

SEPTEMBER 2026

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to Grace Christian Academy!

School Contact

13000 Zekiah Dr
Waldorf, MD 20601
(301) 645-0406

Office Hours: 7:30-4:00 M-F

Important Dates:

- 9/2 - Believe Kids Fundraiser- Chapel Kickoffs
- 9/3 - Chic-Fil-A Begins SGA First Meeting (every other thurs)
- 9/4 - **No Aftercare** - Pizza Begins/ Symphony begins
- 9/7 - Labor Day- School Closed
- 9/11 - Patriotic Day **HALF DAY for students (NO AFTERCARE)** Teacher's Professional Development
- 9/14-9/18 MAPS Testing (K-1st)
- 9/15 - Secondary Back to School Night at 6pm
- 9/17 - TAG Day Oct. lunch forms due.
- 9/18 - Mid Quarter
- 9/22 - PK & Elem BTSN at 6pm (Mini Book Fair)
- 9/23 - See You at The Pole!
- 9/24 - Secondary Games/ Open House 6pm
- 9/25 - PK Johnny Appleseed Day
- 10/09 **No Aftercare**

Lunch Forms Found HERE!



A Note From the Director:

Welcome to September!

I love everything about this time of year! School is in full swing, football is getting started (GO DOLPHINS!), athletics, clubs, and choir at GCA are underway, and before we know it, we'll be enjoying the beautiful colors of fall. I hope your child or children have adjusted well and are settling into the rhythm of the school year. We are excited to continue getting to know each student better, and we are so thankful for a wonderful staff who is committed to connecting with your children—not only academically, but spiritually as well. Our desire is to help each student grow in their relationship with the Lord while also challenging them to grow academically and personally.

The Lord has been so good to us throughout the summer and into this school year! This year alone, GCA has grown by 88 students, added a weight room and media center, welcomed back a full, in-person high school, completed several exciting updates and projects around the building, welcomed wonderful new teachers, and so much more. It is exciting to see how the Lord continues to work in and through GCA!

As we look ahead, I am especially excited to celebrate GCA's 40th year as a school this April! Please save the date for a special family celebration on April 23rd. We have some exciting things planned, and more information will be coming soon. It is going to be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate God's faithfulness and all that He is doing in and through GCA.

Lastly, thank you for trusting us and partnering with us as we invest in your children. We do not take that responsibility lightly. It is a privilege to come alongside your family, and we are praying and believing that this will be an incredible year of growth, learning, and, most importantly, growing closer to the Lord.

We are so thankful to have your family as part of the GCA community. Here's to an amazing school year!

Back to School Nights!

Secondary School: 9/15 at 6pm

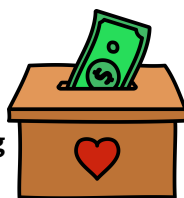
Pre K & Elementary: 9/22 at 6pm



Our Back to School Nights are coming up soon! Please mark your calendar and try your best to find childcare as we ask that these nights are **student free**. The staff is able to get through more information and there are less distractions when students are able to stay home. However, we do know this is not always attainable for some families.

This is a night where parents can hear information from the Director of School and the Director of Education as well as attend sessions with the students' teachers. During these sessions teachers will discuss specific classroom and curriculum topics.

Operation Christmas Child (OCC) is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse that provides a shoebox gift to children in areas that are more closed off to the gospel due to geography, religious, or political reasons. These shoeboxes are packed with basic hygiene items, school supplies, and toys and are dispersed to areas all around the world. The most important thing that the child receives is a Bible written in their own language and an opportunity to join a discipleship program. We have packing parties and activities to support this ministry during the months of October and November. One way you can support now is purchasing school supplies and other items to donate.



Arrival Procedures

Arrival Time:

Students should arrive between 8:10 and 8:30 AM. If your child is not at their designated drop-off location by 8:30, they will need to check in at the front office.

Arrival Locations by Grade:

- Pre-K: Breezeway Entrance
- Kindergarten - 2nd Grade: Foyer Entrance
- 3rd - 10th Grade: Gym Entrance

Arrival Guidelines for Parents:

- Please park in the front school parking lot.
- Walk your child to the appropriate crosswalk for their entrance.
- Parent/teacher conferences are not permitted during drop-off.
- After dropping off your child, please return to your car and promptly exit the school grounds.

Pick-Up Guidelines

- Parking: Please park in the front school parking lot.
- Pick-Up Location: Walk to the same location where you dropped off your child, and bring the car tag with your child's last name that was provided to you.
- Crosswalk Safety: Once your child is with you, please use the designated crosswalk to return to your vehicle.
- Drive Safely: As you exit, drive slowly and remain alert for other parents and students who may still be walking to their cars.

PLEASE NOTE: NO CARS SHOULD PARK IN THE CROSSWALKS.

PARKING LOT SAFETY!

We know it's fun to surprise your child with a special lunch now and then, but we kindly ask that families refrain from outside lunch deliveries. If your child forgets their lunch, please contact the main office so a lunch can be provided.

Thank you so much for understanding and helping us keep the school day running smoothly!



Lisa C Johnson

Director of Admissions and Registrar
301-645-0406



GCA Athletics john.somerville@graceknights.org

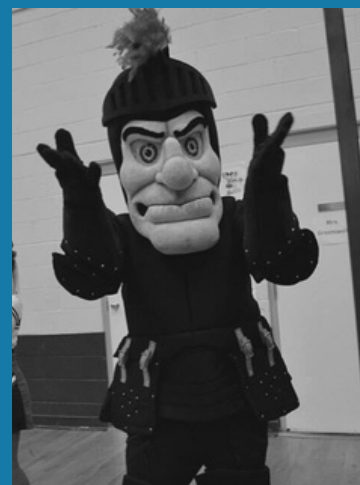
GCA Girls Volleyball and Coed soccer has started! We are excited to cheer on our athletes during this Fall season!

Soccer

9/15: Home vs. KCA @4pm
9/17: Away vs. Calverton @4pm
9/24: Away vs G.E. Peters @4pm
9/25: Away vs Southern MD Christian @4PM
9/30: Away vs Holy Trinity @4PM
10/14: Kings Christian Academy @4PM

Volleyball

9/10: Home vs. Riverdale@4PM
9/14: Home vs. KCA @4PM
9/17: Home vs. Calverton @4PM
9/18: Home vs. Lanham @4PM
9/22: Home vs. SMCA @4PM
9/24: Away vs. G.E. Peters @4PM
9/29: Away vs. Lanham @4PM
9/30: Away vs. Holy Trinity @4PM



Go Knights!

Schedules are subject to change.

2026–2027 Kindergarten – High School Math Academic Goal

Goal:

During the 2026–2027 school year, elementary and secondary students will demonstrate measurable growth in mathematics achievement by developing deeper conceptual understanding, stronger number sense, mathematical reasoning, and effective problem-solving skills.

Mathematics instruction will emphasize rich mathematical thinking, multiple representations, productive struggle, and meaningful discourse to foster confident, engaged learners who can apply mathematical concepts in a variety of contexts.

YouCubed – Stanford University

YouCubed's philosophy is that all students can learn and enjoy math, especially when math is taught as a creative, visual, connected subject rather than a set of procedures to memorize. It emphasizes growth mindset, productive struggle, collaboration, and deep understanding over speed and rote learning.

Teacher Professional Development

Throughout the school year, Math teachers will participate in a book study and/or online certification course created by a Stanford University Mathematics Education Professor, Dr. Jo Boaler. 3rd-11th grade math teachers had the opportunity to attend a Math Workshop this summer and begin one of YouCubed's online Math for Teachers courses.

YouCubed's Approach

Learn more about YouCubed's Approach here. GCA's math education philosophy closely aligns with YouCubed's Mindset, Big Ideas, and Visual Mathematics beliefs. Click the link below.

[YouCubed Approach](#)

Parent/Student Resources

There are wonderful resources on their websites for parents to partner with us in this math goal!

Students should also get involved in their own math journey! Explore their resources for parents and students below!

[Parent Resources](#)
[Student Resources](#)

2026-2027 Tag Days

September 17
October 15
November 19
December 17
January 14
February 18
March 18
April 15
May 13





GCA TAG DAY



TAG DAYS are special activities at GCA where participation is optional. TAG DAYS are a fundraising event for various causes within our school. These special days give students the opportunity to wear non-uniform pants and shirts on designated days. (See the school calendar.)

- Mrs. Miller and **homeroom teachers** are the ONLY staff members who will collect money the week of the TAG DAY. Please do not try to give money to the office.
- The cost is \$1.00 to wear non-uniform pants and \$1.00 to wear a non-uniform shirt, if paid the day before the actual TAG DAY.
- If payment is made on the actual TAG DAY, the cost doubles to \$2.00 for the pants and \$2.00 for the shirt.
- If a student shows up on TAG DAY wearing TAG DAY clothes without funds to pay, that student will have his or her parents notified, via Renweb, that their child owes for TAG DAY (with a late fee). The total of \$6.00 is due the next school day.
- We offer a Yearly TAG DAY payment option of \$18.00. This will cover all Tag Days (BEST OPTION). To take advantage of this offer, send in the exact payment in a sealed envelope to Mrs. Miller/TAG DAY. Please do not combine this payment with other fees or payments. Payment must be received by September 11, 2026. No refunds will be made for missed TAG DAYS.
- All TAG DAY clothing must meet Grace Christian Academy standards of dress found in the Parent/Student Handbook. Please No short skirts or rompers, no tight pants/jeans, pajama style clothing, and no athletic slides or hats on TAG DAYS. Girls may wear leggings but the shirt/sweater over the leggings must not be tight and be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee. If in doubt, don't wear it. Any student who violates these standards will call home for alternate clothing.

Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.

Please sign and return the bottom portion of the TAG DAY agreement to your homeroom teacher by September 11, 2026, even if you are not sure whether your child will participate. If you are paying yearly for TAG DAY, please include payment! Reminder: Please do not combine this payment with other fees or payments.

2026 - 2027 TAG DAY AGREEMENT

I understand the 2026 - 2027 TAG DAY dress requirements. Please check one option below

\$18.00 yr. payment enclosed _____, Sept. payment \$2.00 only _____, no payment at this time_____

Print Student's Name: _____ Grade_____

Homeroom Teacher _____

Parent Signature: _____

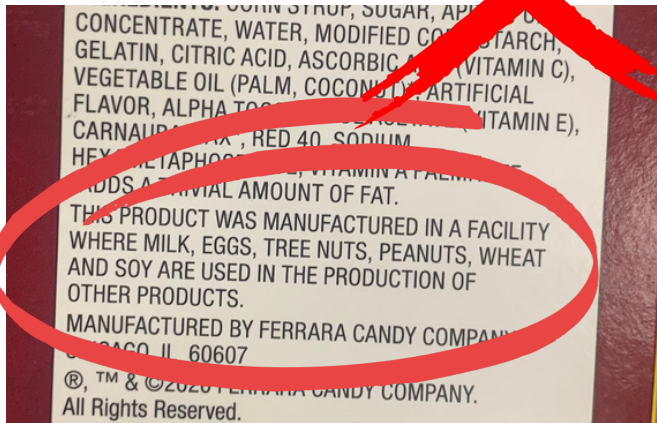
SCHOOL UNIFORMS

We know that many parents are waiting for uniforms to arrive in the mail or be returned to the school with the school logo. Grace will be extended the first few weeks of school. However, when you are purchasing uniform bottoms please be aware of GCA uniform guidelines. A school uniform pant has a 'welt' pocket, not a *pocket on the outside*. Girls are **not** to wear *jegging style* or *stretchy pants* that are khaki or navy in color. We will be enforcing our dress code soon and will send parents an email if their child is out of dress code. *This goes for all students*. Many girls are wearing stretchy material pants. *Cargo shorts* are not a school uniform bottom.

Below are pictures of approved pants/shorts. Our SCHOOL WEBSITE has more detailed information about GCA's school uniform. **Red polos** and **GCA t-shirts** are allowed on Friday's only.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Birthday Parties

Are you wanting to celebrate your student's birthday at school?

Students are allowed to bring in a treat such as cupcakes and cookies to school. All food must be brought to the office, not given to the teacher directly or sent in with the student.

Any item sent must abide by the following:

MUST be SEALED from a STORE AND

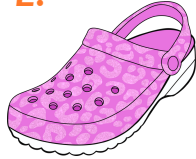
MUST have a NUT FREE Label.

- Your food will not be passed out if the label says made in a facility the produces nuts.
- **No balloons or treat bags. If brought in, these will be left in the office. The school cannot be held responsible for any times that may contain an allergen in a treat bag, nor can we search each bag that is brought in.**

Dress Code

REMINDER

*Students are allowed to wear Crocs to school, but they **MUST** wear the backstraps at all times! They also must wear tennis shoes to PE.*



Secondary School Events

dwayne.johnson@graceknights.org



Program Fees

nancy.kemmerer@graceknights.org

This is a reminder for those who have not paid their program fees for the year. Please log into your FACTS account to check your balance. These fees should be paid at the start of the school year. If you still have a balance, please see the office to make a payment as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Custodial Documents

lisa.johnson@graceknights.org

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.

If your family has custody agreements that are court documented, please provide copies to the main office to the attention to Lisa Johnson.

Click the link below for custodial documents.

[Custodial Documents](#)



Our Fall Fundraiser is underway! September 2nd-September 16th

Your Participation & Support are greatly appreciated. Register your student(s) at ShopFund.com using Group Code: UWJBH

Share the fundraiser with family & friends. Sharing to 10+ contacts gives your student eligibility for the WEEK TO WIN IT prizes (while supplies last/only given the first week of the fundraiser 9/2-9/9)! Thank you for your support!

If you have any questions please email Mrs. Hornickel: Cindy.hornickel@graceknights.org

WHO DO I CONTACT?

TEACHER

Questions about:

- Assignments
- Gradebook
- Classroom Management
- AR
- Your student's behavior and habits in class
- Agenda/Notebook (Grades 3 -8)
- Anything classroom specific

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR, S.T.E.P. CENTER/TESTING MICHELLE GOODSON

Questions about:

- Learning Lab
- MAPS Testing
- PK-3rd Discipline
- Entrance Testing
- IEPs, 504s, Educational Services
- Preschool Educational policies and procedures

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MEGAN SCHANIEL

Questions about:

- Curriculum
- School Events
- Kindergarten - 11th Grade Educational policies and procedures

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS JOHN SOMERVILLE

Questions about:

- School security measures
- 4th - 11th discipline
- Athletics
- Building and grounds questions

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL STACIE BUHL

Questions about:

- School mission and vision
- School culture and values

OTHER QUESTIONS?

- Enrollment, FACTS login - **Lisa Johnson**
- Tuition, Payments, Financial - **Nancy Kemmerer**
- Forms, Attendance, Records - **Julie Turner**
- Employment - **Kathy Fay**
- Medications, Student Illness - **Josephine Bailey**
- Extended Care, Summer Camp - **Michelle Goodson**
- Parent Liaison - **Lisa Johnson**
- Homeschool - **Michelle Goodson**



Save the Date! This year we are having a small Back to School Night Book Fair for you and your child to shop, September 21-September 23! Now that students are receiving their AR reading levels let's help prepare and equip them with books in their reading level. Most, if not all, Scholastic books sold at our Book Fairs are AR leveled within the program. Be on the lookout for more information!

Questions:

Cindy.hornickel@graceknights.org

DO GOOD WITH CHIPOTLE



CHIPOTLE FUNDRAISER FOR GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY OF MARYLAND ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT

25% OF EVENT SALES GET DONATED TO THE CAUSE

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2ND | 5-9PM

4576 FAIRWAY VILLAGE PL, WALDORF, MD, 20602

ORDER ONLINE FOR PICKUP USING CODE **JWFRKKQ**
OR SHOW THIS FLYER IN RESTAURANT



For online orders to count towards the fundraiser, they must be placed for pickup only from the restaurant location of, and during the hours of, the fundraiser. Delivery orders and gift cards do not qualify. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.

School Tablets

sedric.reeves@graceknights.org

We are happy to share that our students and teachers have increased availability of devices in order to enhance learning and engagement! Preschool and Kinder classrooms have a few devices in each room for use in centers. 1st - 5th grade classrooms have class sets of tablets. 6th - 11th grade students have been assigned a laptop for home and school use. It is extremely important that students bring their laptops home each night to charge and bring them back to school each day ready to use for e-textbooks and assignments. All secondary students and parents should have signed our device policy and returned it to school. It is linked [HERE](#) as well for reference.

3rd - Reading, Social Studies, and Science

4th - Reading and Science

5th - Reading, Social Studies and Science

6th - Literature, Heritage Studies, and Science

7th - Literature, Cultural Geography, and Life Science

8th - Literature, History, and Earth Science

9th/10th - United States History

Preschool and lowe elementary classrooms will each get 3-4 tablets to be used for learning centers. We are excited for all of the enhanced learning opportunities these devices will provide!



In honor of Patriotic Day on Friday, September 11th, students are allowed to wear patriotic shirts with their uniform pants.

Fall MAPS Testing

michelle.goodson@graceknights.org

We will begin our Fall MAPS Growth Testing in a few weeks! Students in Kindergarten - 11th grade will take a Math test and a Reading test. Students in 3rd - 11th will also take a Science test this year! We do these tests three times a year to track how students are growing from Fall to Winter to Spring in these subjects. Results will be sent home after all testing is completed.



Message from our Physical Education Teacher, Mrs. Ball

Greetings Parents and Guardians, Please check with your student's teacher to see what days your child has PE. Tennis shoes are required on these days.

Thank you!

Mrs. Ball



2026-2027 Academy Calendar

Date	Day	Event
08/13/2026	Th	AR 5:15pm and Binder Orientation and Study Skills, 6pm (All 3 rd and new 4 th – 8 th Students)
08/17/2026	M	Meet & Greet, 4pm – 6pm
08/19/2026	W	First Day of School – Quarter 1 Begins
09/04/2026	F	NO AFTER CARE
09/07/2025	M	School Closed – Labor Day
09/11/2026	F	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Professional Development</i>) NO AFTER CARE
10/09/2026	F	NO AFTER CARE
10/12/2026	M	School Closed – Columbus Day
10/21/2026	W	End of Q1 (39 Days)
10/22/2026	Th	No School for Students (<i>Teacher Workday</i>)
10/23/2026	F	No School for Students (<i>Teacher Professional Development</i>)
10/26/2026	M	Begin Q2
10/28/2026	W	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Planning Day</i>) NO AFTER CARE
10/30/2026	F	NO AFTER CARE
11/02/2026	M	No School for Students – Parent Conference Day (<i>Teacher Workday</i>)
11/10/2026	T	NO AFTER CARE
11/11/2026	W	School Closed – Veterans' Day
11/24/2026	Tu	Half Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
11/25/2026	W	No School – Begin Thanksgiving Break
11/27/2026	F	No School – End Thanksgiving Break
11/30/2026	M	School Reopens
12/01/2026	T	GIVING TUESDAY – Please consider Donating to GCA. Thank You.
12/18/2026	F	Half Day for All NO AFTER CARE
12/21/2026	M	No School – Christmas Break Begins
01/04/2027	M	No School – Christmas Break Ends (<i>Teacher Workday</i>)
01/05/2027	T	School Reopens – HAPPY NEW YEAR!
01/14/2027	Th	End of Q2 (42 Days) NO AFTER CARE
01/15/2027	F	No School for Students (<i>Teacher Workday</i>)
01/18/2027	M	School Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
01/19/2027	Tu	Begin Q3
02/12/2027	F	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Professional Development</i>) NO AFTER CARE
02/15/2027	M	No School – Presidents' Day
03/03/2027	W	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Professional Development</i>) NO AFTER CARE
03/19/2027	F	Half Day for Students - End of Q3 (43 Days) (<i>Teacher Workday</i>) NO AFTER CARE
03/25/2027	Th	<i>Grandparents Day Program</i> – Half Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
03/26/2027	F	No School – Good Friday
03/29/2027	M	No School – Easter Break Begins
04/02/2027	F	No School – Easter Break Ends
04/05/2027	M	School Reopens
04/29/2027	Th	NO AFTER CARE
04/30/2027	F	No School Spring Break
05/25/2027	Tu	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Workday</i>) NO AFTER CARE
05/26/2027	W	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Workday</i>) NO AFTER CARE
05/27/2027	Th	Half Day for Students (<i>Teacher Workday</i>) NO AFTER CARE
05/28/2027	F	Half Day for Students – LAST DAY (<i>Teacher Workday</i>) NO AFTER CARE End of Q4
05/31/2027	M	School Closed – Memorial Day

Three inclement weather/snow days have been built into the school calendar.

(172 SCHOOL DAYS + 3 SNOW DAY = 175 DAYS)

After three inclement weather days are used, the following will modify the school year:

- June 1, 2027 (Snow day number four)
- June 2, 2027 (Snow day number five)
- June 3, 2027 (Snow day number six)

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.