI. Included in this you will find all of the information you need to get started. This packet is intended to:

- 1) Give you info about how HAA works,
- 2) Provide step-by-step instructions on how to become a HAA member and register for classes,
- 3) Outline our policies, procedures and code of conduct

### How HAA Works

HAA is an open minded, family oriented, member-driven group of homeschooling families in and around Ann Arbor. We are committed to building a close-knit, diverse community dedicated to raising and educating our children primarily outside institutional environments. Within our group, educational philosophies and practices are respectfully exchanged and discussed. We are an all-inclusive group and are not bound by religious creeds or political parties. We warmly welcome members of many backgrounds and beliefs.

#### 4-H Club

We adhere to the 4-H Club By-laws. As a 4-H organization, we honor the Michigan State University Anti-Discrimination policy:

*MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Persons with disabilities have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations.*

#### Weekly meetups on Fridays

For over 15+ years HAA has been serving the Ann Arbor Area homeschooling community with weekly meetups. The fall, winter and spring semesters include enrichment classes indoors, while the summer semester includes outdoor afternoons at local parks.

#### Semester Enrichment Classes and Workshops

Each semester the HAA Class coordinator, with the help of volunteer parents, organizes a series of paid enrichment classes of which students can register and participate. These classes typically include one-hour sessions over a six-week period. Occasionally, mini-classes or seminars are offered on meeting days in which classes are not taking place.

#### Field Trips

## Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

Each semester HAA schedules field trips to local performances, museums, and educational opportunities. HAA is also connected with other local homeschooling meetup groups and is often invited to these events.

### **Volunteer-driven community**

HAA is operated 100% by volunteer parental and student support. We invite all new members to join in the volunteer efforts which will be outlined at the beginning of each semester by the current Membership Coordinator. If members are interested in deepening their volunteer commitments, we invite them to pursue serving on the HAA Board as a parent or youth leader.

*Board Members* - A HAA board member is an enrolled member of HAA who has been approved by the MSU Volunteer Selection Process, and who has been a member of the HAA 4-H Club for at least one term. HAA moderator(s) have been in the group for at least a year and preferably have served on the board. Other members typically include a treasurer, secretary, class coordinators, field trip organizer, and new member coordinator.

*Youth Leaders* - A Youth Leader is an enrolled member of the HAA 4-H Club who is between 12 and 18 years old and who is interested in learning about and helping with the HAA club leadership. Youth Leaders may take on an apprentice board position or take on a smaller leadership role, such as organizing a holiday party, some other special event, or publishing a monthly newsletter.

### **Guests**

While membership is required for attendance at HAA, guests are welcome. After a couple of visits, prospective members are encouraged to join. Any visitors must be advised of the HAA guidelines for conduct and are expected to adhere to these.

### **Affordable Payments**

Each family will be responsible for paying the general membership fee for HAA 4-H Club and the 4-H participation fee. The HAA membership fee is paid in fall and winter and goes toward rental of the facility. The exact amount varies based on the number of member families. Families are responsible for class fees, should they choose to enroll their children in classes offered by HAA.

Member families must pay HAA membership fees at the beginning of each term. The 4-H participation fee is an annual fee payable when the family joins, or every September.

Refunds are generally not issued, unless a class is cancelled due to low enrollment.

Make-up dates for missed classes, field trips, or other special activities will be scheduled if they are practical and possible during the session in which the cancellation occurs. If make-up dates are not possible, refunds for missed classes or other costs, such as field trip fees, are not guaranteed.

### **Cancellation Due to Weather**

In case of inclement weather, the HAA board will cancel the HAA meeting or activity no later than one hour before the regular meeting time or two hours before a field trip or other special activity.

# Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

## Caring for Our Meeting Space

Please pitch in with clean-up at HAA meet-ups no later than 3:30pm, *especially on party days*.

**Main Meeting Room:** Please remove all personal belongings. Dispose of trash and clean surfaces of any messes made by you and your family. We may need additional assistance with sweeping, cleaning up arts and crafts materials, especially on party days.

**Classrooms:** Tables and chairs should be replaced to the original position, and all surfaces and the floor should be clean. Turn off the lights.

**Other Areas:** Be sure to collect all personal items from our meeting space. We are not guaranteed access to these spaces after our rental period is over.

## Illness and Allergy

Please avoid HAA activities when you or your children have a contagious illness including, but not limited to:

- FEVER: May return when fever free (under 100 degrees) for 24 hours, without medication
- DIARRHEA / VOMITING: May return when symptom free for 72 hours
- STREP THROAT: May return after 48 hours of antibiotic treatment and no fever for 48 hours
- CONJUNCTIVITIS (pink eye): May return 48 hours after treatment begins and eyes are free of discharge
- HEAD LICE: May return 48 hours after treatment and removal of all live lice and nits from hair
- RING WORM: May return after treatment begins; area should be covered while in school for first 48 hours of treatment
- IMPETIGO / STAPH / MRSA: May return 72 hours after treatment starts; wound must be covered with dressing taped on all 4 sides
- COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (such as, but not limited to - influenza, chickenpox, measles, mumps, pertussis, meningitis, mononucleosis): May return when cleared by their medical provider

Please keep in mind that your other family members may be carriers and that you may still be putting immune-compromised members at risk. Please inform members via the HAA google email group, or via facebook if your child has symptoms or illnesses so that susceptible members can choose to stay home to protect themselves.

Some HAA families have specialized diets for health or ethical reasons (no nuts, sugar, caffeine, wheat, meat, dairy, etc.). Please check with parents before offering food to a child. In addition, some members have very serious food allergies: Please do not bring foods containing peanuts, peanut butter, tree nuts, or sesame to our events. If your child has eaten these foods before a HAA event, please insure he or she has washed hands and face thoroughly.

## Absentee Parent Procedure

We discourage any parent from leaving their child(ren) (including teens) at HAA without his/her supervision. If a parent must leave the child, the following steps are required:

- 1) Inform a board member and write down your children's names, the name of the designated adult responsible for them, and a phone number where you can be reached in case of emergency.
- 2) All registration, contact information, and code of conduct paperwork MUST be updated and current.

## Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

- 3) The child(ren) must be aware of who is responsible for them. The responsible adult cannot leave HAA without the child(ren) they have agreed to supervise, and if the meeting ends before the parent returns, the child(ren) must leave with the responsible adult.
- 4) Older siblings cannot be the responsible adult for younger siblings unless they are 18 or older.

### Accident Policy

In the case of life-threatening or other urgent medical situation during an HAA 4-H Club meeting, field trip, or other special event, informing the 4-H office and filing the 4-H Accident/Injury form will be done as soon as possible after the urgent or life-threatening situation has been attended to.

The current procedure in the case of a non life-threatening or non urgent accident or injury is to fill out a 4-H Accident/Injury form and turn it in to one of the HAA board members, who will insure that the form is turned in to the Washtenaw County 4-H office.

Thank you for reading and committing to the above policies.

Welcome to HAA!

Sincerely,  
HAA Board Members

## YOUTH CODE OF CONDUCT FORM (completed by child and parent together)

Our goal is to create an atmosphere that is safe, pleasant and fun. For this reason we ask you to read this code of conduct form with your child. Please discuss each item with your child and check that you agree and understand that you will follow these guidelines to the best of your ability.

\_\_\_ I commit to welcome any interested child into my games and play;

\_\_\_ I am always respectful with others, with my body, words and actions.

\_\_\_ I will refrain from bringing toy weapons, using toys as weapons, or fighting;

\_\_\_ I understand that HAA is a electronics-free zone. I refrain from using handheld electronics and will keep packed away if it is with me at HAA;

\_\_\_ I will not bring toys that I am unwilling to share.

\_\_\_ If I notice improper or dangerous behavior, I will kindly inform my parent, the parents of the children involved or a HAA Board Member immediately.

\_\_\_ I respect the physical property at HAA. If something breaks or is damaged, I will inform my parent and a board member immediately.

## Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

I will listen respectfully to my teachers and will be on time to my classes or field trips.

### THE 4-H PLEDGE

I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

### ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT (completed by all attending parents)

At HAA, we are committed to maintaining a healthy and secure environment for all members. Please read the guidelines below and check all boxes as an agreement that you will do your best to abide by these rules.

When discussing "adult" topics, I will be mindful of what children may overhear. When discussing controversial topics, I will speak respectfully of different points of view.

If I am offended by a comment or action of another member of HAA, I will discuss the matter with him or her privately, rather than discussing it with others in the group. If we cannot resolve the matter privately, I will bring it to the attention of the board. 4-H has an official mediation process when group conflict arises.

If a child's safety is in immediate danger I will do my best to protect them. This might include physical help, calling 911 in the event of a medical emergency, notifying the board immediately and locating the child's parent as soon as possible.

I agree to speak to a child's parent or to a board member about worrisome behavior rather than attempting to discipline another person's child.

If my child frequently has behavioral challenges while at HAA, the board may ask me to stay close and shadow my child at HAA. If my child continues to have challenging behavior after repeated reminders, I will withdraw from the meeting and try again another day.

I will respect the facility and equipment and teach children to use the equipment as it is meant to be used.

I respect the physical property at HAA. If something breaks or is damaged, I will inform my parent and a board member immediately.

Due to severe food allergies, I will avoid sending my child with foods containing peanuts, peanut butter, tree nuts, or sesame to our events. If my child has eaten these foods before a HAA event, I will insure he or she has washed hands and face thoroughly.

My child will stay home from HAA when he/she has a contagious illness. This includes fever, vomiting or diarrhea within 24-hours of a HAA event. If my child has head lice, I will refrain from bringing him/her to HAA within 7 days post-treatment.

## Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

\_\_\_ I agree to do my best to monitor/supervise play in the classrooms, main area, gym and outdoor space. It is understood that if I have small children I will not be expected to monitor an entire room).

\_\_\_ I will be aware of my child's whereabouts at all times. If I leave the facility and my child remains at HAA I will sign-out my child with another willing and responsible adult on-site.

\_\_\_ I will do my best to ensure that my child is on-time to all classes and field trips so as to not disturb the learning environment for others. If I have committed to a field trip, but need to cancel, I will inform the organizer as soon as possible. An attempt will be made to pass on my tickets, but there is no guarantee that money can be refunded.

\_\_\_ If my child is very disruptive to the group in classes or field trips, I will quietly and gently remove my child and let the child try again at another time.

### **DISMISSAL FROM HAA (PER 4-H GUIDELINES)**

If any member of our group, either youth or adult, behaves in a way that is counter to our guidelines, a HAA board member will discuss the occurrence with all relevant parties in an effort to establish the facts. If the Board feels that one or more individual's behavior did not meet the standards of our conduct guidelines, a warning will be given.

If the individual is witnessed disregarding the HAA conduct guidelines a second time, a meeting will be scheduled with the family, HAA 4-H Club board members, and the 4-H extension educator. The behavior issues will be discussed, and the HAA leadership will do its best to communicate what types of behavior are acceptable and not acceptable within our HAA community. An improvement plan will be constructed with clear guidelines and expectations as to the changes that need to be made. The HAA board will document in writing the discussion and outcome of the meeting.

If the individual persists with behavior contrary to our guidelines, the 4-H office will be notified of the HAA board's recommendation that the individual and her or his family be asked to leave the group. In conjunction with the HAA board members and any youth or adults involved, final decisions about discipline will be made by the MSU Extension staff of Washtenaw County. If a family is asked to leave, no membership fees, 4-H fees, or class fees will be reimbursed.

Member families may also be dismissed from the HAA 4-H Club for disregarding the by-laws, in particular for failing to pay membership fees and/or 4-H fees, or failing to contribute to the group by fulfilling HAA service obligations. If a member family is not honoring their commitment to the club's by-laws, they may expect to be politely reminded by a board member once. If the family does not begin to honor their commitment immediately, the HAA board will issue the adult member a written invitation to a meeting to discuss a remedy for the situation. The written invitation will also serve as a means to document the specific issue or issues which the HAA board views as possible grounds for dismissal.

When a member family receives such an invitation from the HAA club leadership, they may choose to respond in one of two ways:

## Homeschoolers of Ann Arbor (HAA)

- They may choose to immediately withdraw from membership in HAA 4-H Club, knowing that they will not be refunded any membership fee, 4-H fee, or class fees. If the family wishes to join HAA in the future, they would have to go through the new member admission process.
- They may choose to try to address the issues because they wish to stay in the HAA 4-H Club. In this case, the adult member of the family should schedule a meeting with the HAA board. At the meeting the HAA board will listen to the adult member's point of view, present their own point of view, and then decide on one of two courses of action:
  - Allow the member family to remain in the HAA 4-H Club without probation, no further action being deemed necessary. In this case the HAA board will document the outcome of the discussion with a letter to the member family describing how the issues have been resolved to everyone's satisfaction.
  - Allow the member family to stay in the group but remain on probationary status through to the end of the following term. During this probationary period, the member family may be dismissed for additional disregard of the bylaws. Such a dismissal will be accompanied by a letter from the HAA board describing the reasons for dismissal.

If a serious situation arises, such as belligerent or aggressive behavior or verbal or physical threats, the HAA board, in conjunction with the 4-H Washtenaw County staff, reserve the right to bypass other dismissal procedures and immediately dismiss the member family from the HAA 4-H Club. Immediate dismissal, in such an unusual case, would be followed by a letter from the HAA board, addressed to the former member family and the Washtenaw County 4-H Office, documenting the events leading up to the dismissal. No refunds of membership fees, 4-H fees, or class fees will be made.

Thanks for taking the time to read the packet. If you have any questions, please contact [info@haa4h.com](mailto:info@haa4h.com).