



Welcome Packet

Welcome to Gear Up Homeschoolers!

We are delighted that you are interested in joining us. Our goal is to provide children with a relaxed social and educational experience in a warm and accepting environment. Our programming is strictly secular while respecting everyone's right to believe what they choose. We strive to be a community that helps one another and embraces this wonderful homeschool journey we are all on.

History

The first planning meetings for what is now Gear Up Homeschoolers began in April 2013. Families interested in the co-operative met monthly throughout the summer of 2013. The first official Gear Up class took place in September 2013 and we began using the Old Grade School building on Main Street in Warner shortly thereafter. We've been meeting regularly on Fridays ever since.

Gear Up Homeschoolers incorporated as a nonprofit in the summer of 2015 after two successful years of classes and workshops. We aim to inspire lifelong learning in a community that is supportive, safe and accepting where creativity and curiosity thrive. Our mission is to provide opportunities for New Hampshire homeschooled children through learning sessions, clubs, community service and events to enrich the homeschool experience.

An Executive Committee governed for the first two years. They transitioned into the Board of Directors for the organization (bylaws available upon request) once we became a non-profit. They are responsible for the policies and procedures for the group.

Our Location

We meet on Friday afternoons in downtown Warner at 49 W. Main St. We're easily found from either exit 8 or 9 off I-89.

From the north:

Take I-89S to exit 9. Turn left and continue on highway 103 South. Our building is approximately one mile on the right.

From the west/northwest:

Take 103 south. Our building is approximately one mile after the traffic circle on the right.

From the South:

Take I-89N to exit 8. Turn right and travel through the town of Warner. Our building will be on your left approximately 1.5 miles from the exit.

From the East:

Routes vary when coming from the east. Many members pick up I-89 in Concord and follow the directions from the South. Others take 127 into Hopkinton then get on I-89 or follow 103 North. We recommend using Google maps to find your best options based on where you are starting out.

Once here, you'll find our classrooms on the third floor. Enter the building from the door on the right side as you approach the building. The front doors are usually locked. We also have a great area out back with play structures that a lot of families use for fun social time after or between classes.

Structure of program

We currently have 1-2 scheduled sessions every Friday. Some of these sessions are geared towards having all ages together, while others may be broken up into groups depending on the level of supervision/parent involvement needed. We also may have some Fridays where we could offer one activity that could take up the majority of the time, thus only having 1 session scheduled (such as a nature observation walk). We also have a room for younger siblings and welcome simple crafts/classes for the youngest of our community when they are available. Finally, the highlight of our program is that we encourage kids/teens to feel invested in our program by offering Peer Instructed Programs (PIPs). We have had students facilitate outdoor games, board games, theater games, story times, around the world lessons, arts/crafts, and much much more. Please contact us and let us know what your child would be interested in sharing

We aim to begin each Friday with announcements between 1:00-1:15pm. During this time everyone gathers together to hear the schedule, room assignments, and announcements. Parents and students are encouraged to share during this time too if they choose. At 1:30, the students and facilitators disperse to their assigned classrooms and begin.

We don't require mandatory attendance (come to one workshop, come once a month, come every week). However, we do need input, and there are 1-2 required meetings during the year for parents to participate in. We also expect everyone to help out in a way that they are comfortable and excited about. For some that's teaching, others cleaning, and others organizing, and still others choose to volunteer on the fundraising committee. There are a plethora of ways to help out. With that said, we do ask each family to take a cleaning shift (or 2) throughout the year.

Communications

We are currently utilizing email, our website and social media to communicate our activities and opportunities. Our website is being used to sign up guests/new members and maintain organizational documentation. At this time the sessions we are providing do not require a sign up/or a limit on class size.

Our website: <https://gearuphomeschoolers.org/>

Our Email: info@gearuphomeschoolers.org

Parent responsibility

Parents of children participating in Gear Up are expected to stay with their children during program activities. If they're unable to do so, they're expected to ask another parent to be responsible for their child(ren) in their absence. Children should be accompanied by an adult when going to the bathroom or going outside to the playground area. To be clear, we are not a drop off environment.

Preschool children (babies to age 4)

Our parents of younger siblings coordinate and facilitate a vibrant and fun time for this age group. Parents must remain with their preschoolers unless they've designated that responsibility to another parent.

Financial contribution

Part of our mission is to be an affordable co-op for all homeschooling families, but we do have operating costs. A yearly fee per family is expected at the beginning of the year, or at the end of the guest trial period if you decide to join (price set to reflect current costs every fiscal year). If this fee creates a barrier for attending, please contact Amy Ramirez or a board member to request a waiver. We shall not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, creed, sex, disabilities, financial status, sexual orientation, or national origin. A detailed fiscal report is available upon request.

Covid Policy

The situation is constantly changing so if you have questions about how we are handling Covid, it is best to contact a board member. Here are the current regulations:

- Masks are optional in our spaces at the discretion of the parents.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom. Parents are responsible to make sure their child uses it appropriately.

If any member, adult or child has fever within the past 24 hours, please refrain from attending so as to not spread any viral infection.

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children are following these guidelines.

Inclement Weather Policy

If there is a cancellation, members will be notified of the through an email sent by 10:00am and it will also be posted on our social media accounts under Gear Up Homeschoolers. Please be sure to check your email prior to leaving home on any days with questionable weather.

Bullying Policy

Bullying behavior will not be tolerated. The state of New Hampshire and Gear Up defines bullying as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

- (1) Physically harms a member or damages the member's property;
- (2) Causes emotional distress to a member;
- (3) Interferes with a member's enrichment opportunities;
- (4) Creates a hostile enrichment environment; or
- (5) Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of Gear Up.

Student Expectations/Ethics:

- Treat others with kindness and respect.
- Be punctual.
- Use appropriate physical contact.
- Be prepared for class.
- Be respectful for property of hosting spaces (be it a home, public building, or fieldtrip).
- Share clean up duties.

Parent Expectations/Ethics:

- Social time will be shared by all, adults and children. Parents are responsible for their own children during this time.
- To familiarize yourself and your children with Gear Up's expectations and responsibilities.
- Setup and cleanup shall be shared by all.
- Keep sick children home and consider keeping all children home to prevent spreading illness to our community.

Instructor Expectations/Ethics:

- Be responsible for finding coverage for your class if you will not be there if possible.
- Be prompt and punctual.
- Be kind.
- Be encouraging.
- Clean your room when finished.
- Maintain a healthy environment within the room.

Weapons Policy

We do not tolerate any weapon on any Gear Up premises, including the playground. Weapon is defined as any device used to inflict damage or harm to living beings, structures, or systems. This includes, but is not limited to, knives, guns, bows and arrows. This includes any toy or tool that could be confused or misused as a weapon.

Any family that disregards this policy will be asked to leave immediately. The family should then contact the Board of Directors before coming back.

Fire Code and Emergency Guidelines

We seek to be a safe and secure environment for all children and adults. When an alarm sounds, and we must leave the building, please assist the children in the room you are with currently. Do not try to gather all of your children and leave. Help people walk out calmly and orderly. Once down in the lower parking lot we break into family groups and attendance is taken.

Fire Evacuation Plan for Gear Up

Please familiarize yourself and family with the escape maps located by all doors.

The **Main Community room** will leave through the left hallway door and go down the North set of stairs. If the stairs are not passable exit through the fire escape door in the back of the room.

The **Front Conference Room** will leave through the North door and stair well. If the stairs are not passable exit through the fire escape door in the back of the Community room.

The **Exploration/play rooms** will come through the back of the Community room and leave through the North exit. If the stairs are not passable exit through the fire escape door in the back of the Community room from the back door of the Communityroom.

Bathroom - If you are in the bathroom, leave through the front door. If that is blocked go through a side door.

Once you have left the building proceed to the lower parking lot and gather by family/supervising adult. You must check in with the Emergency Contact Person (ECP) before leaving.

Our current ECP is Erika Carr-Elizabeth Labbe, or current board member.

Video and photo opt-out

Children may be photographed or videotaped as part of class projects, for the yearbook or in order to promote Gear Up to local businesses and individuals. If you would prefer that your child(ren) not be included in any videotaping or photography, please let one of the Board of Directors know and complete the form to opt out. A confidential list of anyone not wishing to participate will be kept in the Gear Up files.

Media Opt-Out Form for Gear Up

(Complete and return this form ONLY if you do NOT give permission for yourself or child to appear in news media or Gear Up and local publicity images.)

Gear Up events, OGS activities and special programs are sometimes photographed or videotaped by school representatives to post on Web sites, yearbook or in newsletters and newspapers.

If you do NOT want to have your child(ren) photographed or videotaped for the above purposes, please sign and return this form to a board member. This form applies only to the current school year.

Date _____

Child(ren)'s Full Name(s) _____

Parent's Printed Full Name _____

Parent's Signature _____