

SHIELD

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is SHIELD?

SHIELD is a homeschool support group (**Supporting Home Instruction Encompassing Lexington District**). We are a support group run by our homeschooling members, who volunteer their time to support one another on their homeschool journey. SHIELD is NOT a third-party option or accountability association. You will need to join an accountability association to legally homeschool in South Carolina.

MEMBERSHIP

How much are the dues to join SHIELD, and what are they used for?

Our dues are minimal at \$25 per family per homeschool calendar year which runs from August 1st through July 31st of the following year. Registration for the upcoming homeschool year begins in July. The dues do not pay a salary for any of our leadership team, coordinators, or members as we are all volunteers. Dues are used for the costs involved in holding meetings, gatherings, providing speakers, and other supportive activities for SHIELD families.

Why do you require members to sign your Statement of Faith?

The SHIELD Statement of Faith (SOF) states the basis and foundation for everything that is done by and through SHIELD. This allows homeschoolers to catch a glimpse into what SHIELD is about, how it is run, and what its members believe. As home educators, we want our children's growth and learning to be supported by what we believe inside and outside of our home. Therefore, we choose to allow our homeschoolers to participate in groups, activities, and lessons that build upon the foundation we have set. The SHIELD SOF lets homeschooling parents know that our activities will be based upon and encompass these beliefs. Then parents can make an informed decision as to whether or not SHIELD is a good fit for their family. The SOF also informs members of what will be expected of its members, how activities should be conducted, and what type of support its members are looking for. It is vitally important for everyone to know what they believe and to participate in activities that do not undermine or compromise those beliefs, but instead encourages and supports them.

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Philippians 2:1-2

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Can Virtual Charter School students join SHIELD?

SHIELD is a homeschool support group, and unfortunately just is not applicable for Virtual Charter Schools according to state law. Virtual Charter Schools (VCS) (eg. K-12, Connections Academy, Calvert, Insights) are all state funded public school programs directed by the SC Department of Education. The State of SC does not classify VCS as homeschool, but as in-home public school since it is the public school curriculum and is overseen and directed by the public school. Membership to SHIELD is open to families that fall under 1 of the 3 legal homeschool options as dictated by the State of SC stated below.

Please understand that SHIELD is not against VCS; we understand that they were created to serve families and families benefit greatly from them. However they do not fall within the SC laws for homeschooling. We must distinguish in-home public school from homeschooling. They are very different in that with VCS the government has complete control over the curriculum and education of a VCS student, whereas a homeschooling family controls and is in charge of the education of a homeschool student. Confusing or intermingling the two, can lead to infringement upon the parental rights and freedom to educate their children.

Information from the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA):

“HSLDA also believes that maintaining the distinction between virtual public schooling and homeschooling is crucial for the continued legal success of home education. If in-home public school programs are regarded as “homeschools,” it will be much more difficult for lawmakers to see the differences between them, making it more difficult for private homeschoolers to obtain legal protections. We thus advocate strict adherence to a narrow definition of the word *homeschool*.”

According to South Carolina Department of Education Code of Laws, Section 59-16-15, South Carolina Virtual School Program:

“South Carolina Virtual Charter School (SCVCS) is a state-approved, public school program. The State Board of Education is authorized to establish the South Carolina Virtual School Program to provide South Carolina students access to distance, online, or virtual learning courses offered for an initial unit of credit. The South Carolina Virtual School Program shall not award a South Carolina High School diploma. A public, private, or homeschool student residing in South Carolina who is twenty-one years of age or younger shall be eligible to enroll in the South Carolina Virtual School Program. A private school or home school student enrolled in the South Carolina Virtual School Program must not be entitled to any rights, privileges, courses, activities, or services available to a public school student other than receiving an appropriate unit of credit for a completed course. Students may be awarded a maximum of three online initial credits in a school year, and no more than twelve online initial credits throughout high school. Home school students and private school students shall receive a certified grade report indicating date, course, and final numeric grade from the South Carolina Virtual School Program or an entity approved by the State Board of Education.”

The 3 legal options in the statutes for parent directed, privately funded homeschooling in SC are as follows:

1. **SC Department of Education, through your local school district** (*not VCS, this is where it is sometimes confusing*). *This option is still parent directed and funded, overseen by a designated administrator at your local school during face to face meetings several times a year.*
2. **South Carolina Association of Independent Home Schools (SCAIHS)**
3. **3rd Option Accountability Group** (Homeward, Grace, Reach the TOP, etc.)”

Why do you have volunteer requirements?

With any group, it takes many hands to make sure everything runs smoothly. A group is only as good as the people who step up to the plate to make things happen. Therefore, we need all hands on deck. Don't be overwhelmed, though. There are just as many small tasks as there are large. Tasks can vary from year to year, so your commitment to one task is not written in stone from year to year. We understand circumstances may change. Some members may have more time one year than another to handle certain tasks. Therefore, commitment times are not long. Typically our members volunteer in an area of interest in which they will already be participating. God has blessed us all with so many gifts and talents, and we are called to share them with others.

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

1 Peter 4:10

What is the SHIELD Leadership Team?

On average SHIELD is comprised of approximately 100 families. A group of this size needs every member stepping up to the plate to get things done. It also needs a group of a few, who can facilitate and organize certain aspects of a support group. The leadership team is composed of three members of SHIELD, who volunteer their time to oversee some of the spiritual, social, and administrative tasks of the support group, being diligent to seek the best interest of the group as a whole.

There are three members of the leadership team because it takes a team to accomplish these tasks. Having three members ensures different, but well-rounded viewpoints and perspectives on issues that concern the group as a whole. The most important task for the leadership team is to come together as one to pray for the SHIELD family and different issues that arise during the year. Decisions for the group are made prayerfully by all three leadership team members collectively, not just one, utilizing Biblical wisdom and truth. It is the desire of SHIELD to honor and glorify God in all that we say, think, and do.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:20

FACEBOOK

Why is your Facebook page private?

The SHIELD Facebook page is private because it is for SHIELD members only. People outside of the SHIELD family do not necessarily need to know what is going on within SHIELD. We also want to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our members.

Can I post pictures to the private FB page?

We want to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our members. Some members do not want their children's pictures posted on Facebook for various reasons. Even though the FB page is private, we know that breaches of security do occur. We do not want to take that risk. We need to respect the privacy of all of our members and do what is best for everyone as a whole.

FORMAL

What is the SHIELD Formal?

The SHIELD formal is an exciting time for our members grades 9-12. Each year SHIELD holds a formal that embodies our faith and beliefs. Our leadership team and other member volunteers and students choose a mix of secular and Christian music that is clean and appropriate. It is our goal to honor and glorify God in all that we do, so we screen music that will be played at the formal. We hire a DJ who is informed of our guidelines and given a thumb drive with only approved music to play and he is to decline requests for music that is not on the approved list. Although this may seem strict or silly, we have to protect the best interests of ALL SHIELD families as a whole. Since opinions about music and appropriateness can vary, we err on the cleanest side possible to ensure that we protect everyone across the board. We can all agree as parents that we do not want someone compromising the innocence of our children or what they are being taught in our homes. It's better to err on the side of caution.

Why do you require students to sign and follow a conduct and dress code?

As Christians, everything that we say, think, and do should be done to the glory of God. That includes our behavior and our dress. While requiring students sign the conduct code cannot make anyone conduct themselves appropriately, it does inform students as to what type of environment we will require and what type of behavior will be expected. This also protects all students and not just a few. Requiring the strictest of standards helps to uphold values that most families hold dear and that reflect their faith.

A modest dress code protects ALL of our students. When standing still in front of a mirror, many pieces of clothing are appropriate. However, when we move and dance, many times our clothing can be revealing and ultimately embarrass those wearing them and others as well. Keep in mind that many times groups are forced to adopt and enforce rules because something negative has happened in the

past that necessitated the rules. We need to learn from history, not repeat it. Therefore, we require a modest, but reasonable dress code.

While we have these rules, we try our very best to seek the heart of each person and be gracious in our enforcement of these rules. We also have to unselfishly seek to do what is best for everyone as a whole not just one or two.