

**Philippians 4:6-7:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.



# NEWSLETTER

February  
2026

## School Contact

13000 Zekiah Dr  
Waldorf, MD 20601  
(301) 645-0406  
Office Hours: 7:30-4:00 M-F

## A Note from the Director

### Parents,

I hope everyone enjoyed the snow and ice storm at the end of January. While the weather brought its challenges, it was also a gift to slow down and spend extra time with family. Thank you for your flexibility and support in helping our asynchronous days run smoothly. I have tremendous respect for our teachers, who stepped up and made those days successful on very short notice.

As we move into February, we are looking ahead with excitement for all that GCA is—and all that it is becoming. As re-enrollment is open now we are thrilled to be able to offer both a traditional high school track and a dual enrollment track starting in our 11th grade. In addition, we continue to grow in the areas of clubs, extracurricular activities, athletics, and academic excellence.

Please know how much we value you and your family here at GCA. Our school would not be what it is without the support and commitment of our families. With that in mind, I cannot stress enough the importance of early enrollment. Having accurate enrollment numbers allows us to plan effectively and hire the most qualified teachers possible. If you know you plan to re-enroll, we encourage you to do so within the next few weeks. If you have any questions or concerns, my door is always open. GCA has big plans—from preschool through high school—and we would love for your family to continue being part of that journey.

Thank you for being such an important part of our community.

*Ready. Set. Re-Enroll!*



## Important Dates:

- 2/3-2/13 - MAPS Testing
- 2/5-2/12 - Valentine's Grams
- 2/10 - Class Picture Day
- 2/13 - HALF Day for students, NO AFTERCARE
- 2/13 - Valentine's Shirt with uniform bottoms
- 2/16 - NO SCHOOL (President's Day)
- 2/17 - 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School
- 2/19 - TAG Day, Mid-Quarter, Lunch forms due
- 2/27 - Black History Month Performance at 10am

**Lunch Forms Found [HERE!](#)**

# Medication Authorization and When to Stay Home

Now that we are back to school, viruses and such will begin to make its way through the school sooner than later. Please express importance of handwashing, cough/sneeze etiquette, consuming enough water, eating a healthy diet, and getting a good nights rest to your student.

Doctor's notes can be sent to [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org)

Please be sure to inform Health Notes as well as your student's teacher if your child is receiving a surgical or medical procedure, or have any changes to their health during the school year. This is to ensure they are properly cared for in the event complications arise.

## New Family Referral Program

Our first Open House of the new year is coming up soon! Do you know about our New Family Referral Program? You have an opportunity to earn up to \$1,500 towards your Facts account! Click [HERE](#) to read more.

## No School/Half Day

February 13

Half Day for Students,  
NO AFTERCARE

February 16

NO SCHOOL

March 4

Half Day for Students  
NO AFTERCARE

# Parking Lot Rules

**Please drive slowly.** There are many students and adults walking through the parking lot, and it's essential that we remain alert and cautious at all times. **The speed limit is 10 MPH.**



**Do not use the farmhouse driveway** as an entry or exit point for school traffic.



**Don't block entrances & exits.**

**Do not drive across parking spaces.** Please avoid cutting through rows of parked cars when moving through the lot, because it is illegal.



**Use the crosswalk** to drop off and pick up your students.



**Stay to the right at all times** when driving through the parking lot to allow for two way traffic.



## IMPORTANT

## Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

- **All parents and students must use the designated crosswalks** when walking across the parking lot for both drop-off and pick-up. This is to ensure the safety of all students and families.
- **For Pre-K and Elementary School parents:** If you are not at the pick-up area by **3:15 PM**, you will need to go to the main office to sign your child out.
- **For Middle School parents:** If you arrive after **3:30 PM**, you will need to go to the main office to sign your child out.



A Ministry of GRACE CHURCH | Waldorf



# RE-ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
PK3 - 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

RE-ENROLL BY FEBRUARY 20<sup>TH</sup> AND  
YOU'LL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING FOR  
\$1,000 OFF TUITION!

Secure your spot now!

Chance to win!

[www.graceknights.org/admissions](http://www.graceknights.org/admissions)

# Reminder



We would like to provide a reminder that weekly Reading Logs are required for elementary and middle school students. Parents must verify that their student is reading the required number of minutes each night and initial. These are due weekly and worth 10% of students' Reading grade. Also, Khan Academy is required for all 3rd - 8th grade students. Students must complete 45 minutes of active learning minutes each week. Grades are taken weekly and worth 10% of students' Math grade. Please reach out to your student's teachers if you have any questions. Thank you!!

## 2025-2026 Tag Days

### Thursdays

November 20  
December 18  
January 15  
February 19  
March 19  
April 23  
May 14



## OUTDOOR RECESS

Elementary students will continue to go outside for recess if the wind chill is above 36 degrees (without precipitation). Please dress your students for school appropriately for the weather.



## Student Illnesses/Appointments, etc.

Now that we are back to school, viruses and such will begin to make its way through the school sooner than later. Please express importance of handwashing, cough/sneeze etiquette, consuming enough water, eating a healthy diet, and getting a good nights rest to your student.

Doctor's notes can be sent to [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org)

Please be sure to inform Health Notes as well as your student's teacher if your child is receiving a surgical or medical procedure, or have any changes to their health during the school year. This is to ensure they are properly cared for in the event complications arise.

## Physical Education

In the midst of Winter, we are all excited to wear our cutest boots. Please be mindful of the days your student has PE. If your student does not have tennis shoes on for PE they will not be able to participate.



## Lunch Form Due Dates

### Chick-Fil-A & Papa Johns



Wednesday, November 19

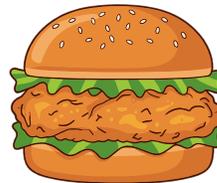
Friday, December 12

Thursday, January 22

Thursday, February 19

Thursday, March 19

Wednesday, April 15



## Not Cinderella

Slippers (e.g. UGG slippers) are not approved footwear for school. For safety and dress code reasons, all students must wear proper shoes that cover the foot and are suitable for school activities. Student who arrive to school with slippers will have to call home and parents will need to bring approved footwear for their student to attend class.



## A Kind Request to Parents and Guardians

*Hi families! We know it's fun to surprise your child with a special lunch now and then, but we kindly ask that outside food deliveries be kept to a minimum. It can be tricky finding staff to bring the food from the office, and calling into classrooms can interrupt learning time. Plus, when deliveries run late, it can throw off our schedule. Thanks so much for understanding and helping us keep the day running smoothly!*



# Unexcused Tardies

Student tardies have become very frequent. Please review the schools tardy policy from your handbook.

Student tardies to school and to classes can and will effect their enrollment and their class average. We need your help in getting students to school on time.

## 6CA Student Handbooks States:

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.





Athletic Director: John Somerville ● Assist. Athletic Director: Nina Johnson

[john.somerville@graceknights.org](mailto:john.somerville@graceknights.org)

● [nina.johnson2@graceknights.org](mailto:nina.johnson2@graceknights.org)

## Basketball

After yesterday's win against New Hope that would conclude our regular Winter Sports Season for 2025-2026.

Please read the following that pertains to the sport your student-athlete is in:  
**MS BASKETBALL PARENTS & ATHLETES:** Review the below information regarding the remainder for this week & the next.

**Our boys have made it to the MISAL LEAGUE PLAYOFFS.**

2/6 - Practice from 3:30-5pm

2/9 - HOME GAME vs. Calverton @ 4pm

2/10 - HOME Game vs. SMCA @ 4pm (also Senior Night to acknowledge our 8th grade student athletes)

2/12 - MISAL LEAGUE SEMI - FINALS @ the Higher Seed (Location & Time TBD)

2/17 - MISAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP @ GCA 5:30PM \*\*\*\*THERE IS AN ENTRY FEE  
-\$5 STUDENTS / \$10 ADULTS\*\*\*\*\*

2/18 - RETURN UNIFORMS TO MR. SOMERVILLE

### MS CHEERLEADERS & PARENTS

Our regular season practices for cheerleaders have concluded for the Winter 2025-2026 Season.

2/9 - Girls will cheer at the HOME GAME vs. Calverton @ 4pm

2/10 - Girls will cheer at the HOME GAME vs. SMCA @ 4pm (Also senior night to acknowledge our 8th grade student athletes)

2/11 - RETURN UNIFORMS TO COACH NINA



# VALENTINE'S CANDY GRAMS

Starting today, students in grades K-10th have the opportunity to purchase Valentine Candy Grams for a friend, sibling or teacher for \$1 each (cash preferred). You can also purchase one for your child during arrival times. Secondary students can purchase from Mrs. Miller during homeroom by coming to the morning snack bar cart. Valentine Day grams are handwritten messages created by your child with a candy option attached as a way of spreading encouragement, friendship, and Christ's Love to others!

The students can choose their candy option: Jully Rancher Lollypop, Hershey Kisses (limited), or Mini Air Heads. Candy grams are sold in the morning only and the sale runs from the 5th through 12<sup>th</sup>. They will be delivered on the 13th before dismissal. This is a fundraiser for SGA and upcoming events.

If you have any questions, please send them to Jennifer Miller  
[jennifer.miller@graceknights.org](mailto:jennifer.miller@graceknights.org)

100 DAYS  
SMARTER!

100<sup>th</sup>

Day of School

All students may dress  
as a "100-year-old"  
Attire must be school appropriate.  
Wednesday 2/5



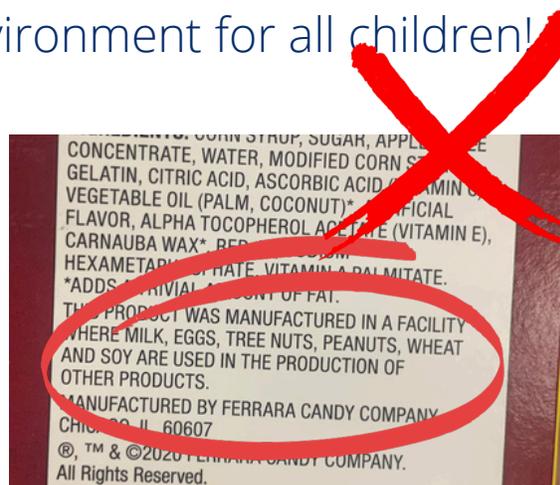
# HAPPY BIRTHDAY from GCA

## Important Birthday Celebration Guidelines

To keep all our students safe and healthy during birthday celebrations, please follow these guidelines when bringing treats to school:

- Only **store-bought cupcakes** are allowed.
- Cupcakes must be **nut-free** and come from a **nut-free facility**.
- Treats must be **sealed and unopened** when brought to school.
- No goodie bags with food or candy are permitted.
- No balloons are allowed in the classroom.
- All cupcakes must be brought to the front office for approval before distribution.
- The school cannot be held responsible for any allergic reactions caused by food brought from outside.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment for all children!



# 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

- Entrance Testing
- IEPs, 504s, Educational Services
- Preschool Educational policies and procedures

## DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MEGAN SCHANIEL

Questions about:

- Curriculum
- School Events
- Kindergarten - 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Educational policies and procedures

## DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS JOHN SOMERVILLE

Questions about:

- School security measures
- School-wide discipline policies
- 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 - **Nina Johnson**
- Medications, Student Illness - **Josephine Bailey**
- Extended Care, Summer Camp - **Michelle Goodson**
- Parent Liaison - **Lisa Johnson**
- Homeschool - **Michelle Goodson**

# 2025-2026 ACADEMIC SCHOOL GOAL:



## *Active Learning*

Academic Goal: We are thrilled to announce that our Academic Excellence Initiative this school year will be focused on active learning! Teachers have been provided ample training and PD on brain-research, engagement, and creating effective and engaging active learning lessons.

This means students will do more active lessons, such as centers, task cards, relay races, scavenger hunts, whiteboards, games, use of manipulatives, etc. and less worksheets.

Teachers will be assessing student understanding during these activities and may take grades to go into Renweb. Renweb grades will reflect active learning activities and traditional worksheet assignments.

# 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.





## 2025-2026 Academy Calendar

| Date       | Day | Event   |
|------------|-----|---|
| 08/14/2025 | Th  | Binder Orientation and Study Skills, 6pm (All 3 <sup>rd</sup> and new 4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Students) |
| 08/18/2025 | M   | Meet & Greet, 4pm – 6pm   |
| 08/20/2025 | W   | First Day of School – Quarter 1 Begins  |
| 08/29/2025 | F   | <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 09/01/2025 | M   | School Closed – <b>Labor Day</b>  |
| 09/12/2025 | F   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Professional Development</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>                            |
| 10/10/2025 | F   | <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 10/13/2025 | M   | School Closed – <b>Columbus Day</b>   |
| 10/22/2025 | W   | End of Q1 (44 Days)   |
| 10/23/2025 | Th  | No School for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> )   |
| 10/24/2025 | F   | No School for Students ( <i>Teacher Professional Development</i> )  |
| 10/27/2025 | M   | Begin Q2  |
| 10/29/2025 | W   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Planning Day</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 10/31/2025 | F   | <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 11/03/2025 | M   | No School for Students – <b>Parent Conference Day</b> ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> )                                  |
| 11/11/2025 | T   | School Closed – <b>Veterans' Day</b>  |
| 11/24/2025 | M   | Asynchronous Learning Day   |
| 11/25/2025 | T   | Asynchronous Learning Day   |
| 11/26/2025 | W   | No School – Begin Thanksgiving Break  |
| 11/28/2025 | F   | No School – End Thanksgiving Break  |
| 12/01/2025 | M   | School Reopens  |
| 12/02/2025 | T   | <b>GIVING TUESDAY – Please consider Donating to GCA. Thank You.</b>   |
| 12/19/2025 | F   | Half Day for All <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 12/22/2025 | M   | No School – <b>Christmas Break Begins</b>   |
| 01/02/2026 | F   | No School – <b>Christmas Break Ends</b>   |
| 01/05/2026 | M   | School Reopens – <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>   |
| 01/15/2026 | Th  | End of Q2 (44 Days)   |
| 01/16/2026 | F   | No School for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> )   |
| 01/19/2026 | M   | School Closed – <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>  |
| 01/20/2026 | Tu  | Begin Q3  |
| 01/21/2026 | W   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Planning Day</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 02/13/2026 | F   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Professional Development</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>                            |
| 02/16/2026 | M   | No School – <b>Presidents' Day</b>  |
| 03/04/2026 | W   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Professional Development</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>                            |
| 03/19/2026 | Th  | End of Q3 (42 Days)   |
| 03/20/2026 | F   | No School for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> )   |
| 03/25/2026 | W   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Planning Day</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>  |
| 04/02/2026 | Th  | <i>Grandparents Day Program</i> – Half Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 04/03/2026 | F   | No School – <b>Good Friday</b>  |
| 04/06/2026 | M   | No School – <b>Easter Break Begins</b>  |
| 04/10/2026 | F   | No School – <b>Easter Break Ends</b>  |
| 04/13/2026 | M   | School Reopens  |
| 05/01/2026 | F   | No School Spring Break <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 05/25/2026 | M   | No School – <b>Memorial Day</b>   |
| 05/26/2026 | Tu  | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 05/27/2026 | W   | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 05/28/2026 | Th  | Half Day for Students ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>   |
| 05/29/2026 | F   | Half Day for Students – <b>LAST DAY</b> ( <i>Teacher Workday</i> ) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b><br>End of Q4              |