



The Community Organization for Near West Homeschoolers

Electronic Communications Terms Of Use

Overview

As a non-profit organization that is inclusive to all homeschoolers in the Chicagoland area, the Community Organization for Near West Homeschoolers (the “Organization”) will enforce the following Terms of Use for any communication, content, or events posted to any of the group’s private or public electronic platforms.

These Terms of Use have been devised in an effort to adhere to and protect the Organization’s 509(a)(2) (“Public Charity”) status and to advance and support its mission of providing education enrichment activities for homeschooled children.

Terms of Use

01. Purpose.

Electronic communication, along with the applications and technology that support it, is an area of rapid development that can be challenging to manage and moderate. Thus, it is important for the Organization to provide guidelines for the Organization’s leadership, registered families and volunteers.

Instead of focusing on specific technology or applications, the intention of this document is to present guidelines that can apply to all variations; these guidelines will apply to all electronic communication used by leaders of or families enrolled in the Organization. It will apply when such communication is

initiated by leaders of the organization or takes place in an electronic method moderated by the organization.

The specific purposes of these Terms of Use are:

- a. To establish guidelines for Organization leaders to use when disseminating information to currently-registered families or to the public;
- b. To establish guidelines for Organization leaders to use when moderating electronic communication platforms; and
- c. To define expected conduct of registered families when participating in the Organization's electronic communication platforms.

02. Definitions.

- a. *Electronic communication:* All forms of electronic dissemination of content and/or electronic discussion used by the Organization, including, but not limited to:
 - i. The organization's website
 - ii. The organization's use of the group communication software applications, such as "Band" or similar software
 - iii. All organization-sponsored emails to current and prospective members
 - iv. The organization's event calendars, both private for currently registered families or published publicly
 - v. File-sharing applications, such as the Organization-moderated Google for NonProfits (and its associated Google Drive).
- b. *Organization:* Any individual acting on behalf of The Community Organization of Near West Homeschoolers in an official capacity, such as Board Members or volunteers.
- c. *Public information:*
 - i. Any information published to publicly-available sites, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Social Media sites
 - 2. the Organization's public website
 - 3. the Organization's public calendar
 - 4. Any other electronic means of communication
 - ii. Any information sent via email to people that are not currently part of a Registered Family, such as:

1. Email marketing campaigns sent to the Friends-Of email list
 2. Direct emails sent from the Organization's email address(es) to one or more people
 3. Any other electronic means or platform used to send information directly to individuals or families
- d. *Personal Identifiable Information (PII)*: Any representation of information that permits the identity of an individual to whom the information applies to be reasonably inferred by either direct or indirect means. This includes, but may not be limited to, personal identification numbers (social security number (SSN), passport number, driver's license number, taxpayer identification number, patient identification number, financial account number, or credit card number), personal address information (street address, or email address), and personal telephone numbers.
- e. *Registered family*: Any member of a currently-enrolled family. Families will be considered "enrolled" as followed:
- i. If registration has been submitted and dues have been received for Fall Session, a family will be considered "enrolled" from the first day of that year's Fall Session until the day prior to the first day of that year's Winter/Spring Session. This period is roughly September-December.
 - ii. If registration has been submitted and dues have been received for Winter/Spring Session, a family will be considered "enrolled" from the first day of that year's Winter/Spring Session until the day prior to the first day of the next year's Fall Session. This period is roughly January-August.

03. Audiences.

These guidelines are intended for the following audiences:

- a. Organization leaders and volunteers who:
 - i. are charged with creating and/or updating any of the Organization's electronic communications and/or electronic forums;

- ii. participate in any of the Organization's electronic communications and/or forums; and/or
 - iii. participate in and/or promote the Organization and its mission in/on non-Organization electronic communications, social media sites, and/or forums.
- b. Members of registered families who:
 - i. participate in any of the Organization's electronic communications and/or forums; and/or
 - ii. participate in and/or promote the Organization and its mission in/on non-Organization electronic communications, social media sites, and/or forums.

04. Prohibited Uses

To adhere to and protect the Organization's 509(a)(2) ("Public Charity") status and to advance and support its mission of providing education enrichment activities for homeschooled children, the following uses are Prohibited:

- a. The Organization and Registered Families **may not** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information or events endorsing candidates, contributing to political campaigns or participating in any activity that may be deemed political. This includes any events or other content aiming to promote any specific candidate or political view.
- b. The Organization and Registered Families **may not** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information or events endorsing specific political viewpoints or agendas. This includes any events or other content aimed at promoting a specific political party or agenda.
- c. The Organization and Registered Families **may not** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information or events related to any specific religion or religious institution.
- d. The Organization and Registered Families **may not** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information or event that is personal in nature and unrelated to the

mission of the Organization (for example, information about birthday parties, personal fundraising activities, etc).

05. Permitted Uses

06. The Organization and Registered Families **may** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information related to the day-to-day operations of the Organization, such as schedules, calendars, registration information, and other general Organizational information.
07. The Organization and Registered Families **may** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information related to educational enrichment activities, such as field trips, book clubs, and other educational opportunities open to Registered Families only or open to all homeschoolers.
08. The Organization and Registered Families **may** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information related to community-building activities open to Registered Families only or open to all homeschoolers, so long as all families are included.
- a. It is permissible to post information applicable only to a subset of Registered Families or the broader homeschooling community, such as “Teen Events”, so long as that information is based on official groupings also used within the Organization’s formal activities. (i.e. the Organization does not group individuals by gender and therefore gender cannot be used as a basis for inviting only a subset of individuals via electronic communication methods; the Organization does group individuals by age and therefore age may be used as a basis for inviting only a subset of individuals via electronic communication methods)

While information targeted at a subset of Registered Families is allowed, it should be done sparingly and only when appropriate for the activity, such as when posting a field trip that is appropriate for certain age groups.

09. The Organization and Registered Families **may** use electronic communication to disseminate, post, or communicate any information related to both Official Organization Sponsored Events and Information or

community events and information that may be of interest to Member Families.

- a. All policies in this document apply to both Official Co-op Events and Information and community events.
- b. All Official Organization Sponsored Events will include a disclaimer in the description that the event and/or information is an “Official Co-op Sponsored Event”. Any posted events without such disclaimer are NOT sponsored by the Organization and are included in the Organization’s electronic platforms for informational purposes only.
- c. Any comment threads, messages, or any other information posted or sent by individuals other than by a member of the Board in their official capacity as a Board Member, will be considered informal, non-sponsored communication.

10. Moderators

For any application or electronic communication method that is in a closed group and/or requires or allows specific users to be moderators:

- a. The Organization’s Board of Directors will appoint at least two board members as moderators. One board member will be appointed as the primary moderator and a second will be appointed as a back-up moderator.
- b. Moderators will be responsible for ensuring all information posted or communicated is consistent with the Terms of Use outlined in this document.
- c. Moderators shall remove any content that is inconsistent with the Terms of Use outlined in this document.
- d. Moderators will ensure only Registered Families are included in any closed or private groups. Users will be added and removed per the terms set forth in the Definition of “Registered Families” above.
- e. For all closed or private groups, the appointed moderator(s) will approve or deny any request to join the group to ensure users are limited to members of Registered Families only. No electronic

application or communication platform will be used by the Organization if it does not offer moderator approval of users.

- f. The Board of Directors of the Organization has complete authority to:
 - i. Approve use of or deny use of any software, tools, and electronic communication platforms by the Organization;
 - ii. Remove users from any or all platforms for violations of these Terms;
 - iii. Moderate all electronic applications, software, and tools used;
 - iv. Change the list of approved applications, tools, or platforms at any time without advance notice.

11. Security and Privacy

To ensure the security and privacy of the Organization's Registered Families, no Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be posted to any platform, software, or application or sent through electronic communication except as approved by the Board of Directors.

Any PII stored or communicated via electronic means will adhere to industry-standard privacy guidelines.

12. Required and Optional Electronic Communications Platforms for Registered Members

- a. *Required Use: Email.* The Organization strives to be as paperless as possible so as to reduce cost and waste. To this end, all Registered Members are required to supply an email address upon registration. All important information about the Organization's formal programs will be sent to this email address, and Registered Participants are expected to check the email regularly. Examples of information that may be sent through email are: weekly announcements during the formal co-op year, information on registration and payments, distribution of the co-op calendar, information on important events that are scheduled.

- b. *Required Use: Website.* The Organization uses its website as a way to make documents and other important information regarding its programs available to Registered Members. Registered Members may be required to submit information via forms hosted on the website (such as Registration forms or Expense Reimbursement Request forms) or to reference documents hosted there (such as the Handbook).
- c. *Optional Uses: All other electronic communication platforms.* Other electronic communication platforms, tools, or programs - besides email and the Organization's website - may be used to communicate informally within the group. Optional information and events may be posted to such platforms, but participating in these is not a requirement for participation in the Organization's formal co-op program. All formal or required communication will be done through email.

The Board of Directors reserves the right to modify the required methods of electronic communication at any time. If changes are made, email and/or the Organization's website will be used to communicate the updates to this policy.

If a Member is unsure if an event or content they wish to post is a permitted post, they are encouraged to seek clarification from the Board of Directors before posting.