Homeschoolers of Pinellas

Family Handbook Fall 2026

Homeschoolers of Pinellas Family Handbook
Table of Contents

How to Register for HOP	3
Drop/Add Policy	3
Family Responsibilities	4
Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch Rules	5
Classroom Policies	5
Schedule	6
Background Check Policy	6
Policy on Bullying and Harassment	7
Weather (and Other) Emergencies	9
Illness in the Family	9
Lice Policy	9
Volunteering	9
Facebook Group	10
Play Areas	10
Lunch	10
Clean Up	10
Photo Policy	10
Liability Waiver and Release Acknowledgement	12

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Policies & Procedures (Updated May 2025)

How to HOP *Please read carefully before registering.*

- Complete your background check (see page 6)
- Review the class descriptions and semester schedule with your child(ren) and discuss which classes they might be interested in taking.
- Attend the Meet and Greet on August 12, 2026.
- Register for classes online on our website
    - 8/12 MVP volunteers registration
    - 8/13 teacher registration
    - 8/14 for returning families in good standing
    - 8/15 @ 10am for new families
- Go to your email. Look for your welcome email.
    - Fill out our Volunteer Form at www.homeschoolersofpinellas.com. Each registered family volunteers for at least one spot, which is a total of about 6 hours of volunteer time per semester.
    - Join our private facebook group
- Join us for our "Not Back to School Bash" (8/19).
- Attend classes on our first day- 8/26
    - Pay teachers on or before their first class the entire fee for the class. Please put your check or cash in an envelope and clearly mark the student(s) name and class name or pay online or pay electronically as instructed by teachers.
- Enjoy the semester! Make friends, learn new things, and enjoy the HOP community and make sure you complete your volunteer hours! Please be sure to regularly check Facebook and our website for ongoing events and field trips.

Registering for Classes: Registering for classes is simple. We use an online registration system that runs through our website. Please DO NOT use a mobile device to attempt registration, as it often causes errors in the process that will delay registration. We suggest you plan to be at home near a computer when registration opens. Please note that some popular classes fill quickly. At the time of registration, be prepared to pay the family registration fee of $50 and $4 per class admin fee. No fees are due to teachers at this time. If you are having problems with registration: make sure you are not on a mobile device, try using a different browser or clear your cache.

Drop/Add Policy

Registering your family for classes is a commitment. Please review classes thoroughly. We kindly ask that you try to avoid making changes after submitting your registration. If your child decides they don't want to take a class before the semester starts, please let us know as soon as possible so the spot can be made available for other students.

We do allow students to drop classes after attending the first class of the semester if the child realizes the class is not a good fit for them. The deadline to drop a class and receive a refund (minus the prorated fee for the first class) is 12:00pm on the Monday following the first day of classes (check the current semester's schedule for the exact date). Failure to drop a class by the deadline will result in full responsibility for the entire class fee. This allows the student to try one class to decide if it is a good fit. An exception to this policy would be a family will not receive a refund for dropped classes if the drop puts the teacher below the minimum number of required students for the class. Please be aware of this exception before registering. If you decide to stop attending classes after the drop period has passed, your family will still owe the full fee for each registered class.

How to Add, Drop or Waitlist a Class: As soon as you know you want to drop/add/wait-list, please email the admin team. If you want to add an additional class after registering, you can simply register for that one (or more) class(es). You may add a class at any time during the semester, as available, through Zeffy. You do not have to pay the registration fee more than once. In order to drop a class or get on the wait-list for a class, please immediately send an email to homeschoolersofpinellas@gmail.com. *Do NOT email the teacher directly.* Verbal requests to drop/add/wait-list will not supersede the email sent to admins.

Before each semester begins, please review the following responsibilities together as a family:

Family Responsibilities

Children should never be left unattended. A reminder that all students must have a parent or guardian on property. It is the parent's responsibility to watch their child(ren) and/or know where their children are.

If you need to leave the premises without your children, you must designate a responsible adult to care for them in your absence. A sign-out sheet is available in the common room for this purpose. For safety and insurance reasons, signing out to another adult is mandatory.

In the event of a fire or if the fire alarm goes off – teachers, parents and students are all to meet at the FIRE SAFETY SPOT, labeled on all HOP Maps. Everyone is required to stay in the FIRE SAFETY SPOT until the campus is cleared for re-entry.

Children not in classes may not disrupt classes in session. Please be sure to plan to keep kids occupied.

ALL areas of the facility, including the outside property, must be respected at all times.

Be respectful to campus employees and listen to their directions/instructions.

All families should read and adhere to our Policy on Bullying and Harassment and report all violations to The Planning Team. ALL HOP members, including children, must be respected at all times.

Bullying or fighting will not be tolerated. Parents and teachers are encouraged to gently help children resolve interpersonal issues. Please refrain from yelling, shaming, or physically punishing your child while at HOP.

Please remember that our teachers take great pride in teaching our children and they ask that you try your best to attend all 12 classes. Teachers need to start their classes on time, so please be respectful and make sure your child(ren) are in class on time as to not disrupt the pace of the class and attention of the students.

Please arrange to pick up your children who are age 5 and under after each class ends and help them to get to the next class. We are a community. We all need to pay attention and help guide our kids according to the rules above.

Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch rules

No climbing of trees, buildings or other structures on property
No picking fruit from the fruit trees on property
No running inside the building
No playing with the rocks
No walking or playing in the yards of the homes on the property
No entering the pool without permission *and* a lifeguard on duty
All families must be off property by 3:15pm

Classroom Policies

Our teachers are not permitted to use any punitive systems in the classroom.
Both teachers and students should be treated respectfully and kindly at all times.
Parents, along with members of the Planning Team, are welcome to sit in on classes.

Teachers are expected to manage their classrooms. If a student is being disruptive in any way, teachers are expected to address that behavior immediately with the student. If the behavior persists, they should notify the parent and HOP admin as soon as possible (must be before the next class). The parent will need to sit in for the next class. If the altercation is violent or involves bullying, one of the Planning Team will need to be in attendance during a parent/teacher meeting prior to the next class. If the behavior continues after the parent/teacher/planning team meeting, the child will be dismissed from the class for the remainder of the semester without a refund. Depending on the severity the family may be asked not to return to HOP without a refund.

What is considered disruptive? This will vary somewhat depending on the nature of the class, but it includes any behavior that has an adverse effect on at least one other classmate. If the behavior inhibits another child's ability to concentrate on the class or enjoy the class, it is considered disruptive. If the teacher is having to ask repeatedly for the child to stop, the child is disruptive. This can include talking, passing notes, moving around the classroom when not appropriate, cell phone usage, or any behavior a teacher deems inappropriate for the classroom setting.

What is considered verbal bullying? The definition of verbal bullying is when an individual uses verbal language (e.g., insults, teasing, etc) to gain power over his or her peers. This could be simple words such as dummy, stupid, trash, wimp, sissy, etc. It can also include harmful phrases such as "you're so gay" or "man-up". There are limitless ways in which someone could use verbal insults (intended to harm or not) and it is up to the teacher to recognize words that are not part of the learning environment.

Teachers who are not sure about a particular situation are encouraged to speak to someone on the Planning Team for assistance.

Teachers are expected to arrive before class begins and be prepared to start on time. They are responsible for teaching all 12 weeks of the semester. In case of emergency they are to notify the Planning Team immediately. A substitute will be provided and will use a lesson prepared in advance by the teacher.

Schedule

HOP meets on Wednesdays during two 12-week semesters each year (Fall and Spring). Each Wednesday includes five class periods and two lunch breaks. Attendance for every class period is not required- families can select the classes they're interested in. HOP operates from 9:00am-2:50pm. Only reset crew, volunteers cleaning and teachers who are cleaning up should be on campus after the end of 5th period.

Class Periods
Period 1 9:00 – 9:50
Period 2 10:00 – 10:50
Period 3A 11:00 – 11:50
Period 3B 12:00 – 12:50
Period 4 1:00 – 1:50
Period 5 2:00 – 2:50

Background Check Policy

To ensure a safe and secure environment for all children, Homeschoolers of Pinellas requires Background checks for all adults who will be regularly present on campus or involved in student activities.

Background checks must be completed and on file before participating in any capacity that involves student interaction. This check includes fingerprinting and a national criminal history review, as required by Florida state law for positions of trust involving children. If you are unsure whether your role requires a background check, please contact the Planning Team for clarification. Please keep your lanyard in your car or with HOP admin so that you have it every week. Once cleared, adults will be issued a lanyard to wear while on campus, identifying them as having an approved background check on file. Wearing the lanyard is mandatory during all group activities and class days. To avoid delays or complications, please keep your lanyard in your car or with HOP administration so it's easily accessible when needed. If you arrive without your lanyard, you must check in manually with HOP admin and receive a temporary visitor pass for the day.

Policy on Bullying and Harassment

Notice: This policy may be revised at any time and is reviewed by the Planning Team prior to the beginning of each semester. The policy will be given to teachers before the beginning of each semester and will be posted on our website for all families and volunteers to read before the semester begins. This policy covers conduct that takes place on the premises of the HOP (at the North Dunedin Baptist Church). It also covers conduct which occurs at any HOP-sponsored activity, regardless of location. This policy also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs at HOP and at HOP-sponsored functions and activities, and on computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists used at any HOP-sponsored activity, including the HOP Facebook Group and the HOP Semester Facebook Group. This policy applies to the entire HOP community, including teachers, the Planning Team, students, parents and volunteers.

Definitions: Bullying: "Bullying and Harassment" means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more people to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the person(s) in reasonable fear of physical or psychological harm. This includes conduct that is based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the above mentioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

Reporting Bullying and Harassment: All allegations of bullying or harassment shall be reported to a Planning Team member as soon as is reasonably possible. Planning Team members will investigate the allegation as soon as possible and will determine what action to take. (Actions described below in the section on *Discipline and Remediation*). Parents may or may not be notified, at the discretion of the Planning Team, according to the health, well-being, confidentiality, and safety of all involved parties. The Planning Team will be responsible for doing everything, within reason, to resolve the situation. *Any student, volunteer or teacher who observes an act of bullying or harassment is required to report the bullying or harassment to the Planning Team.*

Anonymous Reporting: While reports may be filed anonymously, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness and vigor as other reports and disciplinary action can occur based on the results of the investigation. You can anonymously report bullying or harassment on our website: www.homeschoolersofpinellas.com

False Reports: People who file false reports of bullying or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.

Teacher & Planning Team Responsibility: All teachers and members of the Planning Team will take reasonable measures to prevent bullying and harassment and are obligated to report any such acts that come to their attention. All teachers and members of the Planning Team are expected to take action whenever they observe bullying, harassment, physical violence or hate language.

Retaliation: Retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying or harassment or toward those investigating the incident (the Planning Team) will not be tolerated.

Discipline and Remediation: Consequences should be consistent, reasonable, fair, age appropriate and match the severity of the incident. We believe that enforcement of anti-bullying policies should ideally focus on education and prevention rather than exclusionary discipline. When all parties to the incident are amenable, mediation may be used as an alternative to, or in addition to, disciplinary action. The decision as to whether mediation or disciplinary action is used is at the discretion of the Planning Team, and depends on the severity of the incident and the safety of all involved.

Disciplinary actions for bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Warning
- Notification of parents
- Requirement of parental supervision during one or more class(es)
- Requirement of constant parental supervision while at HOP
- Loss of the right to attend one or more class(es)
- Loss of the right to attend HOP or other HOP-sponsored activities
- Loss of membership to our HOP Facebook Group

Training and Prevention: Everyone is given a copy of this policy at the beginning of each semester and are given instructions on how to make a report. Families must read the short version of HOP's Policy on Bullying and Harassment on the Policies page of our website prior to registering. This longer version of our policy is linked to and available to read on our site, in addition to being available in the files section of our Facebook Group page. Teachers are also

given information on the prevention of bullying and on how to respond to hate language at the beginning of each semester.

Weather (and Other) Emergencies

In case of emergencies, the Planning Team may be forced to close HOP. These types of closures are generally not under our control and happen only when the Planning Team feels strongly that it is the best decision for safety and/or the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch closes their property. A "Hurricane Makeup Day" is scheduled during the Fall semester for these types of closures. The Planning Team seeks to avoid these types of closures if at all possible. If a family is unable to attend the Hurricane Makeup Day, teachers will not be required to issue refunds for classes. To be kept abreast of weather related emergencies and other important announcements, please be sure you join our registered-only Facebook group at the beginning of each semester, and check the group before coming to HOP each week.

Illness in the Family

As a general policy, if you or your child is not feeling well or has had vomiting, diarrhea or fever in the last 24 hours please do not come to HOP. Some of our members have health issues such as compromised immune systems. HOP will always inform its members if we suspect a serious illness has been brought to HOP.

Lice Policy

If your family discovers you are affected by lice, please notify a HOP Planning Team member immediately so that we can let our families know to check their children. In order to protect the privacy of the child who has lice, please do not post directly to the group. Please be sure to follow a thorough treatment protocol and be sure to remove all lice/nits before attending classes again. Continue to check the heads of your entire family for 14 days after treatment to be sure that you have successfully removed the lice. About other children: If you suspect another child may have lice because you have seen them, please talk to a HOP administrator and let us know. We will ask the parent to please check immediately. We are happy to talk with anyone that has concerns and encourage you to come to us if you do.

Volunteering

We know parents want to be involved with their children. It's why you are working hard to homeschool them. For HOP to run smoothly, it is imperative that all families are involved in running HOP. We need each family to volunteer their time each semester. **Every registered family needs to volunteer for at least one spot, which is a total of about 6 hours of volunteer time per semester.** Once your family has determined your class schedule, please sign up on the volunteer form for the times that work best for you. Please note, you may not get the time slot that is easiest for your family. There are few exceptions to volunteering, ie. teachers who are *not* HOP parents. All volunteers must sign in on the official Volunteer Sign-In Sheet for their hours to be recorded and counted. Families who choose not to fulfill their volunteer hours may opt to "buy-out" their requirement with a $150 fee. If volunteer hours are not completed and the buy-out fee is not paid,

the family will be considered not in good standing for the following semester and will be ineligible for registration. If volunteering presents a challenge for your family, please contact us.

Facebook Group

Our community Facebook group is used for disseminating immediate information and info on events. You can find the page at https://www.facebook.com/groups/Homeschoolersofpinellas/and request to follow. Once you follow our main Facebook page and register your family for classes, you will be invited to join our registered-only Facebook Group for the current semester. It is a secret group used for families that have registered for classes during the current semester. This group allows us to communicate important information to registered families, such as teacher absences, class cancellations, last minute teacher requests, or issues with the weather. When you register for classes, you will be emailed to join. While it is optional, we highly recommend joining and checking the group before HOP day each week. If you choose not to join the current semester's Facebook Group, you will miss important and timely announcements!

Play Areas

Our HOP location, Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch, has several open areas where children are free to play and socialize when they aren't in class. There is also a playground located on property. Parents need to continuously supervise children in these locations

Lunch

There will be two lunch breaks- from 11:00-11:50 and 12:00-12:50. You can pack your own lunch or there will be pizza, soup, drinks and snacks available for purchase. There will be a pizza sign-up sheet at the information table in the morning every week. Please sign up for pizza by 10:15 a.m. We also allow families to sign up for pizza the evening before each HOP day by posting on a thread in our private semester Facebook group. We will also have a sign-up for members to make and sell soup during lunch. The money for soup goes directly to the soup makers. We are asking for 3 soups each week; one vegan, one vegan/gluten-free and the other can be anything. They will sell for $5/bowl. To sign-up for soup visit the *Soup Sign Up* page on our website.

Clean Up

We are responsible for returning the campus property better than we found it. Please be sure to clean up any messes you or your kids make, this includes spills, stains, crumbs, trash etc. We would appreciate your help picking up trash, sweeping, and tidying the rooms throughout the day.

Photo Policy

Photos may be taken during classes, group activities and events to celebrate and share with our community. These photos may be shared in our private Facebook group, which is limited to current participating families. Occasionally, photos may also be shared on our public Facebook page or website to highlight the fun and learning happening at our group. If you do not wish for your child's photo to be shared publicly, please notify us in writing or by signing the *Photo Opt-Out*

Form. We will make every effort to exclude your child from public posts. Thank you for helping us showcase the wonderful experiences of our homeschool community!

Photo Opt-Out Form

If you do NOT give permission for your child's photo to be shared publicly (on our public Facebook page or website), please complete and sign the form below. No action is required if you consent to public photo sharing.

I do NOT give permission for my child(ren)'s photo(s) to be shared publicly.
(Sharing in the private Facebook group is still permitted unless otherwise noted.)

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Child(ren)'s Name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Homeschoolers of Pinellas (HOP) Liability Waiver and Release Acknowledgement

Location: Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch 3180 Enterprise Road E, Safety Harbor, Florida 34695

Acknowledgement of Risk

I understand that participation in Homeschoolers of Pinellas (HOP) classes, events, and activities may involve inherent risks, including but not limited to: accidents, illness, injury, or property damage. I acknowledge that these risks cannot be entirely eliminated, even with proper supervision.

Waiver & Release

In consideration of my child(ren) being allowed to participate in HOP classes, events, and activities at 3180 Enterprise Rd E Safety Harbor, Fl 34695 and at any other HOP-sponsored locations:

1. I voluntarily release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless **Homeschoolers of Pinellas (HOP), its organizers, volunteers, agents, property owners, and affiliates** from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action related to any loss, damage, or injury (including death) that may occur while participating.
2. This waiver applies whether the injury is caused by negligence or otherwise, to the fullest extent permitted by Florida law.

Medical Authorization

I authorize HOP volunteers to administer basic first aid and, if necessary, arrange emergency medical treatment for my/our child(ren). I/We understand that every reasonable effort will be made to contact me/us prior to such treatment, and I/we accept responsibility for any resulting medical expenses.