

Sacred Grove Academy

A Pagan Cover School Ministry of Church of the Spiral Tree

Yule 2014

**Sacred Grove Academy
P.O. Box 3165
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org**

Sacred Grove Academy is a church school operated under legal code 16-28-1, 16-28-3, 16-28-7, and 16-46-3 (church school law) of the State of Alabama



Updates to Laws Concerning Church & Private Schools

This past summer, legislators passed a new law that recognizes home instruction by someone other than a state-certified private tutor, and tackles a few other issues. A church school now includes either on-site or home schooling options.

After reading the new law, the church school option remains the best and simplest option for parents who wish to homeschool (there are no changes to this section), as the private school option has several requirements that must be met by home educators.

Those of you with high schoolers will appreciate this: the new law says that no public two-year or four-year college may deny admission to students who have been homeschooled, nor will such students be required to take the GED in order to be admitted.

Read the whole story on pages 4 & 5.

Email Addresses

Do you have email? If you are receiving this newsletter via snail-mail, that means we either don't have a working email address for you, or no response was sent back when we emailed this newsletter to you. As we send a lot of communications to families via email, including changes to policies and fees, newsletters, and reminders about deadlines, we just want to make sure that everyone who has an email address listed is actually *receiving* our emails. So if you do have a working email address that you check on a regular basis, please email it to us. And if at any point in the future your email address changes or if you no longer have access to your email, please let us know as soon as possible.

And remember, Sacred Grove's new email address is sacredgroveacademy@gmail.com.



If You Move:

If you move to a new residence within the state of Alabama, and you move into a different public school district, you **MUST** send in a new Enrollment Form for the new school district, **immediately** (don't wait for re-enrollment time!). You do not have to inform the previous school district that you have moved, but you do need to let the new one know that you are enrolled in a church school; otherwise you will be subject to truancy laws.



Attendance Forms Due by August 1

Attendance forms for 2014-2015 will be due at the end of the school year, and must be received by August 1, 2015. Your completed attendance forms are essential to fulfilling the letter of the law, and without them, you will not be able to re-enroll for the following year, even if you have sent the \$75 tuition fee.

NEW: Submit your attendance through our website!

<www.sacredgroveacademy.org/forms/Attendance/form.html>

You can also email your attendance forms; either by scanning and emailing your handwritten copies, or by emailing your Word or Excel document.

Re-Enrollment Deadline: August 1

The deadline for sending in your attendance forms and for re-enrolling is AUGUST 1. All enrollments will officially end on July 1; however, you can re-enroll for the 2015-2016 school year beginning anytime after June 1. The tuition is \$75 per family. In order to re-enroll, you must send the \$75 tuition, and your previous years' attendance forms. You do not have to fill out a new Enrollment Form, unless you have recently moved.

Late Re-Enrollments With Notice:

If you contact us PRIOR TO AUGUST 1 to tell us you will be late: You will have a grace period of 30 days, until August 31, to send in your re-enrollment tuition for the upcoming school year. There will be a late fee of \$25 per family, which must be paid, in addition to the \$75 tuition, for a total of \$100 per family (no discounts are available to CST members in the case of late re-enrollments), before you will be considered to be re-enrolled. Please note that if your late re-enrollment is not received by August 31, we will begin un-enrollment procedures.

If You Miss the August 1 Deadline:

If you have not re-enrolled by August 1 and have not contacted us to let us know you will be late, you'll be considered withdrawn, and we will send the obligatory letter to the school board stating such. You can re-enroll after that time, but you will need to pay the \$25 admission fee per child in addition to the \$75 tuition, and fill out both the Enrollment Form (CSEF) and the Admission Form again.

How to Pay for Your Re-Enrollment:

We accept re-enrollment tuition payments either via check or money order sent regular mail, or over the web using PayPal. You can use this free service to pay for your renewal each summer.

The link to pay via PayPal is
<www.sacredgroveacademy.org/Paypal.html>.

Transcripts Policy

You may prepare your own transcript using the blank forms provided on our website. However, if you'd like Sacred Grove Academy to prepare an official transcript for you, with the director's signature, there is a \$25 transcript fee. You will need to fill out the Transcript Request Form (available on our website), and send it in with your check or money order (or pay via PayPal). If you'd like the records faxed, there is a \$5 fax fee, and there is also a \$15 rush fee for faster than two-week service (fax fee is extra).

The parent/teacher must supply the subjects and grades for the student, using the Transcript Request Form. Sacred Grove does not know what your child studied nor what his/her grades were. Parents must turn in attendance forms **BEFORE** an official transcript will be made. If the student has not turned in an attendance form, we will send a letter stating no work can be verified. Official transcripts will not be made for non-graduating students withdrawing before the end of the school year. If a student withdraws during the school year to transfer to another school, parents will need to negotiate admission to another school on that school's terms, without a transcript from Sacred Grove Academy. Official transcripts will not be made for partial years of less than three months. For any partial year of the student's enrollment, we will send a letter stating no work can be verified. All fees must be paid before a transcript is sent to the parent,

Withdrawal Policies:

All enrollments end on July 1. If you do not re-enroll by August 1, you will be considered withdrawn, but may re-enroll at any point in the future, as long as all other policies have been adhered to. After August 1, an official letter to your local school superintendent will be sent stating that you are no longer enrolled in Sacred Grove Academy (as required by state law).

You can also officially withdraw from Sacred Grove at any time during the school year. ****No refunds will be given at any time.**** Families withdraw for various reasons, including sending their children back to public school, or moving out-of-state. To officially withdraw during the school year, just send a notice to Sacred Grove by mail or by email, stating that you are withdrawing. An official letter to your local school superintendent will then be sent stating that you are no longer enrolled in Sacred Grove Academy.

Removals & Improper Withdrawals:

NOTE: After **any** official or improper withdrawal or removal, an official letter to your local school superintendent will be sent stating that you are no longer enrolled in Sacred Grove Academy, and we will send a letter to your last known address stating the same. If you are not enrolled anywhere else, you will be subject to truancy laws.

You will be removed from enrollment with Sacred Grove if:

- You do not send your child's previous years' attendance forms in by August 1;
- If you write a worthless check, and restitution is not made within 30 days (civil charges may apply); or if any other fees are in arrears and are not paid within 30 days.

In the above cases, until your fees or forms are mailed in to us, no

records or information will be released about your child to you or to subsequent schools that may request such, nor will we provide diplomas, transcripts, letters giving date of withdrawal for purposes of GED, driver's license, or other reason, or any other information requested about that child. Furthermore, if attendance forms are not received within 12 months of your withdrawal (for example, 2013-2014 forms sent in by August 1, 2015), all of the above will apply, and no one in your family will be allowed to enroll or re-enroll in Sacred Grove Academy at any point in the future for any reason.

You will be considered to be improperly withdrawn if:

- If your summer or winter newsletter is returned undeliverable because you have moved and not sent in a change of address, and we cannot then get in touch with you by phone or email; as we will have no way of knowing whether you are still in your original school district or even in the state (Note: if your newsletter comes back, we make a reasonable attempt to contact you before removing you from the rolls);
- We discover that you have enrolled your child in a different school when that school sends us a request for your child's records, and you have not officially withdrawn (NOTE: We will NOT send any information without receiving an official withdrawal from you!)

In the above cases, no one in your family will be allowed to enroll or re-enroll at any point in the future for any reason, and no records or information will be released to you or to subsequent schools that may request such, nor will we provide diplomas, transcripts, letters giving date of withdrawal for purposes of GED, driver's license, or other reason, or any other information requested, **AT ALL** for that child.

Upcoming Event:

Children's Chapel led by Susan Betke at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham, on December 21st. Winter Solstice and the return of the Sun are the theme. All are welcome.

Great Childrens' Book:

The Shortest Day: Celebrating the Winter Solstice by Wendy Pfeffer

I LOVE this book—simple and informative, pretty illustrations. It goes back in history to talk about the beginnings of the Solstice celebrations and discusses how other religions adapted Pagan rituals to their own holidays.

- by April Iris McLeod



New Law Recognizes Home Instruction

From: <<http://www.hslda.org/hs/state/al/201404080.asp>>

April 8, 2014

With the enactment of Senate Bill 38 on April 2, 2014, Alabama law now expressly recognizes home instruction by someone other than a state-certified private tutor as an option for complying with the compulsory attendance requirements.

The vast majority of parents teaching their children at home in Alabama do so through enrollment in a church school. But, until now, this method has not been included in the statutory language describing the options available to parents. The new law redefines a church school to include either on-site or home programs.

Until now, private schools have never been a viable option for home educators, because the law required that these schools be approved by the state superintendent of education. Approval was granted only if all of the teachers were state-certified and public school courses were taught. The new law defines a private school simply as "only such schools that are established, conducted, and supported by a nongovernmental entity or agency offering educational instruction in grades K-12, or any combination thereof, including preschool, through on-site or home programs." Since a person is a legal entity, this means that anyone may start and operate a private school meeting the requirements in the definition. Private schools are now an option for parents conducting home instruction, whether it's through the home program of an established private school or by creating a private school having the home as its main location.

The new law also contains nondiscrimination language for graduates of any nonpublic school, including those who were "home schooled." It states that no public two-year or four-year institution of higher learning may deny admission to an otherwise qualified student based on the fact that the student attended, graduated from, or is enrolled in a nonpublic school. No longer will graduates of church schools (and now private schools) be required to take the GED exam in order to be admitted to a state college.

Another major provision of the new law makes it clear that nonpublic schools are not subject to licensure or regulation by the state or any of its political subdivisions, including the state department of education.

The new law transforms Alabama from a state where the legal status of home educators was uncertain to one that offers one of the most favorable legal climates in the nation. It goes into effect on July 1 of this year. Senators Dick Brewbaker (Dist. 25) and Del Marsh (Dist. 12) sponsored this legislation.



Summary of Alabama's New Homeschool Law Homeschooling in Alabama

From: <<http://www.hslda.org/elert/archive/elertarchive.aspx?7098>>
Originally Sent: 6/23/2014
From the HSLDA e-let service

Dear HSLDA Members and Friends:

With the enactment of Alabama Senate Bill 38 as it was signed by the governor on April 2, 2014, there have been several favorable changes to the law affecting home educators. I summarized these changes in an article in HSLDA's Weekly Update emailed to our members and friends on April 8, 2014. Since that time I have revised our summary of Alabama's homeschool law as it appears on HSLDA's website, and I wanted to provide all of you with the most recent version by email as you consider your options for the upcoming school year.

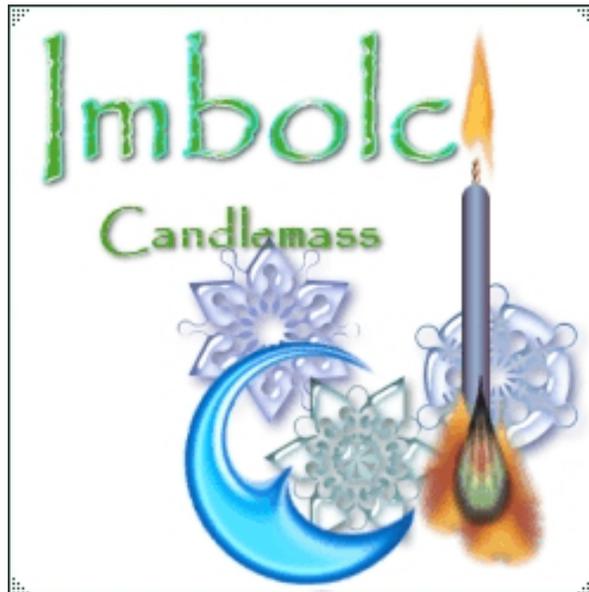
For those of you who received a copy of our summary at the CHEF of Alabama conference in Gardendale last week, please note that I have made a minor change in the paragraphs that include the definition of a church school and private school. This change in the summary was made to clarify that neither a church school nor a private school that has home programs must have a location where a day school is conducted. This is not a change in the law. Many church school coverings for home educators have been conducted over the years without operating a day

school for other students.

In our opinion, a home program of a church school remains the best option for parents conducting home instruction for their children. This is because there is so much less reporting to state officials required of church schools compared to what is required of private schools. The reporting requirements for church schools were not changed by the new law. Parents need only file the church school enrollment form with the local public school superintendent.

Please feel free to contact my legal assistant, Daniel Davis, with any questions you may have about the new law.

Sincerely,
Dewitt T. Black, III
HSLDA Senior Counsel



REMINDERS

Please do not mail any school work to our office! Also, please do not have your former school(s) mail any previous school records to us. We do not need any of these items. You, the parent, are the teacher, and as such, are fully responsible for grading, and keeping and maintaining school work and records.

What We Do NOT Provide:

- Curriculum (books, etc.)
- Teachers to come to your home
- Teachers at our office to check work or give grades
- An accredited school or program (no cover school in Alabama is accredited)

Join our Sacred Grove Facebook group!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/190035067717206/>



Fox's Witchy Kitchen

Enchanted Eats by Arsh Darksbane

Yulefide Wassail

Ingredients:

- 1 lb honey
- 1/8 cup cinnamon
- 1/8 cup nutmeg
- 1/4 cup orange peel
- 2 cinnamon Sticks
- 1 whole apple sliced
- 1 orange sliced
- 1 large bag dried fruit
- 1 gallon apple juice

Directions:

1. In a huge pot, start with apple juice over medium-high heat.
2. When the apple juice is about 180 degrees (when bubbles start forming on the bottom of the pot) you can add honey and just stir it to make sure it dissolves. You don't really want to let honey sit on the bottom or it will burn.
3. Once the honey is dissolved, add your spices and your fruit. Just dump it all in there. Then stir it up and simmer it a bit, reducing the heat if needed.

Now the nice part is that you can leave it on a simmer for as long as you like. The longer you let it simmer, the better it'll taste. If you want, start this in the day before you plan a gathering then let it simmer all afternoon. Just go back and stir it often enough, and make sure it's on a LOW Simmer. Not too hot, or it might burn, or reduce too much. I would toss a lid on it if you're gonna let it sit for a few hours. That way most of the liquid will drip back into the pot from the lid when it evaporates.

Anyway 3-4 hours of simmering is great, but one hour will do if you just want your drink sooner.

4. Remove from heat and add your booze right then. You don't wanna add booze until it's off the heat or it may cook the booze away. You can add as much or as little as you like, down to none. I prefer vodka or rum. Make sure it's a smooth vodka though: I prefer Viking Fjord. Rum is good; some folks use brandy. Use whatever you prefer.

It's now ready to serve!



Traditions Regarding Wassail:

Keep a jug of wassail by your door when guests will be arriving and each person should have a drink with you as they enter. This is a sign of good will and a way of proving the person was a friend and not a wicked spirit in disguise.

;) You can keep a dry version as well for the younger ones so they can participate.

Ever heard "Here We Come a Wassailing?" This concept comes from olden times when people would make wassail and go load into a sled and travel around the village singing holiday songs. When they came to your house, you were invited to come along wassailing and it was considered bad luck to refuse. This usually culminated in the whole village ending up at the village center where the Yule Tree was kept, singing and drinking. They'd throw bits of toast into the wassail then take it and hang it on the tree to offer some of the drink to the Yule tree and the spirits. This is where we get the phrase "To Toast."

Wassail comes from the Old Norse "Wes hal" or "Good Health!" which we loosely translate to mean "To Your Health!"

Wassail Tips and Tricks:

However much you think you need, make double that, because you're going to want more! ;)

Be sure to dish a bit of fruit into people's mugs when you serve it—it's so tasty.

Or reserve the fruit bits and serve with a cinnamon stick in the mug, then you can pull the drunk fruit out when the wassail's gone and make drunk fruit cobbler.

Careful with the drunk fruit mind you! After soaking in the boozed wassail all night that fruit will be potent! But delicious.

From my family to yours, Wassail

Pagan Crafts

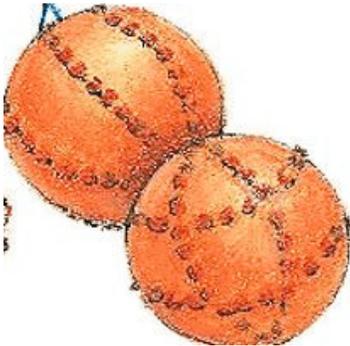
Fun Activities for Children and Adults

Crafts for Holidays

by AmberSkyfire

Pomanders for Yule

All you need are whole cloves and oranges. Just stick cloves into the skins of oranges. The cloves will draw the juice out of the orange allowing it to dry and release a spicy orange scent that will last for weeks. Cover the orange with cloves leaving about 1/4 inch spaces between the cloves. Turn the pomander every few days to allow it to dry evenly. These will make the house smell wonderful. You can even put one in the car as an air freshener. It will last longer than the little cardboard ones you find in the store, and smell better.



Candle Cans for Imbolc

Imbolc is a time to light many candles in celebration of the lighting of the world and the new warmth. Candle cans are a wonderful and safe way to decorate for this holiday.

You will need:

Tin can
Water
Hammer
Nail
Paper
Scissors

Pencil or crayon

Save tin soup cans or other tall metal cans to use as candle holders. Fill the cans almost to the top with water and freeze them in the freezer. Cut a piece of paper to fit exactly around the tin can so that it covers the entire can. Have the child draw a picture on the paper the way that they want it to look on the can using dots as if it you were making a dot-to-dot picture.. (example: stars, flowers, suns, moons, etc.) Once the picture is finished, wrap the paper around the frozen can. Take a nail (adults will need to do this for smaller children) and hammer it lightly over each dot on the picture, so that it will be transferred to the can. When finished, remove the paper and let the ice melt. Put tea lites inside of the tin can through the opening in the top so that they sit on the bottom of the can. The pictures drawn in dots on the can will glow with the light of the flame and will be projected onto the walls of a dark room.

Real Grass Baskets for Ostara

One of the most lovely crafts you can make before Ostara is baskets with real grass in them. This is easy for both children and adults to do.

You will need:

Round basket
Plastic disposable plant water
Catching dish as close to the size of the basket as you can find
Dirt
Grass seed

Place the dish inside of the basket. The closer the dish is to

the size of the inside of the basket, the better. Fill the dish up to the top with potting soil. Sprinkle grass seed over the top of the soil and water. You will need to water the grass every now and then to keep the seeds moist. make sure to use lots of seed so that the grass grows thick and keep in a sunny location. When Ostara comes, you will have a wonderful grass-filled basket to put the eggs you find in. The basket can be kept with grass all year long as a window decoration, or the grass and soil can be tossed into the yard.

Paper Flowers for Ostara or Beltane

You will need:

Colored construction paper or tissue paper
Glue
Scissors
Craft sticks or popsicle sticks
Crayons

Draw flowers on the colored construction paper. You can use each color for different flowers or only one color. Use your imagination when making flowers. You can trace objects like your hand or a toy or use stencils. Color the flowers with the crayons and paste the flower parts together. Glue the flowers onto the sticks and then add leaves that you have cut from green construction paper. Paper flowers can be placed anywhere for decoration and look great in baskets. You can stick them in a flower pot of dirt or crumpled paper for lovely potted flowers that will never die. These flowers also make great gifts for loved ones.

Attendance Form - Version A

School Year: _____ - _____

Student's Name: _____ Grade Just Completed: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Do you intend to re-enroll for the upcoming school year? _____

Parent's Email: _____ Do you check this email regularly? _____

Address: _____

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
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28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	30	30		30	30	30	30
31	31		31		31	31		31		31	

MONTHLY TOTAL

Circle days designated as educational.

Attendance Record - Version B

Student's Name: _____

Grade Just Completed: _____ **School Year:** _____ - _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Email: _____

Do you check this email regularly? _____

Address: _____

Do you intend to re-enroll for the upcoming school year? _____

	Month Total	Year Total
July	_____	_____
August	_____	_____
September	_____	_____
October	_____	_____
November	_____	_____
December	_____	_____
January	_____	_____
February	_____	_____
March	_____	_____
April	_____	_____
May	_____	_____
June	_____	_____

Have You Moved? If so, have you notified us?

If you move to a new residence within the state of Alabama, and you move into a *different public school district*, you **MUST** send in a new Enrollment Form for the new school district, *immediately* (don't wait for re-enrollment time!). You do not have to inform the previous school district that you have moved, but you do need to let the new one know that you are enrolled in a church school; otherwise you will be subject to truancy laws.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

