

NOVEMBER 2024

# 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:

- 11/6 - Honor Roll Chapels
- 11/8 - NO AFTERCARE
- 11/11 - NO SCHOOL for Veteran's Day
- 11/15 - Picture Makeup/Retake Day
- **11/20 - December Lunch Forms DUE**
- 11/21 - TAG Day
- 11/26 - HALF Day for ALL (Possibly NO SCHOOL - Read OCC announcement below!)
- 11/26 - NO AFTERCARE
- 11/27 - 11/29 - NO SCHOOL for Thanksgiving Break
- 12/2 - School Reopens
- 12/3 - Giving Tuesday



### Message From the Office

Dear GCA Families,

As we approach Thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many things I am thankful for. I am grateful for my God, my family, my friends, the ability to stay active, my job, and each one of you. The Bible reminds us frequently of the importance of having a heart full of gratitude.

Ephesians 5:20, "Always give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the midst of this busy season, it's easy to get caught up in the many tasks at hand and forget to pause and give thanks to Jesus for the life He has blessed us with. Here at GCA, we cherish each family and deeply value our role in educating and discipling every student.

I pray that this month brings you abundant time with loved ones and moments to reflect on all that God has done for us. Wishing you a wonderful Thanksgiving filled with joy and gratitude!

Serving Him,  
Mrs. Buhl

**Lunch Forms Found  
HERE!**



GRACE CHRISTIAN  
ACADEMY

# WE'RE HIRING!

ELEMENTARY TEACHER AIDE  
AFTER CARE WORKERS  
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS



For more information, email Nina Johnson.  
[nina.johnson2@graceknights.org](mailto:nina.johnson2@graceknights.org)  
Visit our website to find the application.  
[www.graceknights.org](http://www.graceknights.org)

## GCA Athletics

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

If you are signing up for Winter Sports (Basketball/Cheer)-  
please make sure you bring an updated physical to the  
Athletic Department & GCA participation form.

Basketball Tryouts are 11/6, 11/7 and 11/8 at 3:30PM  
Cheerleading Tryouts are 11/7, 11/8 and 11/13 at 3:30PM  
Mandatory Parent Meeting for both sports is 11/13 at 5PM

## *Go Knights!*



## Honor Roll Chapel

We are very excited to recognize our Quarter 1 Honor Roll students during Chapel on **Wednesday, November 6th!**

Parents of students who made Honor Roll this quarter have received an email inviting them to attend.



## November Lunch Volunteers

[amanda.reed@graceknights.org](mailto:amanda.reed@graceknights.org)

All spots for the November lunch volunteers have been filled. Keep checking the signup genius link to see if any spots open up. Didn't get the email about signing up for a spot? Be sure to fill out the Parent Volunteer Form on our website to get on the email list! I give those who have filled out the form first pick and if there are any spots left, then I email it out to the rest of the GCA families.

## Honor Roll Pizza Party

Students who made Honor Roll this quarter will be invited to a Pizza Party at the end of the school day to celebrate their achievement!

**Elementary Pizza Party - 11/12**

**Middle School Pizza Party - 11/13**

Students who did not make Honor Roll this quarter will remain in their classrooms during the pizza party. However, we do want to acknowledge their hard work! For 1st quarter, all students will receive a treat in their classrooms and teachers will talk with students about their strengths and set goals for quarter 2! As a gradual release from always receiving a treat, starting 2nd quarter only grades 1-2 will receive a treat and 3rd quarter there will not be any classroom treats during this time.

## 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 Healthnotes 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.



# OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

This month kicks off Operation Christmas Child here at GCA, this is an awesome ministry that uses a shoebox as a tool to reach others for Christ. The boxes are filled with basic hygiene items, school supplies, and toys. Students have an opportunity to participate in several ways; by bringing in shoeboxes that they have packed at home, participating in the Middle School Packing party at the end of the month, contributing supplies through an Amazon wish list or bringing donations in.

Students can use any standard size shoebox that they may have at home, or they can get boxes from me, they will receive information on what is appropriate to put in the box. We will gather donations all month for a 'packing party', this is where the supplies are laid out and students have an opportunity to pack in class. This will take place during their history class time. In order for this to be successful we need donations. I have included a link for an Amazon wish list that will delivery items directly to the school for me or you can purchase items and bring them in. **All shoeboxes are due by Nov. 22, 2024.**

There is a lot of information on-line and this is a global ministry that we take part in during the year. If you would like more information, please see the link Operation Christmas Child | Shoebox Outreach of Samaritan's Purse (samaritanspurse.org). If you would like more information on how to get your church involved, please let me know!

Thanks for your support and have a blessed day!

Jennifer Miller

jennifer.miller@graceknights.org



**ATTENTION  
PLEASE**

We feel so strongly about supporting this mission that GCA has created a school goal of 300 shoeboxes this year! **If we reach 300 by Nov. 22 then we will have NO SCHOOL on Tuesday, Nov. 26!!**



# School Spirit

## Spirit Shirt Fridays

Students are allowed to wear a Grace shirt with their school uniform bottoms only on Fridays. The shirt can be from a club, sport, camp, or any GCA related event!

**Let's see that school spirit!**



## Outdoor Recess

Elementary students will continue to go outside for recess if the wind chill is above 36 degrees. Please dress your students for school appropriately for the weather.



## Giving Tuesday

GCA will participate in a Giving Tuesday campaign, if you would like to give money towards GCA's ongoing needs to make the school better. These donations will be tax deductible. You can also indicate a department that you would like to give towards or top priority needs. Soon we will send out a list of the departments that you can give to, as well as a list of needs we are saving for. As always, GCA appreciates your generosity and support of our parents!

#GIVINGTUESDAY  
THANK YOU!



Last year we sent out a fundraiser survey and received a lot of good feedback. Already this year, we have had quite a few parents reach out with ideas for fundraisers. In order to keep them organized and not miss a suggestion, we want to keep them all in one place. If you have an idea, please fill out the form with as much information as possible. Even if you have already sent the office an idea, please fill out the form. I know we say this all of the time, but thank you so much for your support!

<https://forms.gle/47A6ZcwYSuvUsXwN9>

# SCHOOL UNIFORMS

We know that some 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.

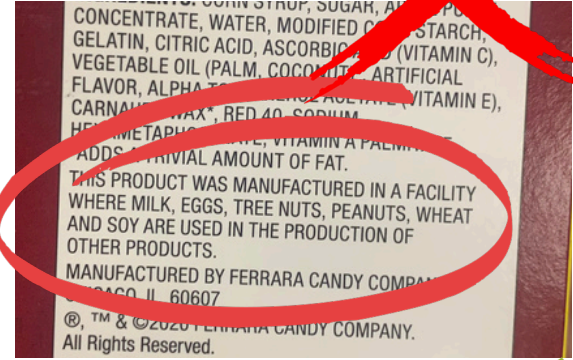
Below are pictures of approved pants/shorts. Our SCHOOL WEBSITE has more detailed information about GCA's school uniform.





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## Birthday Parties



**Want to celebrate your student's birthday at school? Treats such as cupcakes or cookies are allowed and must abide by the following:**

- **A notice must be made to the homeroom teacher a week in advance to include what will be brought in and when.**
- The homeroom teacher will email a notice out to parents of what is being brought in and when. If your student is not allowed to consume the birthday treats, please notify the teacher.
- **All food and/or drinks MUST be SEALED from a STORE AND MUST have a NUT FREE Label.**
- All food/drinks must be brought to the office, not given to the teacher directly or sent in with the student.
- NO balloons or treat bags. The school cannot be held responsible for any items that may contain an allergen in a treat bag, nor can we search each bag that is brought in.

If your student has allergies or diet restrictions such as nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat, vegan, etc. You may send in a separate treat with your child to be enjoyed on that day.

# TARDY!

**Student tardies are becoming very frequent. Please review the school's tardy policy from our handbook. Student tardies to school and to classes can and will effect their enrollment at Grace and their class averages. We need your help in getting students to school on time.**

## 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.

### **Unexcused Tardy to Class (Middle School)**

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.



# Note From the Nurse

*kristin.barber@graceknights.org*

## Did you receive an email from the nurse?

**If you have received an email from the nurse requesting health documents such as updated vaccine records, health inventory, blood lead results, medications, etc. please accomplish these requests ASAP. It is important to ensure your child's record is up to date as we prepare for an inspection from the Health Department.**

### Vaccines Requirements:

- 7th Grade (must be 11 yrs old to receive): Meningococcal, Tdap
- Kindergarten: Second dose of MMR & Varicella
- Pre-K3 & Pre-K4: DTaP/DTP/DT (4 Doses) Polio (3 Doses) Hib (at least 1 dose given after 10 mos of age) MMR (at least 1 dose) Varicella (at least 1 dose) Hepatitis B (3 doses) PCV (1 dose). If your child turns 5 within the school year, the second MMR dose is required within 20 days of their birthdate.

### Medications:

New medication authorization forms are required for this school year. The front desk WILL NOT accept medications without the proper forms. There is a general form and one specifically for students with allergies/anaphylaxis and/or asthma. All forms are found in Parents Web, under the Admissions tab on our website, or at the school office.

### COVID-19 Guidance:

As many of you know, COVID-19 seems to be on the rise again. Per MSDE guidance your child should complete a 5 day isolation period following a positive COVID-19 test. Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the day of the positive test if asymptomatic. After day 5, if your child has no symptoms OR if symptoms are improved and they have had no fever for at least 24hrs without medication, they may return to school if they wear a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days (day 6-day 10).

If they are unable to wear a mask, they may return if they have a negative test at day 5 or later. These test results must be provided to the school via [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org). Otherwise, they should remain at home for day 6-day 10.

Parents are required per the Department of Health to report all positive at home COVID tests at [onestop.md.gov](https://onestop.md.gov)

For more info, please visit [Guidance to Support Safe In-Person Operations for PreK-12 Schools and Child Care Programs \(marylandpublicschools.org\)](https://marylandpublicschools.org).

**GCA is looking for a wheelchair in good condition! Do you have one you are ready to donate?** If so, please contact Nurse Barber at [kristin.barber@graceknights.org](mailto:kristin.barber@graceknights.org).

# 2024-2025 Academy Calendar



Date	Day	Event
08/15/2024	Th	Binder Orientation and Study Skills, 6pm (All 3 <sup>rd</sup> and new 6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Students)
08/19/2024	M	Meet & Greet, 4pm – 6pm
08/21/2024	W	First Day of School – Quarter 1 Begins
08/30/2024	F	<b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
09/02/2024	M	School Closed – Labor Day
09/13/2024	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
10/11/2024	F	<b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
10/14/2024	M	School Closed – Columbus Day
10/23/2024	W	End of Q1 (44 Days)
10/24/2024	Th	No School for Students (Teacher Workday)
10/25/2024	F	No School for Students (Teacher Professional Development)
10/28/2024	M	Begin Q2
11/04/2024	M	No School for Students – Parent Conference Day (Teacher Workday)
11/08/2024	F	<b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
11/11/2024	M	School Closed – Veteran's Day
11/26/2024	Tu	Half Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
11/27/2024	W	No School – Begin Thanksgiving Break
11/29/2024	F	No School – End Thanksgiving Break
12/02/2024	M	School Reopens
12/03/2024	T	<b>GIVING TUESDAY</b> – Please consider Donating to GCA. Thank You.
12/20/2024	F	Half Day for All <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
12/23/2024	M	No School – Christmas Break Begins
01/03/2025	F	No School – Christmas Break Ends
01/06/2025	M	School Reopens – <b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>
01/16/2025	Th	End of Q2 (44 Days)
01/17/2025	F	No School for Students (Teacher Workday)
01/20/2025	M	School Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
01/21/2024	Tu	Begin Q3
02/14/2025	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
02/17/2025	M	No School – <u>President's Day</u>
03/05/2025	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
03/20/2025	Th	End of Q3 (42 Days)
03/21/2025	F	No School for Students (Teacher Workday)
03/28/2025	F	No School for All – Begin Quarter Break
03/31/2025	M	No School for All – End Quarter Break
04/17/2025	Th	<u>Grandparents Day Program</u> – Half Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
04/18/2025	F	No School – Good Friday
04/21/2025	M	No School – Easter Break Begins
04/25/2025	F	No School – Easter Break Ends
04/28/2025	M	School Reopens
05/23/2025	F	<b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/26/2025	M	No School – Memorial Day
05/27/2025	Tu	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/28/2025	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/29/2025	Th	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/30/2025	F	Half Day for Students – LAST DAY (Teacher Workday) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b> End of Q4

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

(170 SCHOOL DAYS + 3 SNOW DAY = 173 DAYS)

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