



Introducing HCA of SOMD @ *LoveMyGroups* (v.2)

HCA is excited to have contracted with a homeschool coop/tutorial website provider, *LoveMyGroups*! There are three components to *LoveMyGroups*.

1. **The HUB** – Family accounts exist here along with online registration & payments
2. **Group Guide app** – Quick way to access HCA Activities and the member directory
3. **Toolbox** (for teachers!) – Ability for teachers to email students and parents directly, upload and download papers, create quizzes, tests and discussion spaces.

As we prepare to start HCA's Registration for 2018-2019 at this new site, it's possible you may have a few questions. 😊

WHEN is Registration?

- Priority Enrollment: Monday, May 7
- Returning Enrollment: not later than the morning of Thursday, May 10.
- Open Enrollment: Monday, May 14.

Melissa Polanowski and Mitzi McConville will be onsite ALL DAY, Thursday, May 10, to assist and collect printed and signed forms and your shift coverage check. A textbook table will be set up with Carolyn Graessle available to answer curriculum questions.

- NEW: The *LoveMyGroups* HUB processes enrollment in batches ("cycles") versus completing one family's request before moving onto the next one. This means confirmation of your enrollment request will be emailed at the end of each cycle, i.e. in the evenings, during Priority and Returning Enrollment. This timing will shift to every other evening once we start Open Enrollment.
- HCA will still process ALL registration & enrollment requests on a first-come, first-served basis (no change in that policy!) which is easily tracked by *LoveMyGroups*.
- Please be ready to WAIT for your enrollment request confirmation email without worry. It's a new way to think for all of us! Do feel free to ask questions.

How about my friends that are interested in joining HCA? Good question! May 10 or 11 is our tentative date to begin accepting new membership applications.

How do I know if my *LoveMyGroups* family account is ready for Registration?

Go to <https://hcaofsomd.lovemymygroups.com/Account/Login> and login. If you see the orange banner with the label: **You have urgent reminders to review - [CLICK HERE](#)**

click on that link to complete any tasks remaining that are REQUIRED prior to selecting classes and enrolling your children or teens. This list your Registration/Enrollment checklist. A few of these items are online versions of standard forms that are completed each year. The GOOD NEWS they may be signed online this year with an electronic signature!!

Do take time to look around and click on various links to see what is available!

PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK your Primary Contact information

This information is KEY to ensuring you receive all HCA communications and provides HCA Supervisors with your emergency contact information.

Once you are logged in CLICK on the square labelled “Update Your Personal Info”. This will take you to your **FAMILY INFORMATION SCREEN**.

Enter the name your designated LOCAL non-family member as your back-up Emergency Contact into the “**Other Contact**” box.

Phone Numbers

HCA will use these three numbers as your emergency contact numbers in the event we need to contact you during an HCA class day.

1. Cell Phone Number: Please enter the cell phone that is your family’s PRIMARY emergency contact number and will be the first number called. This number would also receive a text via Dial My Calls in the event HCA must cancel classes due to an emergency such as a weather-related event or utility outage on a class Thursday.
2. Family Phone Number: This provides the option to select and identify which number is the best option as your family’s SECONDARY emergency contact number, i.e. your spouse’s work/cell phone or a home phone.
3. Add Another Phone Number: Use this field to enter the number to reach your NON-FAMILY EMERGENCY CONTACT, who you listed next to “**Other Contact**”. This number will be called if the HCA Supervisor is unable to reach you via your Primary or Secondary emergency phone numbers.

It is recommended to additional numbers to individual family members on the NEXT screen which has Individual Information.

- Be sure that you have a record for each child or teen that you plan to enroll.
- If you have not already done so, be sure you have an individual record for yourself, your spouse or other legal guardians and other immediate family members that may contribute towards your family’s HCA participation and service requirements.

For each individual record added there are three tabs with boxes to provide specific info:

- A. Individual Info:
 - Enter child’s or teen’s birth grade for the current academic year. The site will automatically promote them to the next grade when you select classes.
 - Graduation date is optional.
 - ONLY enter children “Kindergarten” through grade 12. *LoveMyGroups* is designed to accommodate all sorts of homeschool groups, including those with child care. HCA does NOT have any childcare, programs or classes for children younger than Kindergarten.

- Reminder that children must be 5 years old prior to the first day of HCA classes to enroll. Teens must be younger than 19 on the first day of classes.

B. Phone and Notification Info:

- Add the email for any family member that should or would like to receive HCA announcements.
- Please add your child's or teen's email if you would like teachers to use to communicate directly. Our policy states that teachers will copy parents whenever they communicate with students via email.
- High school students should have their email account entered as teachers will communicate with them DIRECTLY, as well as copy parents.

C. Allergies/Medical

- a. Include allergies, medical conditions, learning disabilities or special needs.
- b. Information on this page will be made available to HCA teachers, Supervisors.
- c. Remember that HCA does not provide an allergy-free zone nor can we make accommodations for special needs. Please refer to the HCA Handbook to read this policy or contact us directly with questions about this topic.

Are there changes to costs or making payments? Yes, but it's simpler, too!

Only Registration Fees have increased slightly. **NEW** this year is the ability to EASILY make and view payments via a credit card or ACH transactions directly from a bank account. Given this convenience to both Admin and families, HCA will NO LONGER add third-party transaction fees to online payments.

All this convenience, of course, has mandated some changes in the Registration Process.

PLEASE ASK if you still have questions. We are happy to fully explain these changes but desired to keep this document to a brief outline!

- **OPTIONAL:** If you plan to use ACH, find the task in the orange banner checklist to set up an ACH, as it requires a short verification process.
- There is no need to complete the ACH step if you are NOT planning to use auto-debit. After completing the liability waiver, and statement of faith, you may choose to "Skip for Now", and bypass the ACH setup.
- AFTER you have selected and finalized your classes choices, look for a Registration confirmation email. Log into LoveMyGroups where you are directed to make 10% "Down Payment", or optionally pay in full, your TOTAL invoice. One of these payments is required to secure your enrollment.
 - Your TOTAL INVOICE includes the combined total of A) nonrefundable Registration Fees along with all B) Tuition and C) Materials Fees.
 - Full payment or a 10% Down Payment may be paid via credit card or ACH. HCA will accept a check for full payment of your invoice balance.

- Tuition rates have not changed, while Materials Fees remain set by teachers.
 - Nonrefundable Registration Fees have been simplified to a flat fee of \$25 each, for the first three students per family. Any additional students per family do not incur additional Registration Fees. Therefore \$75 is the maximum Registration Fee per family through June 15, the Drop Deadline.
 - FYI, from June 16 -Aug 22 there will be an extra \$15 added to Registration per family. From August 23 onward, Registration Fees will be \$30 more than the set amount of \$25 each for the first three students.
 - Tuition and Materials Fees are not refundable after June 15, the Drop Deadline, unless a class is full and a student from a Wait List is immediately available to take the spot.
 - PLEASE contact HCA if you have any questions or concerns about the new payment policies. We apologize there was not more advance notice about this change.
- If you choose to make a 10% Down Payment, the remaining balance of your invoice will be divided into 2 semester payments or 10 monthly payments using your credit card or ACH. You will be prompted to set these up at the same time you are making your Down Payment.
 - The first scheduled payment for both plans is July 15.
 - Subsequent payments are scheduled for either December 15th for semester payments, or the 15th of August through April for monthly payments.
 - The system will send an email reminder about the next upcoming ACH or credit card payment as these transactions “pull” from your bank account or charge your credit card directly.
 - The only required check is the one \$45 check aligned with your family’s Study Hall/Lunch Parent Assistant Shift. [Instructions for this item will be in your orange banner Checklist!]
 - *LoveMyGroups* give you the ability to view your current invoice status, the schedule of payments due and your payment history. You can even make 2 monthly payments at once if desired. Please check the various links to see all the information and options now available.

NEW Tips for Selecting Classes

- a. When your preliminary checklist items are complete, a red starburst will appear on the lower right of your screen when logged in. Click on it!



You may want to print, or have open, the PDF of the Initial HCA Schedule while selecting classes. It is the only way to see the entire schedule on a single page. A "Course Catalog" can be found online when you click on "Documents", which includes all the course descriptions for all the class.

While the interface is quite different, all the same information is available; there are just different links and displays. The system displays classes available to your child or teen's specified grade for the upcoming academic year.

How can I contact the teacher for placement advice? From the homepage, click "contact info". Click the tab "adult"/"adult leader" to find the teacher's contact info.

- b. The new system REQUIRES a selection for EACH class each period for each student. For any period where you do NOT want to enroll in a class or Study Hall, choose the green button that states "**No more class options are available**". This clarifies you are NOT enrolling that period. 
- c. How can I select a class OUTSIDE my child or teen's "grade"? Click on the green button that states "**Put my child on a waiting list for a class not shown**". This will display classes adjacent to your child/teen's grade. Please add notes, per below, to help the Registrar expedite the request.
- d. I don't see a class choice that IS Schedule PDF? Where is it? Once a class is full, the system no longer offers the choice automatically. If you would like to be added to the Wait List, click on the green button that states "**Put my child on a waiting list for a class not shown**". This will display "full" classes as well.
- e. If you have placed your child on a wait list, be sure to choose an alternate class, a Study Hall or click on "No more class options are available". [The enhanced Wait List process is excellent feature of *LoveMyGroups!*]
 - It is common for a few families to drop and free up a few class slots immediately prior to the Drop Deadline of June 15.
 - If there are 6 or more students on a Wait List, HCA may attempt to secure another teacher for a second class of the same course.
- f. To change a selection, click on the REDO button adjacent to the period(s).
- g. Follow the yellow "caution" buttons to make choices and work through your students until you have all Green "Ready to Go" Checkmarks! 
- h. There is a large notes area at the bottom of the class selection screen. Please make use of this to include any questions, previous conversation you've had with the Registrar or teachers, etc., to help facilitate the processing of your enrollment.
- i. Once complete you may print or view your choices for review.

- j. **PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK that you are satisfied and can commit 100% to your selections.** If you change your mind after your enrollment has been processed, you will be charged a \$15 Admin Fee.

TIP: It is MORE COST EFFECTIVE, to wait and add an “iffy” class AFTER you have 100% certainty. A \$15 Admin Fee after June 15 is less expensive than paying full tuition/materials for a class that you decide must be dropped AFTER the Drop Deadline of June 15.

- k. Once you are satisfied and have carefully reviewed your choices, click the “COMPLETE CLASS REGISTRATION” box.



BUT it won't let me click the Complete Class Registration button!

If there's a period where a child is NOT taking a class, choose that period, then choose 'No More Class Options Are Available' button. Once each period has a green checkmark, you should be able to 'Complete Class Registration'. If you still have the yellow warning icon, go back and select a 2nd option, in case the class fills, and that should clear the warning icon out.



- l. Be alert for any questions from the Registrar and reply by early to mid-afternoon. A delay could cause your enrollment request to be skipped during that evening's cycle.
- m. You will receive an email notification that your enrollment request has been processed sometime near the end of the day, during Priority and Returning Enrollment or within 48 business day hours, thereafter.

Tips for Selecting Classes - What has remained the same.

- a. Read course descriptions carefully! Be sure the estimated homework and prerequisites are good fit for your child/teen and your priorities and schedule.
- b. You may select any number of periods for each of your students. The minimum enrollment level is one class per student.
- c. HCA recommends one 3rd - 12th grade Study Hall period per day for most students. Two nonconsecutive Study Halls are permitted. Quiet work during Study Halls is strictly enforced. Please carefully consider if your child or teen can work independently on assigned work in a small room with other students.
- d. Lunch/Recess is divided into grade groupings to ensure we have enough seats at tables for students to eat at one time.
- e. Students must be supervised at all times. If a student has a "gap" (period not enrolled in Lunch, Study Hall or a class) in their schedule, a parent must be present to supervise a student, preferably off SAYSF grounds.

What Is the Status of My Registration request? How Do I Know My Family's Registration Is Complete and Classes Are Secured?

NEW: There is not an automatic message sent prompting you to complete everything. To determine your status, login to your *LoveMyGroups* account. The orange banner will alert you if you have outstanding items to complete!

After you click on "Complete Registration" watch your email for a message with the header "*Homeschool Christian Academy of Southern Maryland Registration Confirmation*".

Recall that Registration is now processed in cycles, i.e. near the end of a business day, so you will not receive a confirmation email immediately but should the same or next day.

Once you receive your Registration Confirmation email, log back into your *LoveMyGroups* where your only option is the prompt to begin the payment process.

Your enrollment & registration is SECURE when:

1. You have paid your 10% Down Payment, or optionally paid in full.
2. Your payment plan, if applicable, has been selected and scheduled, which is prompted at the same time you make your down payment.
3. All items in your orange banner area that relate to required forms (both online and printed, signed and submitted) and volunteer service(s) are selected.
4. Your service check has been received.

Please endeavor to have ALL these items completed the same week you request enrollment to quickly secure your enrollment.

An "insecure" enrollment could result in your child or teen losing their seat in a class that quickly fills and has a Wait List. Everyone would much prefer they keep their spot!!

What Steps Must I Take to Change My Family's Enrollment? It depends.

If you have NOT YET clicked on "Complete Class Enrollment" then you may still change your class selections in *LoveMyGroups*.

Please be sure you're satisfied with your selected classes, and they fit with your anticipated family schedule & priorities. Only enroll in classes where you can commit 100%. Tuition & materials fees are nonrefundable after June 15.

If you clicked on "Complete Enrollment" and change your mind THE SAME DAY, immediately email the Registrar. She can make the change when she processes your original request, if she has not yet "run" the cycle for the evening.

After your Registration has been processed, i.e. you have received the registration

confirmation email, a \$15 Admin Fee will be added to your invoice per request to change your family's schedule. If this is the case, please take the time you need to include all your desired changes in a single itemized request.

An Admin Fee is not applied for a one-time request per family to add Lunch or Study Halls.

Why is the Drop Deadline on June 15?

The Drop Deadline is necessary as HCA's teachers are contracted annually to teach weekly classes for HCA. Their contracts guarantee pay for the number of students enrolled as of the Drop Deadline.

Please Drop any classes prior to the Drop Deadline if you are uncertain of your ability to commit to those classes. It is safest to WAIT to enroll in any class or period that may conflict with other activities. A small Change Fee to add a class later in the summer, when you have 100% certainty, is a much safer option than the risk of paying for a class your teen or child is unable to attend.

Tuition and Materials Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE after June 15th UNLESS a class is full and another student is immediately available on a Wait List to fill the slot.

How May I Contact HCA?

- Send an email to HCA's Administrative Team, admin@homeschoolchristianacademy.org, which is made up of homeschooling parents like yourself.
- One of us will respond to you soon, generally on the same or next weekday, sometimes longer over the summer.
- HCA Admin takes a break from HCA business on weekends to focus on our families and worship. Please be patient with us!

Why Admin Fees?

The HCA Administrative Team is comprised of homeschooling parents just like yourself. We schedule regular time to work on HCA tasks throughout the year and over the summer. These fees reflect the extra time, effort, emails, updating lists and paperwork, etc., required to make changes in the system or track down missing or incomplete items.

Please mark deadlines on your calendar and double check in your online account that all items in your Registration checklist are accurate and complete!

How do I View the Payment Policy?

The current Costs & Payment Policy is in the Documents area of *LoveMyGroups*. Please contact HCA if you have any questions!