



**2025-2026**

**PRESCHOOL MANUAL**

# Parent/Student Manual

## *PRESCHOOL*

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## **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 our 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:</b>	Mrs. Stacie Buhl
<b>Director of Education:</b>	Mrs. Megan Schaniel
<b>Director of Admissions:</b>	Mrs. Lisa Johnson
<b>Director of Preschool:</b>	Miss Michelle Goodson
<b>Director of Operations:</b>	Mr. John Somerville
<b>Athletic Director</b>	Mr. John Somerville
<b>Comptroller:</b>	Mrs. Nancy Kemmerer
 <b>School 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's Preschool is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Childcare.

## 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 grow 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 perspective.

**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.

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.

We believe that God created the world, including man, in six twenty-four hour days.

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.

We believe that all mankind, excepting Adam and Eve, achieve personhood at the moment of conception. (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.

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.

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.

We believe in that blessed hope, the personal imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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.

# 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).

## 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 most appropriate 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.

# ADMISSION PROCEDURES

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## \*Requirements for Admission\*

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

1. Completion of application with signatures and appropriate fees.
2. Satisfactory scholastic and behavioral records from previous school.
3. Satisfactory performance on a formal entrance test.
4. Health records that meet State requirements.
  - A. **Medical Forms.** Maryland State law requires that the *Health Inventory Form* 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.
5. Read the Student/Parent Manual and agree to support the guidelines presented.
6. Completion of parent interview with Academy principal.
7. Completion of Student Questionnaire (secondary).
8. Complete registration with FACTS tuition management within 10 days of interview and acceptance.
9. Complete the Parental Statement of Support.

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

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.

# PRESCHOOL

## General Policies and Procedures

### **PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

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The purpose of our Preschool Program is to provide a safe, nurturing environment where young children can explore the world around them, learn through play, and begin to develop a biblical understanding of God. We recognize early childhood as a foundational season of discovery—one marked by curiosity, hands-on experiences, exploration, and active learning.

Our program is guided by three core principles: it is Christ-centered, developmentally appropriate, and well-rounded.

Being Christ-centered means that biblical truth is intentionally woven throughout all aspects of the day. We teach Bible stories and foundational concepts while consistently reflecting God's love in our interactions, instruction, and classroom environment. Our desire is for each child to understand that they are uniquely created by God with purpose and value, and that they can develop a personal relationship with Him through prayer and learning His Word.

We believe that God's love is the greatest and most important truth a child can know. Our goal is for students to grow in their love for Christ and to begin viewing the world through a biblical lens.

## AIM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: TO GLORIFY GOD

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The spiritual emphasis for the preschool focuses on the comfort of God's presence, His love and His care. These truths are taught to the child in all areas of the curriculum and physical care during the day.

We pray:

That the child might come to know Christ.

Matthew 18:5-19:14

That the child might have knowledge of what God has done so  
praise Him.

Joshua 4:6-7. Psalm 78:3-4

That the child might be preserved from evil and led to righteous

Deuteronomy 6:20-24, Proverbs 22:6

That the child may be a delight to godly parents

Proverbs 29:13 or

That the child might win unsaved parents by his/her delight in the Lord.

Proverbs 20:1, Isaiah 11:6 1

## CURRICULUM

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Research consistently shows that young children learn best through play rather than highly structured academic instruction. With this in mind, our program provides a wide range of hands-on, engaging experiences that encourage children to explore, discover, and interact with the world around them. Our curriculum is designed to meet children where they are, allowing for differences in ability and interest while promoting well-rounded growth across all areas of development.

Our preschool program offers a thoughtfully planned, play-based approach. While activities may appear to be simple play, each experience is intentionally designed to build self-confidence, expand understanding, develop responsibility, and strengthen both fine and gross motor skills. Teachers foster creativity and independence through opportunities such as free play, imaginative play, art, music, science exploration, and hands-on learning activities. Field trips and special events are also incorporated to enrich the learning experience.

We utilize the *Pocket of Preschool* curriculum to guide instruction, providing developmentally appropriate, engaging, and meaningful learning opportunities.

### **Bible Time**

Children are introduced to foundational Christian truths through Bible stories, scripture memory, songs, and prayer. Through interactive and age-appropriate activities, students develop an early understanding of God's Word and experience the joy of learning about His love.

### **Academic Readiness**

Students are introduced to foundational skills that prepare them for kindergarten success. These include, but are not limited to:

- Letter recognition and phonemic awareness
- Basic math concepts
- Shapes and colors
- Pre-writing and fine motor skills
- Listening and comprehension skills

Children also begin developing an understanding of time and sequence through calendar activities that introduce days, months, and seasons. Music, rhythm, movement, nursery rhymes, and interactive games are incorporated to support language development and coordination.

### **Social-Emotional Skills**

Developing strong social-emotional skills is a key component of our program. Students are guided in learning how to interact positively with peers and adults, express their feelings appropriately, and build confidence in a supportive environment. Through daily interactions and guided activities, children learn to:

- Share and take turns
- Practice kindness, empathy, and respect
- Develop self-control and manage emotions
- Build positive relationships with peers and teachers
- Follow classroom routines and expectations
- Solve simple conflicts with guidance
- Grow in independence and self-confidence

### **Daily Learning Experiences**

The preschool day includes a variety of structured and unstructured activities, such as:

- **Free Play:** Exploration in learning centers that promote creativity, problem-solving, and social interaction. Centers may rotate based on weekly themes.
- **Large Motor/Outdoor Play:** Activities designed to develop coordination and physical strength, held outdoors or in the gym.
- **Small Group Time:** Opportunities for more individualized instruction and skill development.
- **Large Group Time:** Teacher-led lessons, discussions, stories, and collaborative activities.
- **Snack/Lunch Time**
- **Specials:** Once a week, students will go to music, Spanish, STEAM, and P.E.

### **Ongoing Skill Development (Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4)**

Throughout the year, students are encouraged to develop the following skills:

- Recognize first and last name in print
- Identify uppercase and lowercase letters when named
- Name basic colors and shapes
- Recite numbers 1–20 and count objects 1–10
- Demonstrate increasing independence in dressing

- Speak clearly in front of a group
- Use scissors with developing control
- Demonstrate book awareness (left-to-right progression)
- Develop large motor skills through play and movement
- Engage in both independent and cooperative play
- Follow simple directions and routines
- Participate in songs, finger plays, and group discussions
- Show improved control using crayons, markers, pencils, and paintbrushes

## **STAFF**

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The preschool staff are Christians dedicated to working with young children. As a staff, our goal is to promote a loving, Christ centered environment that teaches each child to see Christ in all they do and say both spiritually and academically. Each preschool teacher participates in continuing education in the areas of childhood development and developmentally-appropriate practice. Our teachers' help students develop new interests, learn good work habits, follow directions, socialize, share and establish self-direction. The teacher/student ratio is one to ten in preschool 3 and one to ten in preschool 4. Each class has a teacher and a full-time assistant.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESCHOOL**

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### **AGE REQUIREMENTS**

For Pre-K 3, enrolled children must be 3-years-old by September 1.  
 For Pre-K 4, enrolled children must be 4-years-old by September 1.



### **TOILET TRAINING**

Children must be toilet trained when classes begin in the fall. Pull-up pants are not permitted, even at nap time.

## **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE**

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The reason we discipline children is to help them learn to love their Lord. Proverbs 29:15b and 29:17 say, "A child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother," and, "Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul." The Bible makes it clear that children need correction and guidance. Reproof speaks of verbal training, both in what to do and what not to do. We seek to follow the command of this verse by providing the children with clear guidelines of what is acceptable behavior. The rules are clearly explained and repeated often. Respect for those in authority is necessary.

Our first step to discipline will be through redirection and positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior. This positive approach encourages self-control, self-respect and cooperation among children. When misconduct occurs, it will be dealt with promptly, fairly and lovingly. A child may have to be removed from the group for a short time in order to regain personal self-control. If inappropriate behavior continues, then the child may have another short time out or a missed opportunity.

Parents will be contacted and consulted in the event there are persistent problems.

If the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior or threatens his own safety or the safety of others, his parents will be called to pick him up immediately.

All discipline will be based on biblical principles, e.g., restitution, apologies, restoration of fellowship, no lingering attitudes, etc. The vast majority of discipline problems are to be dealt with at the classroom level. Love and forgiveness will be an integral part of the discipline of a student.

There are times that behaviors that will result in a referral to the administration for disciplinary action, rather than being handled solely by the classroom teacher. When a student is referred to the administration, the administrator will evaluate the situation and determine the appropriate disciplinary action.

We have found that positive motivation works successfully in the vast majority of cases. When the discipline merits, the parent may be asked to come in to speak to their child. After the child and parent have resolved the issue, we ask that the child be lovingly returned to class.

Parents must realize that if a child's behavior is not in line with the rules then she forfeits her privilege of being enrolled at GCA.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

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We have one scheduled Parent-Teacher Conference Day each year at the end of Quarter 1. The teacher will post a schedule of available times and ask the parents to sign up for an appointment. If at any other time during the school year you wish to speak privately with the teacher, please contact the teacher or the office to arrange a mutually convenient time for an appointment or phone call. If something is concerning you about your child, our program, or a specific incident that has occurred, please let us know so that we can reach a solution together. We do ask that you not engage the teacher or the assistant in lengthy conversations during the times they are with the children. It is important that the children receive the teacher's undivided attention during class time.

## **ILLNESS AND ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

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For your child's protection, as well as other children and our staff, you will need to keep your child home if he has any of the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees or more;
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting;
- Communicable diseases (strep throat, pink eye, etc.);
- Extreme discomfort that would limit the child's ability to concentrate and participate in activities.

If your child has any of these symptoms, he or she should remain out of school for 24 hours. Any child with a fever must be fever-free (without the use of a fever reducing medication) for 24 hours before returning to school. Please notify the school of any contagious disease or illness your child may have, so we can notify other parents that their child may have been exposed. If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent will be notified to pick up the child.

Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to exclude enrolled children from attending if the child appears ill, overtired or unable to participate in the daily program.

## **MEDICATION**

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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.

### **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.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

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GCA provides transportation to and from school for preschool students who have a sibling in a higher grade at the school. Otherwise, parents are responsible for transportation to and from school. Please be prompt. Your child will only be released to parents with legal custody, legal guardians, or persons named in writing on the emergency card. Teachers must know the adult or see identification before turning the child over to that adult's custody. Written notification is required when someone different will be picking up your child.

### **Arrival Times:**

8:10 a.m. - Preschool arrival begins. Students should be dropped off at their designated doors by 8:25. After 8:25, please report to the main office. Half day students must be signed in no later than 9:30 a.m. Students are not allowed to enter the program after 9:30 a.m. without prior notification.

### **Dismissal Times:**

Half-Day dismissal is at 11:45 and full-day dismissal is from 3:00-3:15.

### **Late Pick-Up:**

Please arrive on time to pick up your child. A child left waiting can become quite upset. Parents will be charged a late fee. Late charges begin for half-day students at 12:00 p.m., full day students at 3:15 p.m., and aftercare students at 6:00 p.m. The late fee will be \$10.00 for every 15 minutes (or portion thereof).

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Our school follows Charles County public schools with regard to delays, early closings and cancellations.

- In case of a delay we will operate according to the following schedule.  
One-hour delay:  
9:00 a.m. – Half-day and full-day students with siblings enrolled in the secondary program may arrive.  
9:15 a.m. – Half-day and full-day students with siblings enrolled in the elementary program may arrive.  
9:30 a.m. – All other half-day and full-day students may arrive.

Two-hour Delay:

10:00 a.m. – Full-day students with siblings enrolled in the secondary program may arrive.

10:15 a.m. – Full-day students with siblings enrolled in the elementary program may arrive.

10:30a.m. – All other full-day students may arrive.

## UNIFORMS

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Preschool experiences require many hands-on activities. While these are very meaningful to the children, they may also become messy. We ask that you please have your children wear comfortable attire to school in which they are able to explore, play and even get dirty! Also, please make these uniforms easy to get into and out of for toileting purposes. You will also be asked to provide an extra set of uniforms that are seasonally appropriate in case any changes need to be made during the school day. All clothing and personal items should be marked with their name in permanent marker. Finally, we go outside frequently, so please make sure your child is dressed for the weather. Winter clothing should include gloves and hats.

### Uniform Guidelines:

Please use the following uniform guidelines when dressing your child for school:

- Khaki or navy blue pants, shorts, skirts, jumpers or skorts. Please observe the 2 inch above the knee length rule when dressing your child in shorts, skirts or skorts.
- Navy blue or white uniform shirts with GCA Logo is required

The following is **not** permitted:

- No long dresses;
- No sandals, crocks, or flip-flops;
- No jewelry such as necklaces, bracelets, rings or hoop earrings. These are choking hazards; and
- No bodysuits that snap in the crotch.

## SNACKS/LUNCHES

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Preschool students are provided with a morning snack each day, along with 1% milk. If your child prefers not to eat the snack provided, you are welcome to send an alternative snack from home.

Students enrolled in the full-day program should also bring a daily lunch. Please pack foods that your child enjoys and is able to eat independently.

Soda is not permitted in preschool lunches.

## **SUPPLIES**

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Teachers create a list of supplies for families to contribute to the classroom. The supply list is on our school's website or may accompany a welcome letter from the teacher(s) at the beginning of the school year. Supplies may also be requested periodically throughout the year.

## **NAP/REST TIME**

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Children will need to bring a rolled nap mat and small blanket. All items should be labeled and brought to school in a bag made from a pillowcase (for easy storage). All bedding will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

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Children are not allowed to bring toys from home unless it is for "Show and Tell". Personal toys from home may cause problems, and we cannot ensure that the toy will not be broken. The preschool is equipped with many toys for everyone to use. If your child has a "security toy" which he/she wishes to bring to school he/she will be asked to keep the item in their tote bag while school is in session.

## **BIRTHDAYS/SPECIALTREATS**

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We celebrate each child's birthday. If you would like to bring in a special snack, please notify your child's teacher ahead of time so she can plan accordingly. All treats must be "NUT" free and accompanied with a list of ingredients or the ingredient label from the container. Please avoid large portions as the children seldom finish eating a large treat. We request that birthday party invitations NOT be distributed at school, unless there is an invitation for each child in the class.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

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Field trips may be scheduled at various times during the year. In order for a child to participate, permission slips sent home by the teacher must be signed for permission to participate and returned before the trip takes place. Each child is expected to ride the bus with the class to the field trip however; they may be signed out at the end of the trip and leave with their parent, if it is a trip that allows parents to attend. Younger siblings may not attend preschool field trips.

## **SPECIAL TIPS FOR A POSITIVE PRESCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

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- Your attitude is contagious! Be positive and confident about your decision to enroll your child in preschool. Your little one will reflect your confidence and positive attitude.
- When dropping off your child in the morning, don't linger but be sure to tell your child good-bye and remind them that you will be there to pick them up in a little while. A quick, clean, confident break will be best for both you and your child. As soon as you are gone, your child will quickly become absorbed in the activities of the day.
- Be sure your child gets plenty of sleep and a good breakfast before coming to school.
- Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day at school. Look for the positives and don't dwell on any negative experience. Ask specific questions such as, "What did you learn today?" "Who did you play with?" "What story did you listen to today?" etc. However, don't press the issue if your child doesn't seem to have much to say – some children just don't keep their parents informed as well as others!
- Check with the teacher for activities you can do at home to carry through on the things done in school. Let your child teach you finger plays and songs. If special recipes are used in school, try making them at home. Your interest and involvement will give your child a great sense of achievement and importance.
- Please read all papers and newsletters, which are sent home with your child. Watch for notes and announcements posted outside your child's class or on the parent information bulletin board. Stay informed so your child won't miss out on any of the fun!