



A Ministry of **GRACE CHURCH** | Waldorf

**2025-2026**  
**PARENT/STUDENT MANUAL**  
**KINDERGARTEN – 10<sup>TH</sup>**  
**GRADE**

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# **Introductory Information**

# PREFACE

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This manual has been compiled to give our school family a knowledge of the operating policies of Grace Christian Academy (GCA). Our hope is that everyone would seek to apply the spirit of these policies and not just the letter. Please note that these policies may be modified during the school year.

While it is not required that you or your child be a member of Grace Church, we do encourage you to be involved in a local church body of your own. For those looking for a church home, we invite you to visit Grace Church and worship with us to become better acquainted with our ministries.

As an open-enrollment school, we admit students who do not personally share our Christian faith and values. However, all GCA students and families should desire and/or be willing to be educated and trained in an educational program that reflects these beliefs and values. While we recognize the equal worth of all people, regardless of their beliefs and values, we expect that GCA students and families will not actively promote (either on or off campus) different beliefs and values in ways that undermine or hinder our school's mission.

# ADMINISTRATION

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Grace Christian Academy is a ministry of the Grace Church in Waldorf, Maryland.

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Director of School:</b>          | Mrs. Stacie Buhl  |
| <b>Director of Education:</b>       | Mrs. Megan Schaniel   |
| <b>Director of Admissions:</b>      | Mrs. Lisa Johnson   |
| <b>S.T.E.P. Center Coordinator:</b> | Miss Michelle Goodson   |
| <b>Homeschool Coordinator:</b>      | Miss Michelle Goodson   |
| <b>Comptroller:</b>                 | Ms. Nancy Kemmerer  |
| <b>Director of Operations:</b>      | Mr. John Somerville   |
| <b>Athletic Director:</b>           | Mr. John Somerville   |
| <b>Extended Care / Summer Camp</b>  | Miss Michelle Goodson   |
| <b>Management Team/Board:</b>       | Composed of pastoral and lay representatives from Grace Church of Waldorf, Grace Christian Academy, and the community |

*\* Grace Christian Academy of Maryland admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Grace Christian Academy of Maryland does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.*

# ACCREDITATION AND AFFILIATION

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Grace Christian Academy is fully accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA). Accreditation is based on educational goals and programs, faculty qualifications, school organization, curriculum, media center, and facilities.

Grace Christian Academy is also approved by the Maryland State Department of Education.

## VISION STATEMENT

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GCA graduates will be fully-equipped to live out their God-given purpose in life.

## MISSION STATEMENT

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*To provide academic excellence from a Biblical perspective in order to develop servant leaders of all walks of life who live and love like Jesus Christ.*

### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE DEFINED

**Fosters Individualized Growth** - Growth looks different for each child based on their individual strengths and weaknesses. All students, regardless of academic level, learning styles, personal interests, level of out of school support, etc. have the ability to show growth throughout their educational journey at GCA.

**Encourages Active Engagement** - Lessons are designed to foster innovation, creativity, critical thinking skills and collaboration. Lesson activities are hands-on and multisensory and take individualized learning styles into consideration.

**Prioritizes Quality over Quantity** - Utilization of instructional techniques that develop deeper understanding. GCA teachers will prioritize the quality of lessons over the quantity of lessons. Teachers will effectively cover all necessary content at a pace that allows for deeper understanding, instead of “scratching the surface” of every topic in a curriculum book.

### BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE DEFINED

Stakeholders will understand the world through the lens of...

**Creation** - All humans are created in the image of God.

**Fall** - Sin entered the world through Adam. We are sinners by nature and by choice and are in need of a Savior.

**Redemption** - Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice. We can have salvation through faith and repentance and be sanctified on this side of heaven.

## **SERVANT LEADER DEFINED**

We will expect our stakeholders to exemplify the following attributes:

**Humility** - Acknowledging we are dependent upon God

**Stewardship** - Being responsible for our God-given gifts

**Empathy** - Having compassion for others

**Selflessness** - Outdoing one another in honor

## **CORE VALUES**

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**Christ Centered** - We prioritize Jesus as the foundation and guiding principle of one's thoughts, actions, and motivations, seeking to live in accordance with His teaching and values.

**Excellence Driven** - We seek to glorify God in every endeavor by using our gifts and abilities to honor Him in our work, words and actions.

**Service Oriented** - We encourage students to serve others, both within the school community and in their local community.

**Growth Focused** - Stakeholders will have a mindset improving in all areas of life through effort, learning and persistence.

**Unified Team** - We are one team, with one mission, serving one God. We are interconnected through all academies and all stakeholders.

**Holy Stewardship** - We honor and maximize the potential of the resources, assets, and people God has entrusted us with.

**Character Development** - We aim to foster strong character, instilling values like integrity, honesty, compassion, and humility.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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- We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

- We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:18-20)
- We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man. (Matt. 1:18-25)
- We believe that God created the world, including man, in six twenty-four hour days. (Ex. 20:11)
- We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned, and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, become sinners (in thought, word and deed) and consequently need redemption. (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 5:12-21)
- We believe that all mankind, excepting Adam and Eve, achieve personhood at the moment of conception. (Gen. 1:26-27; Ps. 139:14-16; Jer. 1:5)
- We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as a genetic male or genetic female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
- We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one genetic male and one genetic female in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4) and that sexual intimacy outside of marriage (including adultery, fornication, rape, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sin.
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood. (Rom. 5:8)

- We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, His ascension into Heaven, and His present intercession for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Heb. 4:14-16)
- We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become children of God. (Rom. 10:9-10; John 1:12)
- We believe in that blessed hope, the personal imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:9-11)
- We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting punishment of the lost. (John 14:6; 2 Thess. 1:8-9)

## OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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### **The Primary Source of Truth**

Acknowledging that the Bible is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, all sufficient and authoritative Word, the philosophy of education at Grace Christian Academy is based on a God-centered view of truth and man as presented in the Bible. "For by Him all things were created . . . He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17). Truth is not based on feelings, circumstances or opinion, but is absolute and objective and is the summation of what is taught through the Word of God (Ps. 119:160, John 17:17). This foundation of truth is essential to have a comprehensive, undistorted understanding of the world and all subjects therein.

### **The Nature of Man**

Man is created in the image of God, with the unique capacity to know and respond to God personally and voluntarily (Genesis 1:26-27). However, because man is a sinner by nature and choice, he cannot, in this condition, know or honor God in his life (Romans 3:10-11, 23). He can do this only by being born again (John 3:3), through receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and thus being enabled to do God's will, being conformed to His image, which is the ultimate purpose of his life (Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 12:1-2). Even as believers, part of our nature is to be inclined toward laziness and the path of least resistance. Students are no different and need the boundaries of instruction, discipline and encouragement to mature into responsible, diligent and secure young people (Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:11).

### **The Responsibility to Educate**

The Bible clearly instructs parents, not the Church or State, to "bring [children]

up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:4; Proverbs 22:6). As parents enlist the school to assist in this training process, we endeavor to become their co-laborers with the goal of guiding and directing the student in gaining knowledge, wisdom and understanding based on a proper and righteous fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7). As a school, we seek to help train parents in God's wisdom for family life.

### **The Goal of Education**

"The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (I Timothy 1:5). Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are:

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37,39).*

# **Operational Policies and Procedures**

# ADMISSION PROCEDURES

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## **\*Requirements for Admission\***

The following requirements have been established for admission to Grace Christian Academy:

1. Completion of the on-line application with signatures and appropriate fees.
2. Parent/Guardian Photo Identification (i.e. Driver's License/Passport)
3. Scholastic and behavioral records from previous school.
4. Completion of Grace Christian Academy admissions/entrance test (Kindergarten – Grade 8).
5. Health records that meet State requirements.

A. **Medical Forms.** Maryland State law requires that the *Health Inventory Form with Lead Screening* signed by the parent and the child's physician be on file for all students.

B. **Immunization Record.** Maryland State law requires students entering any school within the state to have the following immunizations: poliomyelitis, small pox, diphtheria, rubella, pertussis and tetanus.

6. Submit all enrollment forms prior to interview with Director of School, including signed Statement of Faith and Parental Statement
7. Completion of family interview with Director of School
8. Complete registration with FACTS tuition management within 10 days of interview and acceptance.

\* Kindergarten students must be five years of age by September 1 of the year of entrance.

\*\* Pre-K 3 students must be three years of age by September 1 of the year of entrance.

\*\* Pre-K 4 students must be four years of age by September 1 of the year of entrance.

**(All PK students must be fully toilet trained prior to 1<sup>st</sup> day of school. Pull-up pants not permitted)**

GCA desires to provide a Christian education for all students. The school has established the STEP Center to assist students with educational difficulties. However, the school is not able to meet the needs of every student. Students with educational challenges will be evaluated

on a case by case basis. Students with severe educational, physical, or emotional deficits will not be accepted.

### **Academic Probation**

All new students to GCA are automatically placed on academic probation for the first nine weeks of attendance. At the conclusion of the marking period, the academic committee will review the student's progress to determine if the student should remain on probation. Students with a failing grade at the end of any grading period will be placed on academic probation until such time as the grade is passing.

## **FINANCIAL POLICY**

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### **Payment Options**

We offer many payment options:

- **Annual**
- **Semester**
- **Quarterly**
- **Monthly**

Please check our website or contact the Financial Office for more information.

Note: We realize that all families may experience temporary financial setbacks that prohibit them from meeting their monthly obligation. We are willing to work with those parents who come to us in order to work out a mutually-agreed upon plan that meets both our needs.

### **Past Due Payments**

- The responsible person(s) for tuition payments that are past due on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of the month will be mailed or e-mailed a reminder letter reflecting the past due balance and late fee of \$10.00 minimum or 5% of balance, whichever is greater.
- Accounts left unpaid by the next monthly billing cycle will be mailed a collection letter reflecting the past due balance, the current month's tuition, and the added service charges. This letter will include a notice regarding terminating educational services if the account is not paid in full within 30 days.
- Accounts unpaid by the 3rd billing cycle will be sent a certified letter stating the specific date that educational services will be terminated, and the student will not be allowed to return to school.
- GCA will, after exhausting all reasonable collection efforts, turn the delinquent account over to a third-party agency for collection.

## **School Records**

- Report cards, transcripts, diplomas, or any school records will not be released if any account balance is past due.
- If a student is suspended or expelled, he/she shall not be able to sit for any testing until past due payments have been fully satisfied.

## **Returning Students**

- No student will be allowed to return to school at the beginning of the new school year if there remains a balance due from the preceding year.
- Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to request the prepayment of tuition in full for an upcoming school term if excessive delinquent payments were experienced in the preceding year.
- Any unpaid tuition from previous school years prevents re-enrollment in Grace Christian Academy. Under this criterion a parent must pay all previous outstanding fees prior to enrollment, and said parent is automatically placed in a financial probation status.

## **Fees**

- There will be a \$35.00 fee assessed for all returned payment checks for insufficient funds. After two returned checks, Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to request payment in the form of cash, money order, or certified check only.
- Families who choose the monthly payment plan and miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds are assessed a \$30.00 missed payment fee by FACTS as well as incurring a fee from their own financial institution. The missed payment is reattempted by FACTS within 20 days. Two consecutive missed payment attempts by FACTS are considered grounds for dismissal from Grace Christian Academy.

## **Transferring Students**

- We cannot accept students who still owe money to another private or Christian school. This delinquency makes it impossible to receive transcripts. Students cannot be admitted until fees from the previous year have been paid.
- Active duty military families that are transferred more than 50 miles from GCA will be granted a prorated financial balance that includes all education days at GCA prior to PCS. PCS orders must be provided to GCA as proof of military orders.

## **Dismissal or withdrawal**

- Any school family failing to pay their tuition and fees according to their agreement with the school or who have been unwilling to make suitable alternative arrangements with the school will have their children withheld from class until the situation is corrected. The Administration will inform parents when this situation is reached.
- Repeated, even not consecutive, missed payments are considered grounds for dismissal from Grace Christian Academy.
- Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to withdraw students at any time for delinquency of tuition, fees, or extended school day charges.

## **Financial Agreement**

- After the financial agreement between GCA is signed, the family is responsible for the entire tuition. Removal of the student from GCA will not negate the financial agreement and the family is still responsible for the entire agreed upon payment.

## **Tuition Assistance (Variable Rate Tuition)**

- Families may apply for tuition assistance by going to the school's website and clicking on the FACTS link. A Financial Aid Application must be completed online to be considered by the Tuition Assistance Committee. FACTS charges a \$30 fee to apply.

## **Extra hours charges**

- For students not enrolled in Before/After Care, the school will provide supervision for 15 minutes prior to school and 15 minutes after school at no additional charge. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes early or depart more than 15 minutes late must be supervised; therefore, families will be charged for each fifteen-minute interval or any fraction thereof.
- All students, including Extended Care, must be picked up by 6:30 p.m. After 6:30 p.m. a late charge of \$8.50 per fifteen minutes or any fraction thereof will be assessed.

## **Damaged Books**

- Textbooks and library books are the responsibility of the student who has them checked out. The condition of books (those that are GCA owned) assigned is noted at the time of distribution to the student. Loss of or damage to those books will result in a charge for the replacement cost of the book, plus shipping costs. The cost to replace used books will be pro-rated based on the condition of the book at the time it was issued.

- There are no financial remissions for reason (e.g., illness, vacation, holidays, etc.)
- Fees for miscellaneous items, i.e., athletics, field trips, lunches, milk, etc., cannot be charged to accounts.

## **SOLVING PERSON TO PERSON PROBLEMS: USING THE MATTHEW 18 PRINCIPLE**

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We know there will be times when conflict may arise between school personnel and families. In these situations, we ask that all parties follow the Matthew 18 Principle. In doing so you are taking the concern to the person directly involved, not skipping the chain of command. All classroom/academic concerns must first be brought to the teachers' attention. Then if it is not settled, continue up the chain of command. Please follow the conflict resolution advice that Jesus gave to His disciples that is found in Matthew 18:15-17:

*Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

Jesus taught several clear principles for solving people-to-people problems.

1. **Keep the matter confidential.** This is especially true when you are still learning the facts of a matter. Don't be quick to judge a matter before you know everyone's perspective. The pattern of sharing a problem only with those directly involved establishes the principle of confidentiality.
2. **Keep the circle small.** “*If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone...*” The first step and most often the only step needed in solving a person-to-person problem is for one of the two people involved to initiate face-to-face dialogue. Most problems are solved at the two-people level.
3. **Be straightforward.** Be respectful as well as forthright. We will be quick to apologize and make a situation right if we erred. Please give us the chance. Also, please be open to hear a part of the story that you may not have heard.
4. **Be forgiving.** All parties should be ready and willing to forgive, to learn from their mistakes, and to move forward in unity.

5. **Move up the ladder.** If there is no resolution, go to the person's supervisor, and if necessary, to that person's supervisor - up to and including the GCA school board if necessary. This process ensures privacy and puts the issue in the hands of the people who can get it resolved.

## **PARENT/SCHOOL RELATIONS**

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We encourage parents to contact the school whenever they have a question or concern. Please be aware of our 48-hour policy where we will acknowledge emails within 48 business hours (this does not include after school hours and weekends).

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

We encourage parents to request a meeting with their child's teacher when needed. Please email the teacher directly or call the school office and leave a message for the teacher. Please don't approach teachers for a conference or discussion during regular school hours, as they are busy preparing for school activities and are also unable to give you their full attention.

### **RenWeb School Management System**

RenWeb allows you to view your child's grades, attendance, homework and conduct, as well as other useful school information. You can also communicate with teachers and other school staff online whenever necessary. Please contact the school office if you are having trouble getting online or if the information you need isn't posted.

### **Custodial & Noncustodial Parents Policy**

It is the intent of GCA to remain neutral toward families split by divorce or separation. We do not take sides with one parent against the other where there may be possible conflict over children attending our school. If you have a court decree, which established you as legal guardian, you will want to provide GCA a copy of such document for attachment to your child's permanent record. We will use this as a legal base for working with the custodial parent.

In the absence of such a document, you must be aware that GCA cannot deny either parent access to his/her child. We cannot withhold information or refuse to see or work with the other parent. We cannot keep the other parent from picking up his/her child from school.

GCA wants to protect all our students from emotionally upsetting situations. In

order to maintain a safe and secure environment within the school, all custody disputes must be addressed outside of the school. Updated Official Court/Custodial documents must be provided to the school.

## **VISITING CAMPUS**

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We value the presence of our school parents on campus. However, we have established procedures in order to ensure a safe environment for our students. Please understand that these procedures are not to discourage your presence but to protect your children. We have implemented the following visitor safety procedures that all must follow:

Parents who wish to formally observe their children in school need to make an appointment with the Director of Education (who will notify the teacher) at least two days in advance. This advanced notification will help us prepare so that your presence does not distract students or affect the learning environment during the time you are here. (Please realize that the teacher will not have time to confer with you or to answer questions during the visit while students are present. Please schedule a private appointment for this.)

When you arrive on campus, please come to the main office with photo ID to sign in and receive a visitor badge and sign out when you leave.

Students from other schools are not allowed on campus before, during, or after school unless they are attending a school-sponsored event that is open to the public. Exceptions to this policy must be made in advance.

Chaperones for GCA field trips must also sign in at the office (and receive a badge) before beginning chaperone duties.

We understand your time is valuable, and the safety of your children and all the adults serving them is even more so. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we continue to enhance our safety and security procedures to better serve our school community.

## **PARENTAL STATEMENT**

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If my student is accepted at Grace Christian Academy:

1. I agree to have him/her trained in accordance with the school's Statement of Faith.
2. I agree to abide by the Parent-Student Handbook (at [www.graceknights.org](http://www.graceknights.org))
3. I agree to give the administration full authority to place my child in the proper grade level and class.

4. I acknowledge the school's right to dismiss students who do not respect its spiritual standards or cooperate in the educational process.
5. I recognize the school's right to dismiss any student(s) whose parents are unsupportive and uncooperative.
6. I give permission for the applicant to be disciplined according to school policy.
7. I agree to assume the responsibility of my child's education by supervising assigned homework and keeping in regular contact with my child's teacher.
8. I agree to support the school's activities through attendance and participation.
9. I agree to support the school's programs through prayer, volunteer help, and financial gifts as I am able.
10. I grant permission for my child to go on scheduled field trips and school activities.
11. I grant my permission to the school authorities to take the following steps in the event my child becomes ill or is injured under school supervision.
  - a. Contact a parent of the student and follow the parent's instruction.
  - b. Contact the student's physician and follow his/her instructions in the event neither parent can be reached.
  - c. Use discretion in contacting a properly licensed physician and follow his/her instructions if the student's physician cannot be reached. If in the opinion of a properly licensed and practicing physician my child needs medical or surgical services which require my consent before being supplied, and I cannot be reached, I hereby authorize, appoint, and empower the Administrator, or designee, to furnish on my behalf, such written or oral authorization as may be required. Further, I release the Administrator, or designee, the School Board and Grace Christian Academy of Maryland and church from any liability which might arise from the giving of such authorization, it being my desire that my child be furnished with such medical or surgical services as soon as reasonably possible after the need arises.
12. I understand to complete the registration process; the application, tuition and program fees must be paid. These fees are not refundable.
13. I agree to give four weeks' notice of voluntary withdrawal of my child(ren). I understand that the registration and program fees will not be refunded, and

the financial agreement is for the full school year.

14. I have read the financial policy and agree to pay all my obligations therein.
15. I intend to have the applicant enrolled for the full year.
16. I agree that I will provide health insurance coverage for my child while he/she is enrolled at GCA. If my health insurance changes or is dropped, I agree to inform the school office and take immediate steps to replace that coverage.
17. I understand that I am responsible to submit all updated medical forms, birth certificate, and transferred school records where applicable before my child can attend GCA.
18. I understand that school records and transcripts will not be released until all fees and school financial obligations have been met.

## MEDICAL

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GCA has defined certain policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. These policies are in accordance with Charles County and State of Maryland guidelines.

### Health Room Services

Most students will visit the Health Room at least once, so it is important for parents to know what we can provide for your child. The Health Room is open from 8:30-3:00 when the nurse is on campus for students who become ill, injured or need to take medication. The office is staffed by a nurse. If the nurse is not available, there will be several individuals who will be able to administer student's medication. If your child is sick and will be absent, please notify the nurse or school by emailing the school at [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org) asap.

### Illness and Injury

The school provides basic first aid in case of an accident. For minor bruises and scrapes, the wound will be cleaned with soap and water and a clean bandage and/or ice will be applied. Parents will be notified if the injury is more serious. In emergency situations, 911 will be called, and the student will be taken to the nearest hospital. If a parent/legal guardian cannot be reached, the individuals on the student's emergency card will be called. The *emergency card* with a parent's signature permits the school to arrange emergency care for students.

The following conditions will require your child to be sent home during the day:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- Vomiting

- Diarrhea -- two or more episodes
- Very frequent cough -- This is often an indicator of a serious illness or asthma as well as being uncomfortable for your child.
- Any communicable disease listed by the State of Maryland that requires exclusion as found in *Communicable Diseases Summary: Guide for Schools, Child Care, and Youth Camps*

Students who are ill should be picked-up within an hour of parental notification. Please have a plan in place in the event you are called to pick up your child from school.

### **Return to School Policy for All Students**

- Fever-Free (without fever-reducing medications) for 24 hours. **MANDATORY**
- Vomiting-Free, Diarrhea-Free for 24 hours. **MANDATORY**
- State of MD communicable disease requirements for return to school.

**Please be considerate of your child as well as others when making the decision to send your child back to school. The school has difficulty checking the spread of illness when parents knowingly send their child to school not fully recovered. There may be times when this will require you to keep your child home an "extra" day to ensure your child is ready to return to school. Please err on the side of caution or consider a late arrival in order to give you/your child time in the morning to see if he/she is ready to function in school for that day.**

### **Common Communicable Diseases**

The school office/nurse should be notified at [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org) when a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Below is a list of some of the most common diseases.

- Chicken Pox - excluded from school until all lesions are crusted over
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) - excluded from school; may return after receiving medication for 24 hours or cleared for return by the health care provider (documentation needed from health care provider) or symptoms have resolved.
- Fifth Disease - student may return as physician directs or when fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Head Lice - may return after first dose of pediculicide and with school nurse approval. Ask nurse for more detailed information and assistance.
- Impetigo - excluded until 24 hours of antibiotic therapy has been completed or otherwise cleared by health care provider. Documentation needed from health care provider.

- Influenza - minimum exclusion from school is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. PREFERRED exclusion from school until symptoms are gone or with note from health care provider stating student may return to school. The flu is contagious 24 hours before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after symptoms begin, especially in young children.
- Mononucleosis - exclusion from school as the physician directs; excluded from contact sports until cleared by healthcare provider.
- Ringworm - excluded from school until treatment has begun with note from physician or parent. Ask school nurse for more detailed information and assistance.
- Strep throat - may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic and if no fever is present.

If a student is absent due to illness for three days or longer, the parent will need to supply the school with a note from your health care provider. It is a good idea to ask for a note any time your child sees a physician for an illness. It might save you time or an extra trip to the doctor.

## MEDICATIONS

It is against the law in the state of Maryland for students to carry medication with them while at school or a school-sponsored function, including field trips. The Maryland law applies to prescription medications as well as over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, Advil, Roloids, medicated lip balm, medicated cough drops, lotions, creams, ointments such as Neosporin, calamine, etc. Anything with an active ingredient is considered medicated. All guidelines are the same for prescription and over-the-counter medications. If a student is found with medication, the medication will be confiscated, and the parent will be notified.

If your child needs any type of medication, the *Medication Administration Form* should be completed with both a parent and a physician's signature. A new form will need to be sent in each year for all types of medication. This form can be found in the school office or on the school website <http://graceknights.org>. The Maryland Medication Policy does allow certain students to carry emergency medications such as epi-pens and inhalers. This must be approved by the student's physician, parent and the school nurse. This also requires a completed *Medication Administration Form*. A *Medication Self-Administration* form must also be signed by the parent, student and nurse. This form also needs to be renewed yearly.

A parent may have a doctor call in a verbal order for a medicine. This order may only be taken by the nurse. The nurse will transfer the verbal order to the medication form. The parent must sign the medication order sheet within 10 days. GCA will also accept faxed medication orders from physicians. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange for and sign these orders.

All medication must be given to the school by an adult. It must be brought in the original prescription container or over-the-counter container—NOT baggies, envelopes, plastic containers, etc. Most pharmacies will provide a second bottle for you to send to school. The school is not allowed to dispense medications that are in inappropriate containers.

The school is not allowed to dispense any expired medications. Please make every effort to send in medications that will not expire during the school year.

Maryland law does not allow the school nurse to dispense over-the-counter medication from a stock supply. We also cannot accept verbal permission over the phone. In order for your child to receive any type of medication for headache, fever, or pain there will need to be a completed *Medication Administration Form* on file along with the corresponding medication.

The school will not dispense narcotics of any kind.

### **Medications on Field Trips**

The above medication policies also apply to field trips. Necessary and emergency medications such as epi-pens and inhalers will be distributed to a designated teacher who will be trained in the use of the epi-pen and or inhaler. Parents of students with severe allergies or other medical conditions are encouraged to attend field trips when possible.

### **Medications for After-School Activities/Sports Teams**

The above policies also apply to all after-school activities including sports team activities. Parents of students who require epi-pens/inhalers for after-school activities such as sporting events, away games, school plays, etc., should discuss this with the school nurse. The school nurse does not have information on which students are participating in which after-school activities. Since this information changes frequently, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the nurse when the child is participating in an after-school activity so that the emergency medications will be accessible to the child. The school will work with you concerning a plan for the location of the medications. It is not feasible for an epi- pen/inhaler that is intended for school use to be transported back and forth for games or other activities on a regular basis. For secondary students, this will more than likely require the parent to supply additional medication for the student to self-carry. If self-carry is not in the best interest of the student, then the coach/adult sponsor may assist with this. Parents should make sure the *self-carry* portion of the medication form is completed by the health care provider and parent. The parents must notify the nurse of their wishes for their child to self-carry. It is extremely important that students with a condition requiring emergency medication have it as accessible at all times.

We recognize the above medication guidelines can be inconvenient, but they are written for the protection of your child. This is Maryland's law and therefore must be GCA's policy. We appreciate your understanding and compliance.

## **MEDICAL FORMS**

In order for your child to enter GCA, the following health forms are required. It is the ultimate responsibility of the parent/guardian to obtain these forms.

- **Immunization Record:** Maryland State law requires any students entering any school within the state to have up-to-date immunizations. A *Certificate of Immunizations* is required and is due at registration. The student will be excluded from school by law if the required form has not been submitted within 20 days of enrollment.
- **Emergency Form:** Parents are required to complete and sign a new emergency form each year. Allergies and medical conditions should be listed each year. This form is due the first day of school.
- **Health Inventory:** The State of Maryland requires physical exams for students entering Maryland schools for the first time. The exam must be completed within the nine months prior to entering the public school system or within six months after entering the system. A doctor or certified nurse practitioner must complete the *Health Inventory Form*. These forms may be obtained from the school nurse or found on our website. The *Health Inventory* is required for all students new to GCA. In addition, all extended care students and full-day preschool students must have a *Health Inventory* on file with the school.
- **Evidence of blood testing** is required for all students who reside in a designated at-risk area when first entering Pre-kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grade. The *Blood-lead Testing Certificate* (DHMH 4620) or another written document signed by a Health Care Practitioner shall be used to meet the requirement. This form is due by the first day of school and can be found on our website.

## **Medical Forms for Sports Participation**

Students are required to obtain an ANNUAL physical exam to participate in interscholastic athletics. This *Sports Permission Form* must be completed by a physician, certified nurse practitioner or physician's assistant as well as a parent. The *Sports Permission Form* must be turned in to the office BEFORE a student may attend tryouts or practice. No student will be allowed to try out or participate without an annual physical form on file. These are best obtained over the summer so that your child is able to participate in sports throughout the year without interruption. The form may be found on our website.

The school carries an accidental injury coverage plan for student athletes through the Association of Christian Schools International. This is a secondary insurance that will cover costs not covered by the family's primary insurance company.

Please Note: If your child needs to have an emergency medication such as an epi-pen or inhaler available, please refer to the sections on Medications and Medications for After- School Activities.

# **Academic Policies and Procedures**

# GRADING POLICY

The letter system is: A, B, C, D and F.

The guide for determining progress letter grades is:

|                      |         |                  |           |
|----------------------|---------|------------------|-----------|
| A+                   | 99-100% | C+               | 78-79%    |
| A Excellent Progress | 92-98%  | C Average        | 72-77%    |
| A-                   | 90-91%  | C-               | 70-71%    |
| B+                   | 88-89%  | D+               | 68-69%    |
| B Above Average      | 82-87%  | D Below Average  | 62-67%    |
| B-                   | 80-81%  | D-               | 60-61%    |
|                      |         | F Unsatisfactory | Below 60% |

\* "F" grades indicate unsatisfactory performance and will not be accepted for promotion. Students are required to make up all "F" grades during the summer or repeat the class or grade when more than two classes are not successfully completed. Summer classes are to be scheduled through GCA or CCPS. There is an added cost to summer remediation.

# HOMEWORK

## Homework Policy

| K-2nd  | 3rd-5th  | 6th and Up  |
|--|--|---|
| Reading - Required weekly reading logs, 10 mins per night. | Reading - Required weekly reading logs, 15 mins per night.<br><br>Math - Required 45 minutes of MAPS Accelerator in Khan Academy per week. | Reading - Required weekly reading logs, 20 mins per night.<br><br>Math - Required 45 minutes of MAPS Accelerator in Khan Academy per week.<br><br>Other - Teachers may assign one project per core subject per quarter. |

*Teachers can provide a list of where to find optional resources if a parent/guardian would like their student to do additional work at home. Teachers will **not** distribute specific assignments/homework packets upon request.*

## **MAKE-UP WORK FOR ABSENCES**

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Students must make up any work missed while absent. The number of days absent equal the number of days they have to complete the make-up, unless a completion plan is set up by the teacher.

Students who miss only the test/project date are responsible to make up the work the first day they return. If they are absent the day before the test, they are required to make up the work the next day the class meets.

## **INCOMPLETE AND MISSING WORK**

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All assignments are due on time. Consequences for late / missing work are as follows:

1 day late = 10% deduction, 2 days late = 20% deduction

3 days late = 30% deduction, 4+ days late = 0% received

## **RETENTION POLICY**

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Retention at Grace is based on failure of three or more subjects.

Students who fail multiple courses or who transfer into GCA with less than the minimum academic credits, will be individually counseled on procedures necessary to move forward with the appropriate class.

For transfer students, parents bear the primary responsibility to obtain an official transcript from the sending school. Students will be given temporary placement until such official records are received. If we don't receive official transcripts within 30 days, we will exercise our authority to make course changes for the student.

## **SCHOOL-WIDE NOTEBOOK SYSTEM (FOR GRADES 3-8)**

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At Grace Christian Academy, we have adopted a school-wide study skills notebook system beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The system is mandatory through the 8th grade. A consistent notebook system is a foundational key to good organizing. An organized student can find papers more easily, study more efficiently, and be more prepared for the day-to-day needs of school. The notebook dividers and homework assignment book are to be purchased from the school store. The

subject dividers are to be labeled as follows:

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Yellow/Bible          | Orange/History  |
| Red/Math              | White/ Foreign  |
| Language/Study Skills | Green/Science   |
| Black/PE/Elective     |                 |
| Blue/English          | Brown/Electives |

The notebooks should contain the following items:

- **Pencil Bag** with metal, three-ring binder holes
  - a. Pencils, red pencil, pens;
  - b. Any other items such as covered pencil sharpener, erasers, scissors.
- **Student Assignment Book**
- **Pocket Folder**
  - a. Anything passed out or done during the day goes in the front pocket;
  - b. Anything that is graded goes in the back pocket.
- **Dividers**
  - a. Colored dividers for each subject;
  - b. T divider for tests (T dividers are handed out in class and put behind each academic subject to separate tests from classwork);
  - c. Clear dividers only if teacher requests (example: English might be divided into notes, literature, composition, vocabulary and grammar).
- **Notebook Paper**-A small amount of notebook paper should be in the notebook at all times (20-30 sheets).

**REMEMBER:** No loose papers. Papers are to be filed at home **every night**. Students fill out the planner every day in each class. Parents should sign every day in the planner.

## **S.T.E.P. CENTER (SUCCESSFUL TECHNIQUES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS)**

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The S.T.E.P. Center is Grace Christian Academy's resource program. It is designed to help students who are having learning difficulties in the regular classroom. There are seven programs available through the S.T.E.P. Center: Tutoring, Accountability, Social Skills, Search & Teach, Language Therapy, NILD Educational Therapy, and the Learning Lab. The goal of each of these

programs is independence and success in the classroom and in life. There is an additional cost for each of these programs.

**Tutoring:** Individualized and group tutoring are available for students who experience temporary difficulties in a core subject area. Tutoring is contracted on an hourly basis. Students (elementary) are pulled from the classroom two times a week for one-half hour or hour sessions. Tutoring is also available after school and during the summer for elementary and secondary students.

**Accountability:** Accountability classes are designed for students who need help with organization, study skills and preparation for assignments and projects. It includes unlimited tutoring in all areas. It is NOT A REGULAR STUDY HALL. The class is interactive and requires both parent and teacher support. Classes meet for a class period (grades 6-12) or after school.

**Search & Teach:** Search & Teach is an early intervention program for students in preschool through first grade who are at risk for reading failure.

**Language Therapy:** Language Therapy is designed for students who have been diagnosed with language related disabilities or deficits in reading, reading comprehension, spelling or handwriting. This intensive, individualized program retrains students using a curriculum that is phonetic, sequential (it builds only when the foundation is secure) and multi-sensory (visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic). Students meet daily for 45 minutes to an hour. They can be given their language grades by the Educational Therapist.

**NILD Therapy:** NILD (National Institute for Learning Development) Therapy is designed for students who exhibit deficits in visual, auditory, or cognitive reasoning. This program centers on stimulating deficit areas through intense individualized therapy, not compensatory techniques. Students meet twice a week for an hour and twenty minutes. At the secondary level, it is a class period.

**The Learning Lab:** The Learning Lab provides resource or parallel instruction for students who are not functioning at a level that can be accommodated in the regular classroom in the areas of Language Arts and Math. A student would receive full instruction in these areas in the Learning Lab instead of the regular classroom. In Elementary, there are Learning Lab classes in Phonics, Reading, English, and Math. In Secondary, there are Learning Lab classes for Language Arts and Math.

# **School Athletics**

# ATHLETICS

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## **Grade Eligibility**

A student must be in grades 6-10 in order to participate on middle school teams. If a team is short players, then 5<sup>th</sup> graders may play with parent's consent.

## **Academic Eligibility**

Students must be academically eligible to participate in the athletic & extra-curricular programs. Failure to attain and/or maintain eligibility may warrant suspension from participation. An athlete is considered ineligible if they have an "F" or a GPA lower than 2.25.

If a student is ineligible to participate due to grades, the student-athlete is ineligible for a (four) week period until the mid-term. During this time period, the student will not be permitted to practice or travel with the team/group. Athletes may, however, sit with the team for home games out of uniform, if the coach agrees. If at progress report the student has no "F" grades and a GPA above a 2.25, then he/she is eligible to participate in sports or school clubs. If the grades do not reflect the necessary improvement, the student will remain ineligible until the next marking period.

Appeals for eligibility waivers to practice must be submitted to and reviewed by the Director.

While progress report grades do not automatically remove a student from a team, the coach/instructor is encouraged to work with the student/parents to plan a course of action to improve the academic grades. Coaches/Instructors may use their own discretion to place a student on temporary probation from practices or games/performances.

## **School Attendance Policy**

Absences which are not excused will result in partial or full loss of playing time in the next scheduled game. Unless the student has prior administrative approval (appointments, etc.) or a doctor's note, students must be in school at least half of his/her scheduled day in order to participate in a practice or game. Athletes who have physical education are expected to fully participate in class in order to participate in after-school athletics (practice or game). If a student is not healthy enough for PE, he/she is not healthy enough for athletics. A pattern of this problem will result in a loss of team membership.

## **School Discipline**

Athletes must understand that any type of school discipline takes priority over athletics. School administration schedules detentions and they are not required to check an athlete's schedule in advance. A teacher may detain an athlete after school if required work is not completed. If an athlete is unable to travel with the team due to a school discipline issue such as detention, the student may participate that day with the team if they are able to arrange transportation. Students may not participate in a game on the day of serving an in-school or out-of-school suspension.

**Athletic Forms & Fees**

There must be an up-to-date physical form, athletic participation form, and parent athletic agreement form on file in the school office in order for a student to tryout or practice for a sports team.

Physicals are regarded as valid for a one-year period. The physical form you will need can be obtained in the school office by request, or online at the school website. Simply take it to your doctor at the time of your appointment and then return it, properly signed and completed, to the school office before practices begin.

A sports fee will be automatically charged to the parents' account once a student dresses in uniform for a game or scrimmage. If a student is given a uniform but decides not to play before dressing for a game/scrimmage, then that parent/student is still required to return the entire uniform in the same condition as they received it.

# **Student Expectations**

# ATTENDANCE

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*Good attendance and punctuality are not only critical to the overall academic success of students, they are also important for the development of personal responsibility. Not only is the absent or tardy affected, but the teacher and the entire class may be affected by the need for adjusted instruction. Please join with us in training your child to possess these qualities.*

- Students are expected to be in school every day that school is in session. If a student is absent twenty (20) days during the year, the school may either retain or not allow the student to return the following year. A student who achieves passing grades will be promoted if the parents withdraw and place their child in another school. Absences due to extenuating circumstances, such as extended illnesses, will not apply if the parents keep in constant communication with appropriate school personnel and provide the school with necessary medical documentation.
- An elementary student who has a total of forty (40) tardies to school (excused and unexcused) may not be permitted to return to Grace Christian Academy. Students will be counted as on time if they are with their teacher by the start time. Students leaving before 2:00 p.m. shall be credited with one-half day in attendance.

## **Absent (Excused/Unexcused)**

An excused absence will be considered for a death (immediate family), illness, court summons, hazardous weather conditions, college visit (not to exceed five days) or note from a physician. An unexcused absence is an absence for any reason other than those cited as excused.

## **Attendance Note**

An attendance note from a parent must include the date, date of absence(s), excuse for the absence and parent/guardian signature. An attendance note (**within 3 days of the absence**) is required when a student is absent from school, tardy to school, or dismissed early from school. An electronic attendance note must come from the parent/guardian account. A physician's note is required for absences of 3 days or more. Please verify our attendance records in Renweb.

## **Returning to School after an Absence**

Students are required to make up all missed work, regardless of the attendance code. Students marked with an unexcused absence will not receive credit for work missed.

### **Unexcused Tardy to School (Secondary)**

Students arriving after the beginning of Homeroom (8:00 am) are required to report to the office to obtain a tardy slip. A tardy may be excused for the following reasons only:

- Returning from a medical appointment with a doctor's note.
- Involvement in a car accident.
- Illness related to a medical condition on file (physician's note required).
- A note from a parent (limited to 3 per quarter)

| <b>Times</b> | <b>UNEXCUSED TARDY to SCHOOL</b>  |
|--------------|---|
| <b>3</b>     | Warning<br>Email Notification   |
| <b>6</b>     | Referral to Director<br>Email Notification<br>After-school Detention (one hour) \$15 per hour |
| <b>9</b>     | Second Referral to Director<br>Email Notification<br>After-school Detention (two hour, \$30)  |
| <b>12</b>    | Third Referral to Director<br>Saturday School (\$60)<br>Parent Conference with Administrator  |

*\*If additional tardies take place, further discipline will be administered.*

**\*\* Tardy count will reset after each quarter**

### **Unexcused Tardy to Class (Secondary)**

Students are expected to be in their seats, ready to work at the start of the period. Students who fail to reach their next class period during the allotted time without a valid pass, note from teacher, or note from office, will be unexcused tardy. The student should not argue with the teacher or try to explain the tardiness. One point will be deducted from the student overall class average at the end of the quarter for every 3 unexcused tardies to class.

### **School Closings**

GCA will make our own decisions for delays, early dismissals and cancellations. When making our decision due to inclement weather, GCA will follow Charles County Public Schools as well as consultation with GCA administration and Grace Church facilities manager.

All families will be notified via text messaging, Renweb and email. Visit the school website for the most updated information on school closings.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

- One-hour delay: All programs are delayed one hour, including before care.
- Two-hour delay: All programs are delayed two hours/
- Full Day Closing: There will be no before or after care when school is closed due to inclement weather.

If we exceed our four-day inclement weather allowance, the school year may be extended past the published last day of school. Please watch our school calendar for end of the year changes. All students are required to attend school on any additional days.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Gym doors open for arrival from 8:10-8:25. Doors close at 8:25 and all late students must go to the main office to be signed in by an adult. Dismissal begins at 3:00. Any student not picked up by 3:15 is brought to the main office. Any late pick-ups are charged for aftercare.

Secondary: Gym doors open at 7:45 for arrival and close at 8:00. Doors close at 8:00 and all late students must go to the main office to be signed in. Dismissal begins at 3:15. Any student not picked up by 3:30 is signed into the main office and charged for aftercare.

### **Student Pick Up**

The student emergency form allows parents the opportunity to provide a list of those people who are permitted to pick their child up from school. Notification must be made to the school if someone else should have to pick up the student.

### **Family Trips**

Parents/Guardians are requested to plan family activities/trips during one of our many regularly scheduled holidays. Please fill out a Pre-Planned absence form, available at the front office at least a week prior to absence. All requests may not be approved. If absences are not approved they will be recorded as unexcused absences. The purpose of a Pre-Planned Absence Form is to excuse the absence in our attendance system, not to excuse the students from any school work.

### **Lockers**

A locker and combination lock will be assigned to secondary students. Students must not inform other students of their combination code. The office will not release the combination to another student other than the individual to whom it has been assigned. Locks must be kept on lockers and locked to assure security of student's possessions. A locker agreement form must be completed.

### **Lunch**

Students must eat in their designated lunch area. Students need to bring a lunch and drink, napkin and any utensils.

### **Textbooks**

Textbooks are provided by GCA. The teacher will assign books to students by number and the condition of the book will be recorded. Charges will be assessed at the end of the year for damages according to the following:

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Partial Damage     | Up to \$15.00 for repair  |
| Major Damage       | \$20.00 (or book cost) for repair   |
| Beyond Use or Lost | Total Replacement-Value pro-rated according to the age and condition of the book at time it was issued. |

## **STUDENT CONDUCT (Elementary)**

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### **Principles of Conduct**

*“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” Colossians 3:12-14.*

One of the goals at GCA is for our students to mature both in their identity and in their moral character. We nurture these qualities by providing a Christian culture based on respect and kindness. Everyone in our school community (teachers, staff, students, and parents) is expected to model these virtues with one another so as to enhance the nurture of our students.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Help keep the building and campus clean by putting trash in the proper receptacles.
3. Speak positively of and to others. Honor God with your words.
4. Respect the school’s and other’s property. (Any student who willfully damages school property will be responsible to repair or replace what was damaged. Vandalism may result in suspension or expulsion.)
5. Do not disturb others.
6. Be in the correct place at the correct time doing the correct thing.
7. Be honest and show kindness and respect toward others.

8. Maintain wholesome relationships with members of the opposite gender.
9. Speak and act respectfully to all school personnel.

Each teacher has clearly defined rules for the classroom, and teachers have established classroom-specific consequences that best match the offense. When classroom discipline is not sufficient, the teacher may choose to refer the student to the office to meet with an administrator.

### **Honesty**

GCA values the virtue of honesty. Below are examples of dishonesty and are eligible for discipline:

#### **Cheating:**

1. Looking for answers from another person's test or quiz.
2. Copying another person's homework, or having someone else do your homework.
3. Telling others, the answers to a test or a homework assignment.
4. Portraying the work of others as your own.

#### **Lying:**

1. Not telling the truth when caught doing something wrong. (We believe that lying about the misbehavior is usually worse than the actual offense.
2. Bearing false witness or being deceitful in any way.

Note: It is wrong to remain silent when you observe others being willfully dishonest. Ideally, each of us should confront the offending parties in hopes they will either stop or turn themselves in. However, as a last resort the most honest thing to do is to report the dishonesty of others – as their dishonesty is hurting the innocent.

### **Off-Campus Behavior**

Students whose off-campus behavior interferes with the culture and/or reputation of the school may be subject to disciplinary action, including possible dismissal.

### **Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, Firearms, Weapon Possession, Matches/Lighters**

Any student found to be in possession of, or involved in the use of, the above-mentioned items may face disciplinary action that may include expulsion – depending on the motive and circumstances. Making jokes or jests about these

topics may also result in serious disciplinary action.

### **Social Networking**

Unless planned and supervised by a faculty member during the school day, students are not to text, e-mail or use any personal or school equipment to electronically communicate to any individual or group. Outside of the school day, students found to post pictures or texts that are evaluated as inappropriate and not within the Christian guidelines established by GCA, will be disciplined in accordance to similar procedures for in-school unacceptable behavior.

### **School Property**

Any student who willfully damages school property will be subject to suspension from school or expulsion. All damages will be repaired, and the total cost of repairs will be charged to the student's school bill.

### **Electronic Devices**

All electronic devices must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack during the school day, including field trips.

### **School Owned Equipment Searches**

All school-owned equipment such as lockers, desks, computers, etc., are subject to random or individualized searches at any time. If a student is suspected of specific wrongdoing, the student may be required to empty his/her pockets, handbag, wallet, backpack, etc., for school personnel. If a student refuses to allow the search, the parents will be contacted and asked to complete the search. If the suspicion involves a substance or object that may injure or harm the student or others, the proper authorities will be notified. Students suspected of illegal drug use may be required to obtain drug screening and/or counseling for continued enrollment.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT (Secondary)**

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In order to carry out our mission to live and love like Jesus Christ, a certain conduct is modeled, taught, and expected from students. Individuals need character-building discipline. To this end, our students are guided by a set of rules and regulations. These are for the purpose of helping each student to learn to govern himself/herself responsibly. The Bible teaches that God requires

discipline, including respect for authority. Parents have delegated authority over their children to GCA during the school day, but parents should be integrally involved in the process of developing mature behavior patterns. A conference with parents, students, and teachers helps to resolve any difficulty that is being experienced. Consistent parental support is of major importance in our joint effort of training. Failure to maintain appropriate behavior will result in disciplinary action

Whenever the school must enforce a violation of these standards, we are guided by the following principles:

- Work with each student individually, recognizing differences in levels of maturity, distinguishing between an impulsive act and a motive to hurt, treating first-time offenders more leniently, and focusing on the heart and not just the behavior.
- Form a partnership with the home, developing a mutual understanding and a common plan to address any academic, behavioral, or emotional need their child may have.
- Never give up on a child. Even in cases of last resort, when students must withdraw from GCA, we will still pray for them and will be ready to welcome them back when they are ready to return.

### **Character and Expectations**

All faculty, parents, and students are expected to:

- Respect the mission and purpose of the school
- Respect all members of our school community
- Respect the campus, school property, and the property of others
- Be honest and truthful in word and deed
- Use appropriate oral, written, and body language
- Obey the civil laws and school policies pertaining to drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and weapons
- Refrain from engaging in unbiblical sexual behavior
- Honor the dress code policy
- Be punctual to class/school

**What students do off-campus and outside of school often reflects their overall character and ability to support the mission and culture of the school. Thus, out-of-school behavior is subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, expulsion.**

### **General Consequences for Misbehavior**

Discipline shall be handled at the lowest possible level, i.e. classroom. Classroom teachers will assign their own consequences for classroom misbehavior that may fall outside the structure of this outline. If problems continue to occur, the following are general progressive steps that the administration typically follows to enforce our standards; however, sometimes the severity of an offense will cause us to skip a step. Except for the assigned lunch detention, parents are notified by phone of after-school detentions, Saturday detentions, and suspensions.

GCA reserves the right to dis-enroll any student or family who does not abide by the policies and procedures of the school, or who creates disharmony or brings discredit upon the school. These attributes are inconsistent with a Christian lifestyle, the philosophy of the school, and Galatians 5.

### **After School Detentions**

- Served for one hour after school at \$15.00 or served for two hours after school at \$30.00 (student account will be billed). These detentions are usually work detentions (cleaning, washing, etc.).
- Assigned by Administrator based on your discipline referral sheets.

### **Saturday school**

- \$60 fee (student account will be billed) served on Saturday.
- Assigned by Administrator based on your discipline referral sheets. These detentions involve physical labor and possible academic review or reading.

### **In-school Suspension**

- Served during the school day in an administrator's office.
- Student will do the same work as the rest of the class, but grades will be assessed a 10% penalty on classwork, tests, and quizzes penalty.

### **Out-of-school Suspension**

- Student will stay at home and can make up class work but with a 20% penalty on classwork, tests and quizzes.
- Suspended students may not attend extra-curricular events sponsored by the school before, during, or after school.
- Students in out-of-school suspension may not be on campus or at any school-sponsored event.

### **Expulsion**

- Expulsion may result when past corrective actions have been unsuccessful in changing a student's attitude and/or behavior.
- Certain serious behaviors, whether done on or off campus, that seriously threaten the safety and well-being of the school community or that indicate that a student's general attitude or lifestyle choice is in major conflict with the mission and objectives of GCA, may be expelled at the discretion of the Director.
- Expelled students may not be on school property while school is in session and may not attend school-sponsored extra-curricular events (except where approved by the Director of the school).

### **Skipping School**

If it is determined that a student skipped school or skipped a given class period,

there will be a penalty of an after-school detention. Disciplinary probation will be applied to the student, and should a reoccurrence take place, the student could be dismissed from school. The student and/or student's family is assessed the established cost for the Saturday detention.

### **Weapons**

Students may not possess on campus or at school functions any weapon (such as a firearm or knife) or anything capable of starting a fire (such as a lighter or box of matches). Violation may result in immediate expulsion depending on the nature of the infraction and the motive of the offender. The intent of the person in possession of the object is considered, but if found with weapons police will be notified.

### **Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol**

Students must abstain from the use or possession of tobacco, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and alcohol – on and off campus. Violations may result in immediate expulsion depending on the nature of the substance, the motive of the offender, and whether or not the violation occurred on campus or at a school function. The intent of the person in possession of the object is considered, but if found with illegal drugs police will be notified.

### **Public Display of Affection (PDA)**

Unacceptable behavior differs in its severity and should receive different disciplinary responses. The examples listed in each category are representative and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Offenses that are not listed will be dealt with at the discretion of Administration consistent with these examples. Please note: Under serious offenses, students may be suspended or expelled, especially in cases of severe rebellion, mistreating or placing others in danger, criminal activity or sexual immorality.

PDA observed between students will result in an automatic referral and parental notification. We expect students to refrain even from hand-holding and affectionate hugging on campus and at all school events.

If a teacher or staff member witnesses PDA, the incident will be reported to the office. The students shall be referred to the school administration, and the action could lead to suspension.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Our school community is built on the foundation of respect and kindness. Therefore, any form of bullying and harassment is a serious offense against the student and our entire school culture. Students guilty of harassment and/or bullying may suffer consequences up to, and including, expulsion depending on the nature and frequency of the offense.

**Bullying** is the deliberate and repeated attempt to intimidate, embarrass, or harm another person.

- Physical bullying involves physical contact and can include pushing, hitting, tripping, etc. This can also include intimidation or the threat of aggression in a physical nature.
- Social bullying is also called relational bullying and occurs when a person is ignored, shunned, ridiculed, manipulated, etc. by a social group.
- Verbal bullying may consist of teasing, mocking, threats, insults, gossip, and the spreading of rumors and lies.

Harassment and bullying are often done electronically via social media using cell phones, computers, and iPads.

**Harassment** is a type of bullying that targets individuals based on their belonging to a particular gender, race, or ethnicity, or because they possess a particular disability. No member of our school community is allowed to harass another member because of his/her sex, race, color, national origin, or disability. GCA will promptly investigate all complaints and act to protect its members and discipline violators.

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcomed and unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature – whether done as a joke or with the intent to cause harm.

**Examples of sexual harassment:**

- touching, patting, grabbing or pinching another person's intimate parts
- coercing, forcing or attempting to coerce or force the touching or any sexual act on another
- sexual gestures, sexual or dirty jokes
- talking about one's sexual activity in front of others
- spreading rumors about the sexual activity of another.

**Examples of other forms of harassment:**

- name calling, jokes, or rumors pertaining to someone's ethnicity, race, religion, or disability.
- offensive language (whether spoken or written) toward members of these groups.
- any behavior that degrades others for belonging to such groups.

**Reporting Procedures:**

Any student who believes he or she has been a victim of harassment by another student, teacher, administrator or other school personnel or by any other person is encouraged to immediately report the alleged acts to an appropriate person (a

teacher or administrator).

### **Academic Dishonestly**

Academic integrity is an essential element to Grace Christian Academy's philosophy and practice of promoting academic excellence.

### **Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following examples:**

- Taking, stealing, and/or using an assignment from someone else and submitting it as one's own.
- Allowing another to take and/or use an assignment to submit as his/her own.
- Looking at another's test or essay with or without his consent for the purpose of duplicating that work and submitting it as one's own.
- Representing as one's own the work or words of a parent, sibling, friend, or anyone else.
- Discussing or revealing the contents of a test or quiz with students who have not completed the assessment.
- Unauthorized use of teacher test materials, answer sheets, computer files, or grading programs.
- Using any type of "crib/cliff notes" on your person, an object, or programmed within graphing calculators, palm pilots, cell phones, or other electronic devices without teacher permission.
- Receiving answers for assignments or exams from any unauthorized source.
- Working on assignments with others when not authorized by the instructor.
- Giving answers to another student for an assignment or exam.

### **Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following examples:**

- Directly quoting or paraphrasing all or part of another's written or spoken words without notes or documentation within the body of a work.
- Presenting an idea, theory, or formula originated by another person as the original work of the person submitting that work.
- Purchasing or receiving in any other manner a term paper or other assignment that is the work of another person and submitting that assignment as the student's own work.
- Repeating information, such as statistics or demographics, which is not common knowledge and which was originally compiled by another person.

Consequences **may** include:

First offense:

- Zero grade or reduction in grade or retest
- One hour after school detention (\$15, student account billed)
- Probation from other student activities

Second offense:

- Meeting with parents
- Zero grade
- Two hour after school detention (\$30, student account billed)
- Suspension from other student activities

Third offense:

- Meeting with parents
- Zero grade
- Failure of course in which offense occurred
- Saturday School (\$60, student account billed)
- Dismissal from other student activities

Students must also work at confronting amongst their peers. If a student observes cheating, he/she should confront that student with what was observed. At that point the student should tell the person that he saw him cheating and encourage him to go to their instructor and confess.

### **Student Pregnancy**

God has clearly communicated His standard of reserving sex for marriage. If a GCA student becomes pregnant, the GCA students involved (both male and female) will be suspended while the administration learns the facts, discerns the spiritual condition of the students, and determines the appropriate response of the school.

While general school policy states that we do not enroll married students or allow pregnant students to attend classes, we will evaluate each situation in light of its particular circumstances and our desire to be part of God's plan to restore repentant students and encourage the mother to carry her baby to full term.

### **School Property**

Any student who willfully damages school property will be subject to suspension from school or expulsion. All damages will be repaired, and the total cost of repairs will be charged to the student's school bill.

## **STUDENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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### **CELL PHONE POLICY**

Except as provided in this rule, students may not use cell phones or other personal electronic devices (such as Apple or Samsung watch) on school property, on school buses or school-chartered vehicles, or at any school-sponsored activity before, during or after the school day. Cell phones with camera and/or video

functions must not be used to take or transmit any image or video at any time, even if the use of the cell phone is otherwise permitted.

1. A student may possess a cell phone on school property as long as the cell phone is powered off, stored in the student's locker, and not used for any purpose on school property. A cell phone set in vibrate or other non-audible mode is not considered "off."
2. In order to briefly communicate with the student's parent/guardian/caregiver, a cell phone may be used while traveling to or from a school-sponsored activity on a school bus or other school sponsored vehicle, as long as the supervising teacher/coach has granted the student permission

It is the intent of Administration to ensure cell phone possession does not disrupt the learning environment, after-school activities, or the safe transportation of students. Therefore, students found to be in violation of this rule are subject to the following disciplinary action:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Warning, cell phone confiscated and returned to parent/guardian.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: After-school detention decided by Director, cell phone confiscated and returned to parent/guardian.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Saturday detention decided by Director, cell phone confiscated and returned to parent at parent conference.

Grace Christian Academy and its employees and agents are not responsible are not responsible for the loss, theft, damage, or destruction of any cell phone other portable electronic device, or any other personal property.

### **Posting on Social Network Sites**

As a general rule, students should not post pictures of school staff and other students without their permission. Furthermore, students should realize that their character, life-style choices, and values will largely be judged according to what they post on social media sites about themselves and others. As previously stated, what students say, do, and post outside of school may affect their continued enrollment at GCA. Students should not post pictures/video of themselves, teachers, and other students while in school.

### **Computer Use**

Students enrolled in a computer class will be required to sign a statement of understanding of appropriate and acceptable computer use. However, all students must abide by the same principles of using any computer in the school.

- Students are only to use a computer after receiving faculty/staff approval.
- Students may not change, delete, or add any computer settings
- No programs may be downloaded to the computer without expressed

consent of the faculty member.

- Students may not install, use any personal software/discs on school computer without approval of the technology coordinator.
- Students are not to use the computer for any social networking (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) unless structural within an approved school project.
- Students may only access the internet with direct faculty approval.

Violations of the above may result in detention, suspension and/or financial responsibility for repairs of damaged equipment.

## DRESS CODE

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Grace Christian Academy has a uniform policy. Clothes should be worn properly, cleaned and pressed. Extremely wrinkled, torn or stained clothes are not acceptable. Skirts are not to be rolled at the waist.

**Pants for both boys and girls must be “uniform style” (ex. Classic Dockers style) in terms of material and cut. (No cargo style pants for boys or tight-fitting pants for girls.)**

### DAILY UNIFORM OPTIONS

| BOYS   | GIRLS  |
|--|--|
| khaki or navy blue pants/shorts  | khaki or navy blue pants/shorts/skorts/capris/skirts <u>No more than 4” above the knee.</u>  |
| White or navy polo shirts (long or short-sleeved). <b>Must have the GCA logo printed or pressed on the shirt.</b>  | White or navy polo shirts (long or short-sleeved). <b>Must have the GCA logo printed or pressed on the shirt.</b>  |
| GCA Sweatshirts (three styles)<br>--Crewneck with embroidered GCA emblem (grey or navy)<br>--Pullover GCA Knights hoodie (navy, grey, or white)<br>--Zip GCA Knights hoodie (navy, grey, or white) | GCA Sweatshirts (three styles)<br>--Crewneck with embroidered GCA emblem (grey or navy)<br>--Pullover GCA Knights hoodie (navy, grey or white)<br>--Zip GCA Knights hoodie (navy, grey or white) |
| Students may wear collared GCA athletic/sport apparel  | Students may wear collared GCA athletic/sport apparel  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Tennis shoes and Crocs are acceptable but must be worn with socks. Flip flops (any shoe that only has a strap between the toes), athletic type sandals, and slippers are unacceptable. | Tennis shoes and Crocs are acceptable but must be worn with socks. Shoes with heels must be no higher than 2". Flip flops (any shoe that only has a strap between the toes), athletic type sandals, and slippers are unacceptable. |
| Socks must be worn.  | Socks must be worn.  |

### **Jewelry**

Jewelry must be conservative and appropriate (no inappropriate symbols). All jewelry must be removed for Physical Education or other sports events.

### **Outerwear**

Secondary students may wear coats to and from school, but they must be placed in the student's locker before homeroom and retrieved after school. Elementary students will leave all coats in cubbies, on coat hooks, or in lockers. For daily wear, the only school jackets/coats/sweatshirts with GCA Logo are allowed. Sweatshirts can be purchased through our school store. Order forms are available at the front office or on RenWeb.

**No backpacks, handbags or purses allowed in the classroom. They must be kept in the student's locker.**

**Hats are not to be worn in the building at any time.**

WALMART, J.C. PENNEY UNIFORM CATALOG, TARGET, LANDS END, KOHLS, or AMAZON may be able to help parents as a supplier of some uniform items.

### **Modesty**

GCA is not the place to draw attention to our sexuality. Pants are not to be too tight and work at the natural waistline. Any bottoms must not come more than 3" above the knees. Revealing necklines are not permitted.

### **Safety**

Flip flops (any shoe that only has a strap between the toes), athletic type sandals, and slippers are unacceptable. Crocs can only be worn with the strap.

Pants that extend past and cover the shoe are not acceptable.

### **Tattoos/Piercings**

No body piercings can be displayed other than earrings on girls.

Tattoos (including temporary tattoos) cannot be distracting, nor can they contain images or promote values that conflict with the mission and standards of GCA.

### **Hair Policy**

No un-natural hair colors are permitted.

### **Moderation and Christian Unity**

Learning takes place best in an environment free from distractions and reactions to avant-garde styles of dress. Neither should members of our community promote (in their dress, automobiles, etc.) themes that are offensive to others, immoral, non-Christ like, or divisive.

*The administration reserves the right to decide if a hairstyle, jewelry, clothing, etc. is inappropriate, disruptive, or not conducive to a Christian learning atmosphere.*

### **Spirit Fridays**

Students may wear a GCA T-shirt with uniform bottoms every Friday.

### **Tag Day**

TAG DAY is a fundraising event for various causes both within and outside our school. Most often we raise money to supplement school activities.

TAG DAY gives students an opportunity to wear non-uniform pants and shirts. The cost is \$1.00 to wear non-uniform pants, \$1.00 to wear a non-uniform shirt, or \$2.00 to wear both non-uniform pants and a non-uniform shirt. No student is required to participate in TAG DAY; it is strictly voluntary.

Homeroom teachers collect all TAG DAY money. No TAG DAG money is to be brought to the office.

All TAG DAY clothing must meet the GCA standards of dress as found in the Parent/Student Handbook. No hats are permitted. Any student dressed inappropriately will be asked to call home to attain appropriate attire. This violation may forfeit your right in future TAG DAYS.

TAG DAYS are an extended privilege for students. Students found in repeated violation of behavior, uniform, attendance, or TAG DAY policies may forfeit the opportunity to participate in TAG DAYS.

### **Dress Code Violations:**

#### **This is the general sequence of consequences for dress code violations:**

Warning by Administration  
Conference with Student  
Communication with Parents

After-school Detention  
Saturday School

- **Students who have been warned against wearing a specific article of clothing but continue to wear it will be disciplined for being defiant as well as for the dress code violation.**
- **The administration reserves the right to keep any student from attending class until the proper clothing is attained.**

### **Clothing Identification**

With a large student body, it is important that students' names be placed in their coats. Since all students wear uniforms, it is imperative that students' names be placed on all uniform items. Some activities require that students change clothes (PE, athletics, Band, Drama, plays, etc.). This is how many uniform items are lost, but could be returned if names were in the items. Every year we have boxes of lost and found uniform items that are considered unidentifiable because there is no name on them (initials don't always help). When uniform clothes are turned in with a name, we make every effort to return them to the student. Many people purchase used uniform clothing. Please change the name in the clothing so that we may return the clothing to the right child.

## STUDENT'S PLEDGE (School Year 2025-26)

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Each student in the school is expected to uphold the following pledge:

1. We pledge ourselves to the teachings of the Bible and its values. Our behavior will reflect these teachings and values both on and off campus.
2. We pledge ourselves as well to uphold the institutional preferences and policies of the school, which are intended to promote our community life together.
3. We pledge ourselves to abstain from the use of tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, profane language and immoral behavior.
4. We pledge ourselves to exert a positive influence in our social relationships and be responsible members of the school community.

### School-Wide Standards of Conduct

1. We will follow directions the first time they are given.
2. We will help keep the building and campus clean by putting trash from floors and desks in the proper receptacles.
3. We will not call each other names or use any vulgar or profane language or signs.
4. We will not write on or damage the school's or another person's property.
5. We will not leave the school campus or be in restricted areas during the day without permission from an administrator.
6. We will not fight, coerce, steal, lie, cheat, or engage in forgery.
7. We will conduct ourselves in a manner so as not to disturb others.
8. We will be in the correct place at the correct time doing the correct thing.
9. We will show respect for peers, school property and school personnel.
10. We will not bring a weapon of any kind or items that can be construed as a weapon to school.
11. We will not bring cellular phones, smart watches, handheld gaming consoles, or **any other electronic devices** to class.
12. We will not bring purses, handbags, or bookbags to class.
13. We will not engage in public displays of affection of any kind.
14. We will conduct ourselves under these guidelines both on and off campus.

I have read the above and agree to abide by them, as well as the teachings of Grace Christian Academy. I realize that if my behavior is not in line with the rules that I forfeit my privilege of being enrolled at GCA.

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Student Name

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Parent Name

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature