

Homeschool Instructional Support

(H.I.S.)

Family Handbook

2014-2015

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NLT) And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

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Homeschool Instructional Support is a co-operative effort among parents to provide classes that meet once a week for the purpose of providing instruction in core subject areas as well as supplementary and elective areas. The program has been in existence since 2005. Currently the classes meet at First Baptist Church in Brazoria on Tuesdays from August through May. Assisting families with high school course requirements was the main reason this co-op was developed. Classes for all ages have always been part of the program to assist teachers and families in areas where they are less confident or where a group setting is more appropriate for learning. Many families have stated that the classes have met an academic need, provided social opportunities, and helped in meeting transcript requirements. Registration is required to take part in the classes. Fees are collected, and supply / copy costs and curriculum may be required to take part in the classes. Registration for the classes takes place in the summer for the fall classes, and in November-December for the spring classes. At this time, there are no mid-semester registrations.

TEXAS

Alternative Statutes Allowing for Home Schools: Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 25.086(a)(1).

1. “Any child in attendance upon a private or parochial school which shall include in its course a study of good citizenship” is exempt from the requirements of compulsory attendance. Since this law does not specifically mention home schooling, the Texas Education Agency announced that homeschooling was illegal in 1985. After over 80 innocent home school families were criminally prosecuted for truancy, HSLDA joined with other homeschool plaintiffs to file a class action suit against every school district in Texas (over 1,000). The class action suit, *Leeper v. Arlington Indep. School Dist.*, No. 17-88761-85 Tarrant County 17th Judicial Ct. Apr. 13, 1987), resulted in a trial level decision in favor of home schooling. The court ruled that:
 - a. Home schools can legally operate as private schools in Texas;
 - b. Article 7, section 2 of the Texas Constitution only authorizes the legislature to establish and maintain public education, not private or parochial education (*Leeper*, Slip Op. At 10);
 - c. Homeschools must be conducted in a bona fide manner, using a written curriculum consisting of reading, spelling, grammar, math and a course in good citizenship; **no other requirements apply.**
 - d. The court ruled that the interpretation of the law cannot be left to each criminal prosecution. “If arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement is to be prevented, laws must provide explicit standards for those who apply them.” Slip Op. at 9. Therefore, the court interpreted the law based on the historical treatment of homeschooling. “The evidence

establishes that from the inception of the first compulsory attendance law in Texas in 1915, it was understood that a school-age child who was being educated in or through the child’s home, and in a bona fide manner by the parents ... was considered a private school....”

- e. “This judgment does not preclude the Texas Education Agency, the Commissioner of Education, or the State Board of Education from suggesting to the public school attendance officers lawful methods, including but not limited to inquiry concerning curricula and standardized test scores, in order to ascertain if there is compliance with the declaration contained in this judgment.” *Leeper*, Final Judgment at 13. *Texas TX-2*
 - f. On November 27, 1991, the Court of Appeals of Texas completely affirmed the *Leeper* case. (See *Texas Education Agency, et al. v. Leeper, et al.*, 843 S.W.2d 41 [Tex. App. – Ft. Worth 1991]). The Court stated that the Texas Education Agency “deprived the home school parents of equal protection under the law” since their private schools in the home were unfairly discriminated against “on the sole basis of location in the home,” rather than outside the home. The court emphasized “that initiation of prosecution of plaintiff parents violates the parents’ equal protection rights by establishing an unreasonable and arbitrary classification of parents which is not rationally related to any state interest.”
 - g. On June 15, 1994, the Texas Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the Court of Appeals decision in *Texas Educational Agency, et al. v. Leeper, et al.* (893 S.W. 2d 432, 1994) clearly settling the issue: “homeschools” can operate as private schools under the law.
2. On October 4, 1995, Mike Moses, Commissioner of Education, issued a memo on homeschools stating, “It is the current opinion of the Commissioner of Education and the Texas Education Agency Legal Counsel that a written statement of assurance, provided by the parents to the school district, meets

the requirements of *Leeper* and verifies compliance with compulsory attendance laws.”

3. As a result of the *Leeper* decision, home schools do *not* have to initiate contact with a school district, submit to home visits, have curriculum approved or have any specific teacher certification. Home schools need only have a written curriculum, conduct it in a bona fide manner and teach math, reading, spelling, grammar, and good citizenship.
4. Two important developments were successfully lobbied by HSLDA which curtail the powers of the Child Protective Service against homeschooling: a) social worker training mandate: “It is the intent of the Legislature that the training curriculum for CPS Caseworkers funded out of Strategy A.1.2, Child and Family Services, include instruction in the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and parents' rights,” (Texas House Bill 1, 2003), and b) Parental Rights Act: “A state agency may not adopt rules or policies or take any other action that violates the fundamental right and duty of a parent to direct the upbringing of the parent's child.” Tex. Fam. Code § 151.003.
5. Homeschool graduates are specifically protected by law from discrimination by Texas colleges: “Because the State of Texas considers successful completion of a nontraditional secondary education to be equivalent to graduation from a public high school, an institution of higher education must treat an applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate student who presents evidence that the person has successfully completed a nontraditional secondary education according to the same general standards as other applicants for undergraduate admission who have graduated from a public high school.” Texas Education Code, Chapter 51, Subchapter Z, Section 51.9241.

Standardized Tests: None. The court in *Leeper* specifically stated that the school district could not mandate standardized testing.

Religious Freedom Act: Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 110.001 et seq.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), passed with the help of HSLDA members, gives religious home schoolers another legal means to protect their right to home school. If the parents’ free exercise of religion is substantially burdened by having to comply with the homeschool law, the parents may use the RFRA as a defense or file suit against the state. Under this statute, the burden is on the state to prove that its requirement “furthers a compelling state interest” and is the “least restrictive means” of fulfilling its interest that children be educated. This Act restores the highest protection of the individual's right to freely exercise his religious beliefs taken away by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1997 City of Boerne decision. 521 U.S. 507.

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Statement of Purpose and Faith:

We believe:

1. That the Holy Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, is the only inspired, infallible, inerrant and authoritative written Word of God (II Tim. 3:15-16; II Peter 1:21),
2. That there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gen 1:1, Matt. 28:19; John 10:30),
3. In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, his virgin birth, his sinless life, his miracles, his vicarious and atoning death through his shed blood, his bodily resurrection, his ascension to the right hand of the Father, and his personal return in power and glory (John 10:30),
4. That for the salvation of the lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary (John 3:16-19, John 5:24, Rom 3:23, Rom 5:8-9),
5. That a person is justified by grace alone, through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-10, Titus 3:3-7),
6. In the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Rom 8:13-14, I Cor. 3:16, I Cor. 6:19-20, Eph. 4:30, Eph. 5:18),
7. In the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—those who are saved, unto the resurrection of life, and those who are lost, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29),
8. In the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ and his church (Rom. 8:9, I Cor. 12:12-13, Gal. 3:26-28).

All classes within the H.I.S. program are taught with a distinctly Christian worldview.

In order to adhere to the vision of the H.I.S. program, it is understood that anyone who becomes involved with the program in a teaching or classroom monitoring capacity shall believe in the above mentioned statement of faith in its entirety. It is also understood that the teachings and principles of H.I.S. are to be consistent with these beliefs.

Enrollment and Payment Policies

By registering for classes and paying your registration fee of \$35.00 per child per semester, you are agreeing to have your child attend sixteen sessions of the selected courses. We will make every attempt to help you match your child with the courses that are appropriate for him/her. If you begin a course and then see that you do not wish to continue it for any reason, you **MUST** notify both the director and the teacher of the course by the third class meeting to drop the course. **Courses dropped by the 3rd class session are subject to a refund. After the 3rd class, if you choose to drop the class, you will be expected to pay for all sixteen sessions of the semester.** All registration fees and copy/curriculum fees are non-refundable. All curriculum, copy, and supply fees must be paid at the time of registration. These are non-refundable. Tuition (listed on the course description) must be paid in advance. These fees are to be paid by the semester. All payments should be in the form of a check made out to the individual teacher or cash inside a clearly marked envelope that has the student's name, class name, payment amount, and dates covered by the payment on it. The teachers use the information on the envelope to record cash payments. These payments are to be turned in to the teacher on or before the first day of class. If you experience a financial hardship that may cause you to fall behind in making your payments, please let the teacher know as soon as you can.

Attendance

An enrolled student is expected to attend every class session. If your student is unable to attend due to illness or out of town trip, you need to notify the teacher prior to the absence and make arrangements to pick up any handouts and assignments for that day. For any other absences, please notify the teacher as soon as possible to collect any missed assignments or turn in any work due during the missed class. Teachers prepare, make lesson plans, copy handouts, and grade papers for your child every week whether he attends or not. It also requires extra time to make adjustments for an absent student. Therefore, the teacher must be paid for each session of the course even if a student is absent.

Check-In / Out Procedures

Formal check-in and check-out procedures will be followed during weekly class activities. Students under legal driving age must be checked in and out by the noted responsible adult(s) only, unless advanced, written parental consent is received and accepted by the Director of another arrangement.

Communication with Teachers

Please check with your student each week to see if information has been sent home to you from the teachers. Teachers may communicate to you through notes, by phone, or by e-mail. Since some teachers have several students in a number of classes, communication by email is the most effective way to reach your child's teacher. It is essential

that you check your email several times a week to view information from your child's teacher(s).

If you need to talk to a teacher on the day of class, please make arrangements to meet the teacher after they have taught their last class of the day or contact them by phone or email. This will ensure that their other classes are not delayed or interrupted.

Homework and School Items

All assigned homework is expected to be completed to the best of the student's ability and turned in on time. **High school level (for credit) course teachers cannot accept late work. Students will receive a zero for assignments that are not completed or turned in on time.** Lower level course teachers may choose to accept late work, but are not required to do so and may deduct points for lateness. If you have a family emergency or extreme situation that needs extra consideration in this area, the parent needs to contact the teacher as soon as possible to request an exemption to this policy.

Each student needs to bring all class textbooks, notebooks, and supplies to each session. **Teachers are not responsible for items left at classes.** Students must also take responsibility for taking all class items home with them. We suggest a backpack or rolling backpack to be used to hold these items. Being unable to complete home assignments because items were left behind will not be accepted as an excuse for failing to turn in assignments on time.

Cheating

If a teacher requires the purchase of an answer key to facilitate parent grading or checking of homework, the parent must endeavor to prevent the student from having access to the answer key (especially for quizzes and tests). Some students may 'test' the boundaries of supervision in this area. If a student is found to have copied answers directly from the answer key, the teacher will contact the parent with the information. In the case that a student enrolled in a high school level class has copied answers from a teacher key, or passed that information to another student in any way, that student (and the one who received the answers) will receive a zero on that grade. The function of the H.I.S. program is to provide assistance to families in the education of their child(ren). Since copying answers from a teacher key does not in any way facilitate an education, it is therefore against the policy of H.I.S. A student who is discovered in the act of cheating or giving answers during class time will be dismissed to their parent for the remainder of the day. A conference between the parent, teacher, and director will precede the student coming back to classes. In the case where a student is found to have violated this policy a second time, the student will be dismissed from the H.I.S. program for the remainder of the semester.

Dress Code

General modesty is required at all times. To reduce the number of clothing guidelines needed, an H.I.S. monogrammed polo shirt must be purchased and worn to every class session. Be sure that you purchase the polo shirt in an appropriate size so that it fits loosely and continues to cover all areas even when moving or bending. Girls may wear

the polo shirt with a skirt (at least knee length with no slits that are higher than the knee), jeans, pants, or capri pants. Capris must cover the knees at all times, even when sitting. **Shorts may NOT be worn by either girls or boys to H.I.S.** Please, no "shrink-wrapped" jeans (skinny jeans/pants), capris, or skirts. Clothing with holes is NOT allowed. Shoes are required at all times. Heelys (or shoes with skate wheels) are not allowed at H.I.S. Earrings may be worn by girls only. No other piercings are allowed. If a student is not in compliance when they arrive at classes, they will not be permitted to attend class until they are dressed appropriately (as described in this section).

Prohibited Items

No pocket knives, weapons, toys, electronic games, recreational items, matches, lighters, air soft guns, or any other devices that could be distracting or potentially dangerous are to be brought to H.I.S. classes.

Students may not bring gum, candy, food, or drinks of any kind into the building. It is the parent's responsibility to check the student's mouths and persons for these items when bringing them to class. Again, this is an area where there will be a zero tolerance policy. Any student violating this policy may be sent home immediately. A repeat violation may lead to expulsion from the program.

It is the parent's responsibility to see that none of these prohibited items are brought into the building.

Behavior

In order to provide a safe and effective learning environment, students are expected to hold to the highest standards of behavior and character. Behaviors deemed unacceptable are bullying, name-calling, roughhousing, foul language, disrespect towards adults, bringing weapons to classes, refusal to obey authorities, cheating, or fighting (this is not a complete list).

In the event that serious action is necessary (other than general classroom corrections), the following procedure will be enforced: 1st action: a verbal warning with parent notification. 2nd action: the child is released to the parent. 3rd action: the child is suspended without reimbursement.

Parental Involvement

As a co-operative, H.I.S. relies on the support of each and every parent. Your involvement is required as part of the opportunity afforded your child(ren) to attend class(es). We encourage you to assist as your schedule will allow, but **require one hour per week of volunteer work** within the following categories:

- Classroom monitor
- Building set-up and re-set(beginning and end of day)
- Clean up
- Check-in and out/Study Hall monitor

Background Checks and Training

For those individuals who will be working closely with students, namely teachers and classroom monitors, H.I.S., in cooperation with FBC, is requiring all volunteers to participate in background checks. These checks will only screen for convictions related to child / domestic abuse. Subsequent training for proper classroom procedures involving children will be required as well.

Required Paperwork

To complete your registration for classes, you must complete the following forms:

Registration form (once per semester)

Release of Liability and Agreement for Mediation

Consent for Medical Care

Agreement to Check-In / Out Procedures

Consent to Background Check and Training (if applicable)

Volunteer Application

Guideline Checklist

Photo Release Form

Payment for registration is payable to H.I.S. and due in order for registration to be initiated. You will be issued a receipt. Payments for tuition and copy/supply fees are due beginning on the first day of class and are payable to the individual teachers.

Information about graduation requirements provided by Brazosport Area Home School Graduation Committee.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS for participating in the graduation ceremony conducted by BAHSGC.

- AGE: Students must be 16 years of age, or be accepted by an accredited college or junior college.
- Students should have a minimum of 26 credits for graduation, of which at least 50% (2 years OR 13 credits) should be derived from a home school conducted in a bona fide manner.

BAHSG ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Students should have the Recommended Course Study of 26 credits for participation in BAHSG program, of which at least 50% (13 credits) OR 2 years out of the last 5 schooling at home, should be derived from a home school conducted in a bona fide manner.

2014 Recommended Course Study

Rec.(21)

English	4
Math (Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and a fourth math)	4
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and one additional science)	4
Social Studies (World History, World Geography & US History)	3
Government	0.5

Economics	0.5
Physical Education	1
Foreign Language	2
Fine Arts	1
Speech	0.5
Health	0.5

Electives (5)

TOTAL 26

Elective suggestions include but are not limited to: Bible; Drivers Education; Technology Applications: Computer; Multi Media Technology; Career or Work Program. Overages from academic courses such as English, Math, Science, Social Studies or Career Related Courses may count as Electives.

**IPC – Intergraded Physics and Chemistry Students that entered 9th grade in the 2011-12 school year and took the IPC course may use it as a Science credit. Student that took the course in subsequent years will use it as an academic elective. Students entering 9th grade in 2012 and after need one year of Chemistry and one year of Physics.*