

Somerset County Christian Homeschoolers

Co-op Handbook

2009 - 2010 Academic Year

Mission Statement

Our mission is to glorify God by providing a variety of enrichment programs and an opportunity for families to develop friendships within our homeschooling community.

Purpose

The SCCH Co-op is a ministry of Somerset County Christian Homeschoolers (SCCH). SCCH is a participating member of ENOCH (Education Network of Christian Homeschoolers) of New Jersey. All programs and activities of the SCCH Co-op are governed by the By-laws of SCCH and under the authority of the SCCH Board. The SCCH Co-op Director is accountable to the President of the SCCH Board.

SCCH was initially started in 1988 under the name of Somerset County Christian Parent Educators Association (SCCPEA) to support moms in their efforts to home educate their children. This group expanded to include the children and evolved into what we today call SCCH Co-op. The SCCH support group also continued to grow to include the dads. SCCH Co-op was created to provide an environment for home educated children to get together for fun and learning. Our purpose is to provide our children with an opportunity to further develop a love of learning through Christ-centered, supervised, parent directed group interaction.

Co-op Organizational Model

The SCCH Co-op is an enrichment program that is run on a co-op basis. A co-op is an enterprise or organization owned and operated for the benefit of those using its services. The SCCH Co-op is a voluntary institution that exists because members desire to join together with other like-minded families to provide a variety of enrichment experiences for the children. Because SCCH Co-op is a co-op, active participation, commitment and personal responsibility are required from each family enrolled in the program.

Membership Requirements

Participation in the SCCH Co-op is for members of the SCCH group. Families must be home educating at least one child who will be at least 5 years old by December 31st of the specific school year **and** in kindergarten.

Prospective new members are **required** to visit SCCH Co-op and observe the program before joining the co-op. This visit provides new members with the opportunity to see firsthand how the Co-op functions which will enable them to make an informed decision about whether or not the program meets the needs of their family.

SCCH Co-op Schedule

Each time the SCCH Co-op meets, the activities are scheduled as follows:

12:00 - 12:45pm	Arrival and Set Up	All Areas
12:45 - 1:00pm	News & Information/ Fellowship Time	Fellowship Hall
1:00 - 1:15pm	Opening Assembly	Fellowship Hall
1:15 - 2:15pm	Learning Groups	Classrooms
2:15 - 2:20pm	Clean Up/ Transition to Gym	Classrooms/ Fellowship Hall
2:20 - 3:00pm	Gym Groups	Specific Assigned Locations
3:00 - 3:15pm	Cupcake Day (1st meeting of the month)	Fellowship Hall
3:15 - 3:30pm	Clean Up	All Areas

Arrival and Set Up

Upon arrival into the facility you will be greeted by a member of the SCCH Co-op community at the name tag table. Name tags are used both for fellowship purposes and as part of our safety procedures. All attendees of SCCH Co-op, including visitors, must wear a name tag to identify themselves as part of the program. Coats may be hung in the coat rack area in the foyer. During this arrival period the parent retains the authority of supervising the children and monitoring their behavior in the group setting. Parents who will be teaching an academic class or a gym class should arrive early enough to set up the activities for their students. These teachers must keep their children with them during the set up time. After the set up is completed the entire family may return to Fellowship Hall.

Children are not permitted in other parts of the building during this time (excluding the above mentioned children). They are not permitted on the stage at any time. Parents should help their children find the assigned row for their class. Toddlers and infants should stay with their parents. This is a great time for the children to sit and visit with their friends before the start of the formal program. Running in Fellowship Hall is not acceptable behavior at any time unless part of a supervised indoor gym activity.

News and Information/ Fellowship Time (before Opening Assembly)

Each time the SCCH Co-op gets together there is a great wealth of information to share with each other. News and information will be posted so each parent can stay up to date on what is happening within the group. This is also an important time for handouts to be exchanged and sign ups to be completed for events such as Photography Day, Scholastic Book Clubs, the Christmas party, etc. While all this information is being exchanged it is also a great time to say hi to your friends and get caught up with what's happening in each others' lives.

Opening Assembly

The Opening Assembly is the beginning of the formal part of the SCCH Co-op program. Adults will lead the group in prayer, pledges (the American Flag, the Christian Flag, and the Bible), songs, and Scripture Memory Verses.

Learning Groups

The teachers will take class attendance in Fellowship Hall prior to the Opening Assembly. Following the Opening Assembly, the children will be dismissed from Fellowship Hall by academic class group. The teachers and assistants will escort the children by class group to their assigned classroom.

Clean Up/Transition to Gym

Five minutes are built into the schedule for cleaning up and preparing for gym class. If the specific activity requires more time for clean up, the teachers may end their instructional time sooner to accommodate the necessary additional clean up time. Either the teacher or the assistant will escort the children to Fellowship Hall to meet the gym class teachers while the other adult stays behind to straighten up the classroom. Children are to stay under the supervision of the academic teachers until that supervision responsibility is handed over to the gym teachers. For insurance reasons, children are not permitted outside the building without an adult.

The teacher who remains in the classroom should make sure all windows are closed and locked, the white board is erased, and paper scraps or other trash is picked up off the floor. A vacuum is available if necessary. The garbage bag should be removed from the can in the classroom and brought down to the large trash can in Fellowship Hall. A new garbage bag should be placed in the garbage can. All classrooms should be returned to their original condition. When the teacher leaves the room, the lights should be turned off and the door left open.

Gym

The gym teachers will meet their group of children at the assigned location in Fellowship Hall. When the entire class is present and attendance has been taken, the gym teacher will escort the children outside to the play areas. Gym will be outside as often as possible. Please dress the children for the weather conditions of the day. Gym classes will move inside in the event of inclement weather. **Sneakers must be worn** by all gym participants in order to reduce the chance of injury.

Transition from Gym to Fellowship Hall

A closing signal will be sounded to announce the end of gym class. Gym teachers and/ or the assistants are to collect up all the gym equipment and the children are to help bring the equipment back to the building. Gym teachers and/or the assistants are to escort the children back to Fellowship Hall where the children will remain seated with their gym groups. While at least one adult gym teacher or assistant stays with each gym group, the parents of children in the nursery will go and get their infants. Once the infants have been picked up, the parents will return to Fellowship Hall. Children are to remain under the supervision of the gym teachers until that supervision responsibility is handed back to the parent.

Cupcake Day

On the first SCCH Co-op meeting of the month after gym class is completed, cupcakes will be provided to celebrate the birthdays which occur during that month. (July birthdays are celebrated with the June birthdays; August birthdays are celebrated with the September birthdays.) Birthday children are given the privilege of lining up first for their cupcake.

Clean Up

After the students have left the classrooms, a cleanup committee will go back through each room to make sure it is left in the same clean condition it was in when the group arrived. The clean up committee will also check all of the bathrooms to make sure they are neat and orderly. After the entire group is dismissed for the afternoon, the SCCH Co-op Director will do a final walk through inspection of the entire facility prior to locking up.

Dismissal

There is no formal dismissal program. The parents are to collect their children from the gym teachers in a timely fashion at the completion of the gym program. This will allow the gym teachers and their assistants to collect their own children. At this time supervision responsibility for the children shifts back

to the parents. Families are requested to exit the church building together at 3:30pm so that the final clean up and inspection of the facility can be completed.

Teacher Guidelines

1. Leading a group of students can be a fun, rewarding experience. With guidance from God and help from other parents in the group, teaching a class at SCCH Co-op can be an enjoyable learning opportunity for both the teacher and the students.
2. The model of Christian behavior requires adults to maintain self-control at all times. Yelling at children, expressing anger, or belittling the children should never occur.
3. The content of the classes should follow the spirit of the Mission Statement, meet the purpose of the SCCH Co-op as an enrichment program, adhere to the by-laws of SCCH, and explore the academic content area. Teachers should inform the SCCH Co-op Director of the general plan for the class before the class begins.
4. Teachers are to arrive early to the facility so that they may set up their materials for class. If there are any special equipment requests, please contact the SCCH Co-op Director in advance.
5. If a teacher is absent, it is the teacher's responsibility to contact their assistant teacher to provide appropriate instruction and materials for the class.
6. If a teacher wants to change the location of the class for a specific SCCH Co-op meeting (e.g. going outside to paint a landscape), please inform the SCCH Co-op Director in advance so that all children and adults may be accounted for in the case of an emergency.
7. Donating materials and supplies is greatly appreciated. Some purchases may be made but must first be approved by the SCCH Co-op Director. Keep receipts and pass them to the SCCH Co-op Director for reimbursement. A specific reimbursement plan will be provided each year based on the budget.
8. An assortment of general classroom materials are kept in the SCCH Co-op filing cabinet in Fellowship Hall, and are available for teachers to use. Please return these materials to the filing cabinet when you are finished using them.

Program Structure

Participants in the SCCH Co-op will be divided into Learning Groups based on age with adults leading each group. Gym classes will be set up in the same manner.

A nursery group will be provided for infants and children up to 2 years of age. Adults will supervise the nursery during the Learning Group time and during the Gym time. Each parent will keep their infants and toddlers with them during the Opening Assembly and during cupcake time. There are cribs available in the nursery room. Please inform the adult in the nursery if you would like your child to attempt to nap during that time. Please provide a diaper bag with your child's name on it which includes diapers, wipes, snacks, bottles, pacifier, blanket, etc.

A toddler group and a pre-kindergarten group will also be provided at the SCCH Co-op. Each class will be supervised by adults and they will teach developmentally appropriate material.

Students from kindergarten up through high school age will be divided into classes based on age and enrollment numbers. Adults will supervise and teach each class.

The academic structure of the classes will follow a 2 year rotating schedule of topics. Each classroom teacher will have the freedom and flexibility to design the individual course content within the overall general category in accordance with the Teacher Guidelines.

	Fall	Winter	Spring
2009 - 2010	Geography	Science	Art
2010 - 2011	History	Literature	Music

SCCH Co-op Planning Meeting

The schedule of academic teachers, gym teachers, and various other areas of responsibilities are determined at the SCCH Co-op Planning meeting. This **mandatory** meeting is very important for all of the families who are participating in the co-op. The meeting is held prior to the beginning of the Fall Session. The date, location, and time of the meeting will be posted in the SCCH newsletter and announced at SCCH Co-op with plenty of advance notice.

Families who join the SCCH Co-op during the academic year will be welcomed and integrated into the existing structure.

General Policies and Procedures

Cancellations

Decisions regarding cancellations due to inclement weather will be made by the SCCH Co-op Director. Information will be communicated to the SCCH Co-op members by e-mail and/or phone chain by 11:00am on the morning of the scheduled program.

Sick Children

Children with cold symptoms or other signs of contagious illness **cannot** be brought to the SCCH Co-op for the health and benefit of all members of the program.

Attendance

In the event a parent is unable to attend the SCCH Co-op due to illness or the illness of a child, the parent **must** notify the SCCH Co-op Director by 10am on the morning of an SCCH Co-op meeting at the latest. Notification may be either by phone or e-mail. This will allow adequate time to schedule a substitute teacher.

The parent may not send other school age children with another SCCH Co-op family because of the limitations of how our group is insured at the church facility. The parent may send their children to the SCCH Co-op with another responsible adult relative. This responsible adult relative may be a spouse, grandparent, aunt or uncle who is committed to the same Statement of Faith as the parent, can medically make decisions for the child in the event of an emergency, and who will fulfill the parent's assigned responsibilities at the SCCH Co-op. If these conditions are too difficult to meet on an individual date, then it is recommended that the family stay home, relax, get healthier, and make it to the next SCCH Co-op date.

No Shows

An SCCH Co-op family who does not show up and does not notify the SCCH Co-op Director about the absence is considered a no show. This behavior has a very serious impact on the overall functioning of the Co-op. The Co-op Director will make a phone call to the family after the first no show incident to determine the reason for the behavior and re-emphasize the importance of either a phone call or e-mail notification regarding the absence. If the family is considered a no show at the Co-op meetings, then membership in the Co-op will be revoked for the remainder of the school year with no refund of fees. Extenuating emergency situations will be considered on a case by case basis by the SCCH Co-op Director.

Lateness

If a family arrives after 1:10pm to an SCCH Co-op meeting, it is considered a late arrival and is viewed as a serious situation because of the disruption it causes in the overall functioning of the Co-op. By this time in the afternoon, a substitute teacher would have been scheduled to assume the responsibilities of the late arriving member of the Co-op.

The SCCH Co-op Director will discuss this with the family after the first occurrence and the first warning will be issued. If the behavior is repeated, the Co-op Director will speak with the family again and give the second warning. After a second warning for lateness has been given, the family must sit out the next Co-op meeting. The family is re-instated to Co-op at the subsequent Co-op meeting date.

If the late arrival behavior happens again after the previously cited disciplinary procedure has been completed, then membership in Co-op will be revoked for the remainder of the specific session (e.g. Fall, Winter, or Spring). If the suspension occurs on the last date of a session, then membership in Co-op will be revoked for the next full session with no refund of fees. The family is again re-instated to the Co-op at the beginning of the next session. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis by the Co-op Director.

E-mail

E-mail is the primary mode of communicating information quickly and efficiently with the SCCH Co-op membership. Parents are required to have a personal e-mail account and are expected to check their e-mail regularly for announcements especially during the last several days before an SCCH Co-op meeting. If a co-op member has a new e-mail address or if the existing e-mail account is temporarily inaccessible, the SCCH Co-op Director must be informed immediately.

Phone communication

The SCCH Co-op Director will provide a cell phone number to be used in the event of an emergency. This number will be given out at the SCCH Co-op Planning meeting. This cell phone number is **only** to be used for emergency communication after 10am on an SCCH Co-op meeting date. All standard communication needs to be completed using the SCCH Co-op Director's home phone number or e-mail.

Co-op Mailbox

A co-op mailbox is provided with a file folder for each family. It is located at the name tag table near the Opening Assembly area. Each parent should check the mailbox upon arrival at SCCH Co-op and again before leaving at the end of the day. Announcements, classroom projects, homework assignments, and other important items are placed in the mailbox.

Visitors

Home educating parents who are seriously considering joining SCCH Co-op are encouraged to make an appointment to visit the program. It is very important to initially contact the New Member Representative

to get an overview of the co-op. If it seems that the program may meet the needs of the new family, the new member is expected to contact the SCCH Co-op Director to set up an appointment time for a visit to the co-op.

Each time a visitor arrives at SCCH Co-op arrangements must be made to host the visitor, provide pertinent information, tour the facility, and meet with two members of SCCH Co-op leadership to answer any remaining questions about the group. These arrangements must be made ahead of time so there will be minimal impact on the routine functioning of the SCCH Co-op program on the day the visitor is in attendance.

Kitchen

Children are not allowed in the kitchen unless they are with their parent and supervised. Please keep all children away from the stove, the refrigerator, and the cabinets. If the microwave is needed for baby bottles or baby food, please let the SCCH Co-op Director know about it. The sink may be used for cleaning up, but it should be left clean and orderly afterwards. We have limited use of the kitchen and we need to abide by the rules of the church.

Parking

Parking is located at the back of the church near the Fellowship Hall entrance. Please park in the designated spaces instead of along the driveway or on the grass areas.

Bathroom

Children should be escorted to and from the bathroom before the Opening Assembly, between academic classes and gym classes, and after gym class by their parent or another adult if the parent is unavailable. During class times, the bathrooms will be closed except for emergencies.

Keeping the bathrooms clean for such a large number of children is very difficult. Each person is expected to clean up after themselves. If you use the bathroom facilities and notice a problem, please notify the SCCH Co-op Director immediately.

If the class activity requires hand washing, the teacher and/or the assistants will escort the children to the bathroom at the same time. The doors are to remain open at this time. The children should return to the classroom as a group.

Medical Emergency Procedures

If there is a medical emergency, contact the SCCH Co-op Director immediately. The first aid kit (located in the SCCH Co-op filing cabinet in Fellowship Hall) may be used for minor first aid treatment. If a major medical injury is suspected, do not move the injured person. Wait until certified medical personnel have arrived. The SCCH Co-op Director will designate one person to make the 911 phone call. If a child is injured, the SCCH Co-op Director will designate a person to retrieve the child's parent. If a parent is injured, the SCCH Co-op Director will ask another adult to take responsibility for the injured parent's children.

Rules of Proper Behavior

The leadership of our host church have graciously opened their hearts and provided the SCCH Co-op with a wonderful home for the upcoming school year. We all need to remember to treat the building, the

grounds, and all the equipment with care and respect. We need to respect and abide by their church rules. We also should remember to leave the facility in a neat and orderly fashion.

The teacher is the authority figure in the classroom and on the gym fields and it is the teacher's responsibility to maintain order in those situations. Assistants are assigned to each group to help the teacher accomplish this task. Specific behavior of any individual cannot be disruptive to the overall functioning of the group. If the child is disruptive and is not responding to verbal correction, the teacher should escort the child from the classroom and bring the child directly to the SCCH Co-op Director. After a description of the disruptive behavior, the teacher will return to the classroom and the SCCH Co-op Director will immediately have a meeting with the child and the child's parent. If necessary, the classroom teacher will be brought back into the discussion at a later time if issues or specific information needs to be clarified. The inappropriateness of the child's behavior will be explained to both the parent and the child. The child will not be allowed to return to the classroom for the remainder of the day, but instead must remain with the parent. We love our children so much but it is our responsibility as parents to clearly define for them where the boundaries of acceptable behavior are located.

All adults at the SCCH Co-op have the responsibility to maintain an atmosphere of order in all areas of the program. If an adult observes a child whose behavior needs to be corrected and the child is not responding to verbal correction, then the child should be taken immediately to the SCCH Co-op Director.

If the SCCH Co-op Director determines that additional steps are necessary to resolve the conflict, whether the conflict occurred in the classroom, the gym fields, or during a general assembly time, these steps will be implemented. (See Conflict Resolution information below.)

Specific Rules

1. The following areas are off limits at all times: the administrative offices, the pastors' offices, and the sanctuary.
2. Smoking is prohibited on church property.
3. The church property is to be respected at all times.
4. Children are to be supervised at all times. They should not be sent to another part of the building or outside without an adult escort.
5. All adults are to be honored and respected.
6. The following behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated: hitting, pushing, wrestling, yelling, teasing, whining, name calling, ungodly talk, gossip, or swearing.
7. Running inside the building is not permitted unless it is part of a supervised gym activity.
8. Boys and girls shall dress modestly. Shirts must cover the torso completely.
9. Jewelry such as dangling earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and some types of rings are dangerous in some class situations. This jewelry should be left at home and worn at a different time.

Conflict Resolution

The following information is adapted with permission from the Christian Homeschooler's Hybrid School policy manual.

Both parties (student-to-student or adult-to-adult) are responsible in any kind of conflict, whether they are the one offending or the one being offended. Both parties have a Biblical part to play in peacemaking.

Step One: Overlook Small Offenses

"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense." (Proverbs 19:11)

Many disputes/differences can be properly resolved by overlooking an offense and forgiving the person who has wronged or offended. Pray about the issue to decide if "it's worth it." If it's that important an issue to confront the offender, then do so. (Step Two) If, however, after prayer, God gives peace to "drop the issue," then it is passed and forgotten, and is not to be discussed with others.

Step Two: Seek Discussion

"If your brother sins against/offends you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." (Matthew 18:15)

Personal wrongs/offenses that are too serious to overlook should be resolved through confession or loving confrontation, opening the way to reconciliation. If the personal offenses occur between adult and student, then the student's parent needs to be in on this step as well.

Step Three: Begin Negotiation

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4)

Substantive issues should be resolved through a cooperative process in which you work together (offender and offended) to find solutions that meet the interests of all those involved. If a dispute cannot be resolved at this level, then step four is necessary.

Step Four: Seek Mediation

"If he will not listen to you, take one or two others along." (Matthew 18:16)

The SCCH Co-op Director and one or more mediators as necessary will meet with the offender and offended (and any others involved) to help communicate more effectively and to explore possible solutions. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level, the issue will be referred to the SCCH Board for resolution.

Location

Our home for the SCCH Co-op this year is Evangel Chapel located at 505 Highway 28 in Bridgewater, New Jersey. Evangel Chapel is situated on the right side of the road approximately 1½ miles west of the Somerville Circle on Highway 28.

Yearly Schedule

The SCCH Co-op meets two or three times per month on Mondays. The dates for the 2009 - 2010 academic year are as follows:

Fall Session: 9/21, 10/5, 10/19, 11/2, 11/16, 12/7

Winter Session: 1/11, 1/25, 2/8, 2/22, 3/1, 3/15

Spring Session: 3/29, 4/12, 4/26, 5/10, 5/24, 6/7

The final spring SCCH Co-op date (June 7, 2010) will be reserved for a Field Day for the entire SCCH Co-op community. Graduation ceremonies will be held during the week of June 7, 2010 at a location to be determined.

Enrollment

There are three SCCH Co-op enrollment periods for the 2009 - 2010 Academic Year.

Fall Session:

Regular Registration: April 20, 2009 - May 8, 2009

Late Registration: May 9, 2009 - May 15, 2009

Winter Session:

Regular Registration: October 5, 2009 - November 20, 2009

Late Registration: November 21, 2009 - November 30, 2009

Spring Session:

Regular Registration: January 25, 2010 - March 5, 2010

Late Registration: March 6, 2010 - March 12, 2010

For those families enrolling at the beginning of the school year, the costs are: \$30 for an annual family SCCH membership and \$95 for an annual family SCCH Co-op membership. If the family enrolls during the late registration period, an additional \$25 late fee will be assessed. Fees for those families joining during the year will be discussed directly with the SCCH Co-op Director.

Fire Drill Procedures

The SCCH Co-op Director will review these procedures with the parents and answer any questions. A minimum of one fire drill per session will be conducted at the SCCH Co-op each year.

A. Taking Attendance:

1. Attendance must be taken at the beginning of each class, preferably in Fellowship Hall during the Opening Assembly. Each teacher is supplied with a clipboard with an attendance sheet for the semester and a page showing the fire exits. The names of guests must be written on the attendance sheet as well as any toddlers or infants staying with the classroom assistants.
2. The SCCH Co-op Director will take note of the church staff in the building.
3. During the fire drill the attendance clipboard will be taken outside with the class. Attendance will be taken again after the class is outside at the assigned meeting place.
4. The classroom teacher will notify the SCCH Co-op Director and/or assistant if anyone is missing. DO NOT re-enter the building to look for missing personnel.

B. Signal: An ear piercing bell with flashing strobe lights.

C. Evacuation Procedures:

1. Evacuating the rooms: Each class is to quietly file out of the classroom and proceed to the fire exit for their room. If the main exit is blocked, use the alternate exit. A teacher is to lead the class and a second teacher is to be the last person out of the room. The last teacher should check to be sure that the windows are shut, the lights are turned off, and the door is shut. Any additional teachers are to help the students evacuate in a calm manner.
2. All drills are without outer clothing.
3. All bathrooms are closed during fire drills. Bathrooms are not re-opened until five minutes after students have returned to their classrooms.
4. Each side of the building has a **designated meeting place outside**.
 - A. East side – the manhole in the grass area closest to the road. Teachers must maintain order with the students at all times due to the possible traffic on the road from the fire department. Caution must be exercised at all times. Teachers may have the students sit on the grass, but the class must be kept together.
 - B. West Side – the Dumpster area behind the yellow lined box. When crossing the parking lot, please watch for cars and/or trucks that may be entering the parking lot.
5. The building will be supervised by the SCCH Co-op Director and assistant during the drill.
6. When the building is empty, the SCCH Co-op Director and assistant will check all the rooms. All doors and windows should be shut to complete the search. Bathrooms are also to be checked. Any student found inside the building during the fire drill will be escorted outside to the appropriate meeting place. Once the building check is completed, the SCCH Co-op

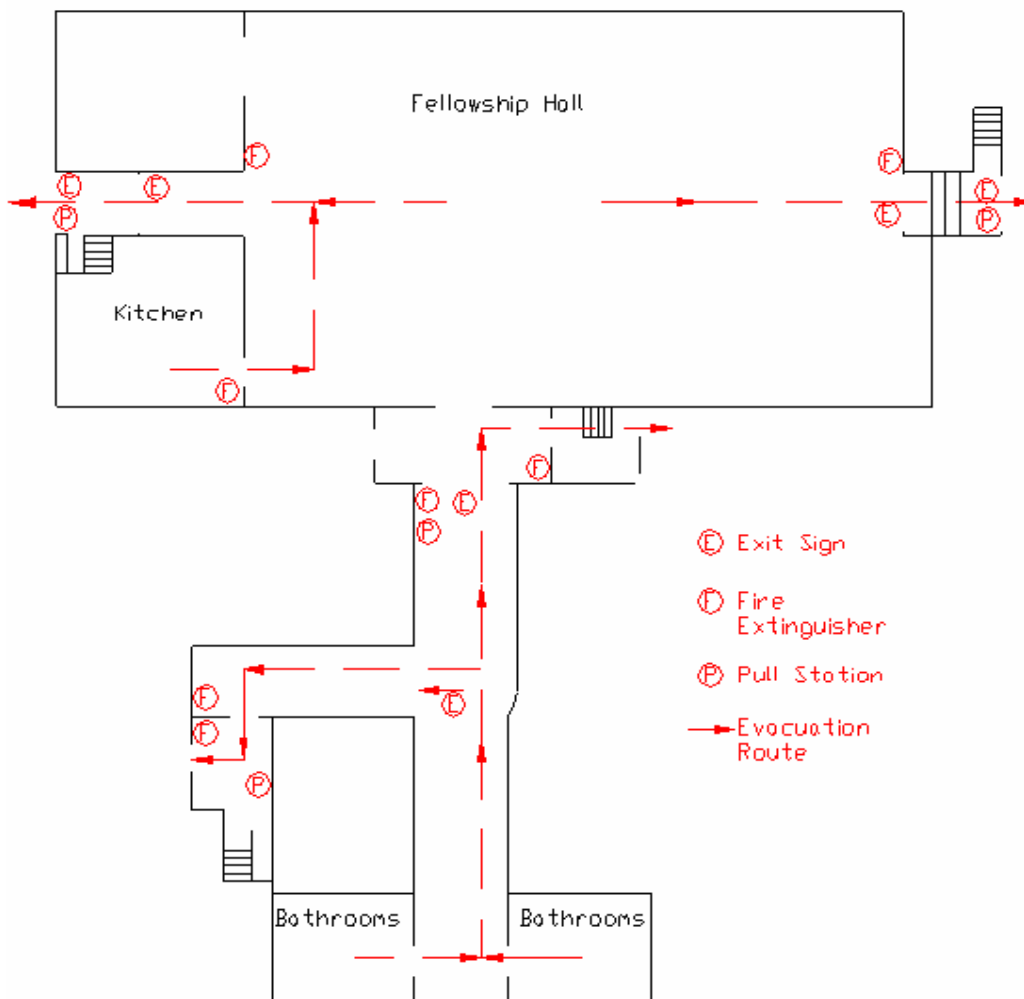
Director and assistant will go outside and check with the classroom teachers for any missing personnel.

D. End of Fire Drill: A long loud whistle by the SCCH Co-op Director and/or assistant will signify the end of the fire drill. Students should return to their classrooms with their teacher escorts.

E. Notification of an Actual Fire:

1. If anyone in the building observes an actual fire, a teacher or another adult should be notified immediately. An adult will pull the fire box to initiate the evacuation procedures.
2. There are several pull stations on each floor, usually by the exits. If the adult is unable to reach the fire box due to the fire, the adult should yell loudly in the hallway for help. The nearest adult will pull the closest fire box.
3. If addition, the SCCH Co-op Director or assistant will call 911 to verify the fire.

Fellowship Hall Evacuation Plan



Upstairs Evacuation Plan

