



# Mt. Pleasant Home Education Association, Inc.

Handbook

The purpose of MPHEA is to build a community of like-minded Christian homeschooling families and to support them in their journey of training up the next generation. We seek to do this by gathering for social and academic events throughout the year and by sharing information about resources and opportunities for homeschoolers.

## **MPHEA MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Attend BOTH Spring and Fall business meetings:**
  - a. MPHEA is a member-driven group, the board needs to receive input from all members to make the best decision for the group.
  - b. Cannot attend? Let the President know beforehand.
  - c. Minutes from the business meetings will be available for members to access at any time.
  - d. *New Members ONLY*- Attend the Orientation meeting (in August) designed to answer questions and connect with families in the group.
2. **Serve on ONE committee for the year:**
  - a. Attending committee meetings or email correspondence
  - b. Help prepare for the event
  - c. Turn in receipts for money spent to the Committee Chairperson
  - d. Serve at a committee event, even if your child is not participating in that event
  - e. Some committees have a year round commitment, *i.e. Field Trips, Yearbook, Teen Outings, etc.*
  - f. Possibly Chair or Co-Chair the committee.
  - g. Cannot fulfill your role? Ask to switch committees or find someone to fill in for your event. You may apply to the MPHEA board for an exemption from this requirement on the basis of a different contribution to the group.
3. **Abide by MPHEA policy and policies of the facility, organization, or event; if policy conflicts, follow the stricter policy.**
4. **Supervise your children at all times:**
  - a. If prior arrangements have been made, an adult 18 years or older, can be assigned direct supervision of your children (please note that in the case of co-op, **a parent must participate on a weekly basis**, with the exception of a background-checked and approved by the co-op committee substitute).

## **Additional Ways to Participate:**

1. Attend or participate in any of our large group events (*pg.2*)
2. Chair or co-chair an MPHEA Committee (*pg.3 sect. 1*)
3. Organize, host, or participate in group events (*pg.3 sect. 2*)
  - a. Organize or Attend an educational field trip
  - b. Host or Attend a social event geared toward children (e.g. sledding, park day, etc.)
  - c. Coordinate or Participate in an MPHEA club (e.g. 4-H, book club, etc.)

- d. Host or Attend a party (e.g. Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.)
- e. Host or Attend a social event geared toward parents (e.g. Couples' Night Out, Mom's Night Out, Dad/Son Activity, Mom/Daughter Activity, Charlotte Mason Tea, etc.)
- f. Host or Attend a topical discussion group (e.g. curriculum, homeschooling high school, adoption, homeschooling elementary, homeschooling a large family, etc.)
- g. Plan or attend an event inviting a special speaker to share
- 4. Serve as a board member (pg. 5&6)
- 5. Join our private Facebook page. Contact the Member Administrator to be added.
- 6. Buy, sell, or share curriculum within the group
- 7. Participate in our weekly co-op

**MPHEA Committees:** (These are specifically sanctioned by MPHEA)

Large group events are committee-led and for members only, unless otherwise noted. Most events are "free" to members (covered by annual membership fees); some involve an additional cost (see below). MPHEA typically offers the following each school year:

**Kickoff (August/September):** "kicks off" our year and is designed for families to get reacquainted and meet new friends—bowling, putt-putt golf, an ice cream social, a potluck, or something else!

**Family Game Night (November):** Social event for MPHEA families. Families mingle over board games and some type of food.

**Spelling Bee (January):** Competitive event open to 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders in MPHEA, as well as from homeschooling families in the Gratiot-Isabella RESD or Clare-Gladwin RESD.

- 1. A judge, readers, and a timer facilitate this event.
- 2. A participation fee of \$5/student with a cap of \$10/family will apply to those outside of MPHEA.
- 3. The winner of the oldest group may be eligible to participate in the local Regional Spelling Bee.

**Science/History/International Fair (February):**

- 1. Open to all MPHEA students free of charge, VOH for \$5/students ( and cap of \$10/family).
- 2. Event may include a competitive element.
- 3. Students may enter projects in any "Fair" category!
- 4. Students may study and present a science project (display or experiment) at the fair, usually judged (judging may include a brief student interview and is sometimes optional).
- 5. Students may study and make a display on a country or history topic of their choice, then come to the fair ready to share; some may come in costume and/or bring a taste of a native dish.

**Art Show (March):** Open to MPHEA students to share and celebrate projects they've accomplished! May include table elements (books, binders, displays, constructions, homemade treats, etc.), wall elements (artwork), and "culinary creations."

**Showcase (April):** Open to MPHEA students to share their Creator-given talents with family and friends. This event typically includes stage elements (music, recitations, dance, drama, etc.).

**Field Day (May):** Organized "traditional" field day activities, i.e. sack or relay races, scavenger hunts, lawn games, etc., Open to 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders, sometimes includes children of all ages and their families. Any area homeschool family is welcome. May include a picnic afterward.

**Elementary Field Trip/Social (year-long):** provides the group with at least two field trips and two social events geared toward elementary aged children, most likely at additional cost.

**Jr./Sr. High Social Events (year-long):** provides MPHEA students in grades 6th-12th at least three opportunities to connect throughout the school year. Events may include: Canoeing, Disc golf or foot golf, sledding, a bonfire, etc., may come at additional cost. Additional events may include non-member homeschoolers, at the discretion of the committee.

**Co-op (year-long or more):** Available to all current MPHEA members at additional cost (for facilities and supplies), usually weekly throughout the school year. Parents of MPHEA cooperate to plan, organize, and teach a variety of classes to MPHEA students of all ages. The co-op committee is responsible for administrative tasks and for communicating with families. Committee members are chosen in the spring and may be asked to serve for two years at a time, or longer if willing.

**Yearbook (year-long):** Gathering information and pictures of the year's events of MPHEA families, then create, sell, and distribute a yearbook to interested MPHEA members (usually by Kickoff). The committee is encouraged to invite students to help with photography and other duties. May be run as a "Club."

**Chairing or Co-Chairing a Committee:**

Each committee consists of a chair (or two co-chairs) and perhaps additional members (the number of which depends on the need and the number of families in the group). The chairperson (or the co-chairs) is/are responsible for:

1. Calling meetings, delegating responsibilities, and ensuring the budget is followed;
2. Handling the committee bin (when applicable);
  - a. The bin provides helpful information or supplies for the event
  - b. The bin is available from the Vice President and should be returned shortly after the event
3. Write an after-event summary, including any information that may be helpful for future committees

A Large Group Event or other service could be dropped if no one will chair the event or if there is not adequate help but this is not often the case!

**Planning/Hosting Events:**

MPHEA offers only the events previously listed. Field trips or other social or educational events (for children, parents-only, or families) can be organized by **any member at any time!** When organizing an event, please add the event information to the SI Portal or email the Online Communications Coordinator with the following information if you would like help communicating with the group about the event:

1. Event description, date, time, location, who can attend, space limit (i.e. first ten to respond), and any other pertinent information, including if there is an additional cost since these events are not covered by the annual membership fees. The organizer is responsible for communicating or collecting any additional fees.
2. Communication regarding member-led events (RSVPs, sign-ups, etc.) can be maintained in the comments section of the event in SI.

3. MPHEA does not offer rides or carpooling to MPHEA-led events or to member-led events. Members are welcome to arrange rides/carpool among themselves, but please understand that this is outside the scope of MPHEA and not considered a part of MPHEA events or services.

**MPHEA Communication, Website, School Info Portal (SI), and Facebook:**

[MPHEA.org](http://MPHEA.org) is the new website for MPHEA. This site is intended to be a public-facing informational page for people looking for a homeschool co-op association. Here, interested parties can read our Statement of Faith, browse Frequently Asked Questions, Meet the Board, read the MPHEA Handbook, and contact the New Member Coordinator for more information about joining MPHEA. This site is an easy way to introduce potential new families to MPHEA and is allowed to be shared.

The School Info Online Portal (SI) is designed specifically for MPHEA members and must be logged into with an MPHEA member profile (which is created when a family is approved and accepted into MPHEA). Here, you'll find MPHEA directory information, announcements, events, and co-op classes & invoices. Registration for co-op classes and information about events will be hosted here, and a simplified email system allows for easy communication within MPHEA.

Our group also has a Facebook page (private, for current members). Sign up to have access to this page at the business meeting or contact the Member Administrator at any time.

Members that do not have internet access will be provided with a general list of events and projected dates at the beginning of the year. Though we will try our best to keep these members informed, it will be the responsibility of the member to confirm the dates and times of each event and to stay informed.

**MPHEA Child Protection Policy:**

We believe in creating a physically and emotionally healthy environment for everyone, students and teachers, therefore:

1. All classrooms used for MPHEA events must have a window in the door or the door remains open during class.
2. There must be a minimum of two adults present at any activity.
3. Parents should avoid one-on-one meetings with a child not of their family.
4. When accompanying a child/children into the bathroom, like at the weekly co-op, two adults must accompany the child/children. If an adult is assisting a child using the bathroom, the bathroom door and/or stall door should be left open so that the other adult has a clear line of sight. If a young child doesn't need assistance, one adult may accompany him to the bathroom and wait in the hallway. Older students (10 & up) may be sent to the bathroom one at a time. Though this policy may not be convenient, we believe protecting both parents and children is well worth it.

**Behavior Policy:**

The following is a list of the appropriate behavior that we expect from our members while participating in events, classes, and activities that involve other MPHEA members:

1. Parents are responsible for their children at all times. If prior arrangements have been made, an adult 18 years or older, can be assigned direct supervision of children.
2. Members must abide by the policies of the facilities and organizations that govern the spaces where MPHEA meetings, classes, and events are held.

3. Spaces should be stewarded well by cleaning up messes, replacing furniture, and turning off lights where necessary. Leave the space in better shape than when you arrived.
4. Be respectful of any staff that may be working in facilities during the meetings, classes, or events.
5. Members and children should treat one another with respect, kindness, and patience in our speech and actions.
6. Conflict Resolution Process: As a diverse group united by a common faith statement, conflicts between unique personalities and misunderstandings can occur. It is important to agree on how these things should be handled. We encourage members to prayerfully deal with conflict by seeking resolution as outlined in Matthew 18:
  - a. Go directly to the person with whom you have conflict and try to work out the issue.
  - b. If the issue is not solved to the satisfaction of both parties, or understanding cannot be reached, please seek an unbiased mediator to help (such as a teacher, co-op committee member, or a board member).
  - c. If the matter is still unresolved, as a last resort the matter will be brought to the MPHEA board for guidance. If the conflict continues to be a problem past this point, or either parties are unwilling to resolve the conflict or follow the guidance of the mediators/board, those members may possibly be removed from membership.

#### **Board Positions and Serving on the Board:**

Although some board positions may be better filled by someone with a specific skill set, most can be filled by anyone who is ready and willing to serve and learn! Here are the general descriptions (duties may vary from year to year) that may help you determine where you might want to serve at some point:

**President:** Leads meetings, generally oversees the group, and handles issues as they arise. This position is best filled by someone eager to lovingly serve the group who is able to be decisive when needed. This position typically involves:

1. Setting the agendas and presiding over the board and business meetings
2. Maintaining a working knowledge and management of the group and its activities by:
  - a. Ensuring MPHEA policies and bylaws are followed
  - b. Bridging communication between the co-op committee and the board and assisting or directing with co-op where needed
3. Mediating any disagreements or confronting and handling any issues that may arise (with the assistance of other board members, if necessary)
4. Ensuring that decisions reached by members and the board are carried out
5. Supporting and empowering other board members to fulfill their responsibilities

**Vice President:** Assists the President and serves the group in various ways. This position is best filled by someone with a heart to serve who is flexible and a good helper. Tasks typically include:

1. Setting up meeting venues for business meetings
2. Conducting background checks as new members join the group and every 5 years for current members and retaining a record of background checks for all MPHEA members
3. Managing committees
  - a. Contacting committees during the planning phase to ensure that they are well-equipped for success and connecting them with sources of further help if needed

- b. Checking in with committees throughout the year to reflect upon large group events
4. Operating as the liaison with the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), which entails:
  - a. Informing and updating the group about HSLDA
  - b. Keeping track of the HSLDA memberships within our group and discounts available; updating the roster and the web listing once a year
5. Reviewing the financial books with the Treasurer quarterly
6. Attending board and business meetings and presiding over meetings if the President is absent

**Membership Administrator:** Receives, organizes and processes all MPHEA applications, and helps new families connect. This is a position for an organizer, involving plenty of paperwork and communication, including:

1. Reminding the group of approaching deadlines for applications
2. Assigning members to large group event committees
3. Depositing membership fees in a timely manner and communicating with the Treasurer
4. Answering inquiries from prospective families, and guiding new applicants through the process
5. Sharing access to certain forms with appropriate members for processing
6. Passing on information about prospective members to the board
7. Notifying applicants that their applications were received and communicating with applicants to resolve any incomplete portions of their applications
8. Leading the new member orientation meeting prior to the fall business meeting
9. Attending board and business meetings

**Secretary:** Records minutes at MPHEA meetings and presents them for group approval, and helps prepare for meetings. This position is a fit for a good summarizer and someone who enjoys taking notes, and typically involves:

1. Taking minutes at all board and business meetings, retaining them in a provided notebook for reference, and presenting past minutes at business meetings for group approval
2. Creating and printing membership cards in August and assisting with preparation for meetings

**Treasurer:** Keeps detailed financial records for MPHEA, presents financial reports at meetings, and manages funds and bins for large group event committees. This position is a fit for an organized, detail-oriented person who enjoys basic number-crunching, and typically involves:

1. Communicating with the Membership Administrator and tracking the income (membership fees)
2. Tracking expenses throughout the year, distributing funds to large event committees, and collecting any unused funds
3. Distributing, collecting, and storing bins for large group events
4. Mailing thank you notes and/or donations to churches for hosting large group events
5. Reconciling the MPHEA checkbook monthly
6. Preparing financial reports and presenting them at board and business meetings
7. Determining the annual budget with the board and presenting it at the fall business meeting
8. Filing necessary annual forms with the IRS and the State of Michigan

**Online Communications Coordinator:** Administrates the MPHEA website, SI Portal, Facebook page, and MPHEA's Google Drive. This position is a fit for someone who is unburdened by plentiful electronic communication, and typically involves:

1. Maintain informational website for MPHEA
2. Adding and/or removing members to Facebook in August; Monitoring the page
3. Organize digital files, forms, and documents in Google Drive

4. Create SI Portal profiles for members and trouble-shoot where members have difficulties
5. Keep class information, updates, and events current in the SI Portal
6. Give a technology tutorial to new members at the Fall New Member Meeting
7. Communicating with event committees and MPHEA members hosting other activities, creating or updating events in the SI portal
8. Helping members solve any online communication issues
9. Considering ways to improve MPHEA's online presence and accessibility

**Officer of the Board:** A person or persons willing to serve on the Board for a term but not necessarily in the above-mentioned positions. Will help with various Board tasks and decision making in ways that suit their individual strengths. For example: Might help the Member Administrator specifically with new families, and also help the Online Communications Coordinator with sending out event communication.