

Central STEM

2023-24 Handbook

As of August 2022, Central STEM is a ministry of Central Triad Church. The desire of the Central STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) classes is to offer outstanding STEM curriculum to triad area homeschoolers and to be a blessing to the families that we serve. This document in no way precludes the staff or board from making decisions that need to be made in the best interests of this program or from allowing the Lord to redirect our paths. This document is intended to be a set of guidelines to give all staff and Central STEM families a fair expectation of our time together and to eliminate confusion about policies and procedures.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Central STEM (hereinafter referred to as STEM) is to provide fun STEM classes as well as academic classes that supplement and complement the homeschool curriculum. STEM is a place to learn, grow, and inspire students in a Christian environment. It is a family-friendly environment where families can look forward to healthy social interaction with instructors and peers. The program is not a “school” in the traditional sense. Our assumption is that schooling takes place in the home and our enrichment classes are designed to support families in those efforts. Each semester, the classes offered will vary as the Lord provides instructors and exciting choices for your scheduling.

Statement of Faith

Our profession of faith begins with God, for God is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End of everything. The Credo begins with God the Father, for the Father is the first divine person of the Most Holy Trinity; our Creed begins with the creation of heaven and earth, for creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God's works.

General Policies

- Visitation Days – Prospective families may visit according to the schedule posted on the home page of the website.
- Severe Weather – We do not follow any particular county school system for closings or delays. Check the website and your email for announcements.
- Drop-Off – Parents should be sure students are safely inside the building before leaving.
- Pick-Up – Parents may enter the building to pick up students or line up in the drive-thru pickup line. Students will be released when the car is at the front of the line.
- Lunch – Students will eat lunch outside unless it is raining or temperatures are extremely cold. Please dress your children accordingly (i.e. layers are best). Whether outside or inside, students must remain in designated areas under adult supervision.
- Parental Support – Families are required to pay a \$130 Support Fee each semester, included in their semester's total fees. Parents may choose to reserve support positions for the semester to recoup some or all of the fee (\$20/hour/position, paid at the conclusion of the reserved position).

- Absences – Notify STEM if your child will be absent using the **STEM Absentee line, 336-310-5155 by text**. Instructors are notified of absences throughout the day. We account for all children every hour, and instructors report absent students not already on the absentee list.
- Grade Level Enrollment – We strictly adhere to the grade levels listed for each class. Out-of-grade-level registrants must be approved by/may be added at the discretion of the instructor and STEM board.
- Email Forwarding – Requests to forward emails will be limited to those that promote the education of children and activities that help homeschool families.
- Enrollment Priority – Families register each semester by seniority based on the number of consecutive semesters enrolled.
- Classroom Visitors - Parents/visitors are not allowed in the classrooms for multiple reasons. If a need arises, parents/ visitors must have permission from the director to formally observe a class.

K-1 Pods

Students must be five years old on or before September 1 to enroll in the K-1 Pods.

Our K-1 program holds coveted space for students. The K-1 Pod class fee is \$325 per semester for four hours of instruction and a 30-minute lunch. Students are assigned to one of two pods and will remain with their group all day. We recognize the need for social interaction and plan on helping the children learn appropriate behaviors in a group setting, but we ask that participants are capable of the following:

1. Must be able to leave the parent/caregiver without excessive negative emotional distress, crying, or anxiety.
2. Must have the ability to participate for the full duration of the pod day, 9:30-2:00. If your student experiences fatigue after an hour or two in a group environment, he is not ready for this program.
3. Must be able to wait to use the bathroom for at least one hour. Bathroom breaks are frequent, but we limit class interruptions with individual requests.

Behavior Policies

We have high standards for behavior and expect children (students and siblings) and their parents to be respectful. Give prayerful consideration before enrolling your children. Students must conduct themselves in a respectful and Christian manner. If there is any doubt that your children cannot or will not adhere to the STEM rules and policies, this is likely not the appropriate program for them.

Realizing that self-control is a fruit of the Spirit, the staff requires certain standards of behavior to help train children in this important area. True joy is found in submission to Jesus Christ and outward control helps to train children in inward control. Willing submission to the following standards is expected from each child. Your efforts to uphold these standards will aid in a well-run and godly program. These behavior standards apply to all STEM functions and activities.

1. Acceptable behavior requires students to be respectful, polite, considerate, trustworthy, obedient, and self-controlled at all times. Disrespect toward others will not be tolerated.
2. Students are not allowed to disrupt class or interfere with the learning process.

3. Most unacceptable behaviors will result in one warning and a discussion between our director, student, and student's parent. A repeat offense will most likely result in expulsion from the classes. We maintain a strict "hands off" policy. Absolutely no fighting or bullying will be tolerated. If the behavior problem is serious, no warning will be given but immediate suspension or expulsion will be administered.
4. Students who have possession of anything illegal will be immediately expelled. The police will be notified.
5. Public displays of affection (PDA) such as kissing, hand-holding, and other body-to-body contact are not permitted.
6. Conversations must not contain language or topics that are inappropriate in a Christian environment.
7. All students must be in a supervised classroom, lunch area, or study hall.
8. Cell phones and other devices are not permitted in class unless otherwise requested or approved by an instructor.
9. Gossip will not be tolerated.
10. STEM participants are expected to adhere to Christian principles including those regarding sexuality. STEM is not the place to engage in conversation regarding sexuality.
11. STEM participants are expected to adhere to Christian principles regarding online communications including, but not limited to, social media postings and email/text exchanges.

The board's primary responsibility is to strengthen and secure the integrity of the STEM program as a whole. Please have a conversation with your children regarding the expectations of words and actions at STEM. Failure of parents or students to uphold these principles may include consequences resulting in suspension or expulsion.

Expectations for Classroom Behavior

1. Students must respect the rights and property of others and treat those in authority with respect. Adults should be addressed with appropriate titles of respect.
2. When talking, students will use an appropriate conversational tone.
3. Students must be punctual to each class.
4. Students are expected to listen when others are speaking and raise hands for permission to speak in class.
5. Writing and passing notes, tossing objects, and playing with irrelevant objects (such as laser pens, hand held games, etc.) will not be allowed in class.
6. Students must help keep the church classrooms and grounds clean and free of trash. Students must not damage church property. Parents will be financially responsible for damage caused by their child, even if the damage is the result of an accident. Good stewardship of all our property is a biblical standard that is very important to the leaders of STEM.
7. If a child is unable to bring his behavior under control, he may be removed from the classroom at which time the parent may be called. (See the section on K-1 and 2-3 Behavior Policy below.)

8. We reserve the right to impose academic standards that will maximize our ability to retain qualified instructors and an environment that fosters academic excellence. Students are expected to participate in class and complete all assignments and projects. This minimizes classroom distractions and ensures students are gaining the maximum benefit from their classes.
9. Students who consistently fail to participate in class and/or complete assignments and projects may be suspended or dismissed from the class at the discretion of the instructor, with no refund. (See the-section on Academic Class Policy below.)
10. Please refer to the class descriptions and/or syllabi for individual classroom expectations, including study hall.

K-1 and 2-3 Behavior Policy

Please review with your children the expectations for good behavior while at STEM. Simply put, if your child is truly ready for a classroom environment, he must:

1. respect adults and authority,
2. exhibit self-control (e.g. keeping hands to self), and
3. engage in classroom activities.

Our goal is for STEM to provide an environment conducive to learning where instructors and students alike have an enjoyable school day. We are not a school and do not have the ability to deal with behaviors beyond simple re-direction.

Students will be warned/ redirected for inappropriate behavior. If a child needs to be removed from a classroom for any reason, a parent will be called and if needed, the student will stay in study hall until a parent can pick him up (\$5/hour). Upon the second offense, a parent will need to remain on the premises (STEM campus) for a minimum of two (2) weeks to be available to intervene with the child, if needed.

Academic Class Policy

Carefully consider whether or not enrolling your child in an academic class at STEM will be a good fit for your family. Students enrolled in academic classes must come to class prepared, actively participate in class, (discussions, labs, presentations, etc.) and complete assignments on time.

It is imperative that students stay current with their assignments. Students are also responsible for class material missed in the event of an absence. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to contact the instructor in the event of an absence to determine any material missed and to complete assignments prior to the next class period. Late or missing assignments put an extra burden on the instructor, cause the student to fall behind, and create an inefficient use of time and energy for both student and instructor.

Students who are unprepared, not engaged, or do not turn in required work diminish the integrity of the instructor and classmates who are actively participating. The following items detail the assignment policy.

1. Failure to be prepared for or participate in multiple class periods may result in dismissal from the class.
2. If the student misses two (2) weeks of assignments, he will not be permitted to attend that particular class until the assignments have been completed.
3. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor to turn in missed work in order to be cleared to attend the next class period.
4. Three (3) weeks of missing or incomplete assignments without attempt to get caught up will deem the student ineligible to return to class.
5. Cheating, plagiarizing, using solutions manuals or teacher's resources (unless authorized by an instructor), and copying (from any source including the Internet) are all offenses that may result in suspension.

Students suspended from a class must remain with a parent or attend study hall at the hourly study hall rate (\$5/hour).

It is the goal of STEM to help students exhibit responsibility and accountability for work required in academic classes. Additionally, the STEM Board is dedicated to providing an enjoyable learning environment for all participants.

Payment Information

Acceptable forms of payment:

- personal check, cashier's check, official check, bank check, bill pay, money order, and cash
- credit card via payment on centralstemnc.com
- Balances can be found at the top of the website when you are logged in

Fees (per semester):

- The Registration Fee (per family) of \$50 is nonrefundable.
- The Facility Fee is \$10 per class with a maximum of \$100 per family. (The K-1 Pod is considered 4 separate classes.)
- The Support Fee is \$130. Parents may choose to reserve support positions for the semester to recoup some or all of the fee (\$20/hour/position, paid at the conclusion of the reserved position).
- The Study Hall Fee is \$25 per semester hour (or portion thereof) per student and may be used if the student has a gap in the schedule AND the parent is not on campus to supervise the student.

Semester fees may either be paid in full at the time of registration OR according to the following schedule:

- A minimum of half of your semester fees will be due upon receipt of the confirmation email to secure your class choices.
- Balances are due June 1 for the fall semester.
- Balances are due December 1 for the spring semester.

Registrations submitted after the balance due dates will require payment in full within five business days.

A late fee of \$25 will be assessed to all new registrations submitted after the balance due date and to any prior registrations not paid in full by the balance deadlines.

Class Changes and Withdrawals

- Refer to the semester Registration Information page for details on partial refunds.
- Fees may not be transferred after the refund deadlines.
- Refunds will have fees deducted depending on the withdrawal notification date.
- Payment Deadlines
 - Fall 2023
 - Registration opens mid-March
 - 1/2 of Fall class fees due at registration
 - Facility fee discounts will be applied between the first and second payments.
 - All Fall class fees due by June 1, 2023
 - No refunds will be given after June 1. Registration fee (\$50) is not refunded even if you withdraw from all classes before June 1.
 - Spring 2024
 - Registration opens mid-October
 - 1/2 of Fall class fees due at registration
 - Facility fee discounts will be applied between the first and second payments.
 - All Fall class fees due by December 1, 2023
 - No refunds will be given after December 1. Registration fee (\$50) is not refunded even if you withdraw from all classes before Dec 1.

If a student withdraws from a class after the drop/add deadline and would like to add Study Hall in its place, he may do so at the discretion of the director and for a prorated study hall fee. If a student wishes to change classes before the drop/add deadline, a balance adjustment will be made.

Communication is essential to the success of the program and the student. Please do not wait for a problem to become serious before contacting the instructor. The director is available to meet with instructors and parents, if needed. Parents may confer with the director regarding any communication from instructors that causes concern.

Dress Code

STEM leadership does not require a specific dress code. However, we are a Christian program and we meet in a church, so please be considerate of others. Parents should monitor their child's clothing carefully. All participants and families are encouraged to dress in a modest, tasteful fashion. If you are unsure if something is appropriate, please do not wear it. Any shirts, skirts, dresses, pants, or shorts

should be an appropriate length for sitting and moving modestly. Shirt and dress necklines must cover cleavage even when bending. Shirts should completely cover the abdomen and lower back even when sitting or bending. Parents will be required to bring a change of clothing if a student wears something that is immodest or offensive (including t-shirt graphics and logos). Boys and girls should wear jeans, pants, or shorts that are neat, clean, and that fit comfortably and are not too tight or excessively baggy. Shirts with sleeves are preferred, and T-shirts are acceptable for all.

Parental Support

- This program is not possible without the committed involvement and assistance of the parents. We offer a variety of support positions that help the program run smoothly.
- Parents may choose to reserve support positions for the semester to recoup some or all of the fee (\$20/hour/position, paid at the conclusion of the reserved position).
- We do understand that there are circumstances in which parents may not be able to or choose not to be on campus.
- Parents in support positions may not have their children with them when assisting in classrooms. It is permissible for children to be with their parents during lunch duty, entrance monitor, clean up, set up, and tear down positions.
- Once you have selected your support position, please make note of the dates on your calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- If, for some reason, you have to miss a day, you are expected to find a replacement for your position and/or notify the Support Coordinator.
- Failure to successfully fulfill your selected duty will mean that you forfeit the option to choose support positions in future semesters.