

OCTOBER 2023

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:

- 10/2 - 10/6 - Spirit Week
- 10/6 - NO Aftercare
- 10/9 - NO SCHOOL
- 10/13 - Middle School Career Day
- 10/13 - Picture Day
- 10/19 - TAG Day
- 10/25 - Quarter 1 Ends
- 10/25 - November Lunch Forms Due
- 10/26 - NO SCHOOL
- 10/27 - NO SCHOOL
- 10/30 - Quarter 2 Begins

Message From the Office

Greetings GCA Parents and Guardians,

I pray that you and your student(s) have had a great start to the school year! I can't believe that we have already finished five and a half weeks of school!

The last day of Quarter 1 is Wednesday, October 25th! As we progress closer to the end of the quarter, the topic of conversation seems to lend itself heavier to grades. We encourage you to talk to your student about how they are expected to do their best in school, complete their assignments, study for tests, etc. BUT how special they are and how much they are loved, has nothing to do with letter grades. Above all others, their Creator loves them for exactly who they are, strengths and weaknesses included!

Let's continue to encourage and motivate our students to always give their best effort, knowing that success looks different for every child. We love your kids tremendously and we are so grateful for the opportunity to educate them each day. Thank you for sharing them with us!

**Lunch Forms Found
HERE!**

In His Service,
Megan Schaniel
Director of Education



End of Quarter 1!

Last day of quarter 1 is on Wed., October 25!

All student work is due by October 25th. Teachers will not accept work after that date.

NO SCHOOL

There will be no school for students on **Thursday, October 26** or **Friday, October 27**.

Claire's Gourmet

stacie.buhl@graceknights.org

Claire's Gourmet orders will need to be picked up at the school. Mrs. Stacie Buhl will email more information about pick up day!



Parent

Conference Day!

Monday, November 6th!

Elementary Conferences

Elementary parents are required to schedule a conference in order to receive your student's first quarter report card. Teachers will email information about signing up for times.

Middle School Conferences

Middle school parent conferences are optional. Parents may request a conference with one or multiple teachers. An email about how to sign up will be going out soon.

GCA Athletics 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. Clinics will begin the week of 10/23. More info to come.

Upcoming Volleyball Games:

10/2 Away @ Grace Brethren 3:45pm

10/4 HOME vs Holy Trinity 4pm

10/6 HOME vs SMCA 4pm

10/13 Away @ Kings Christian 4pm

10/18 Semi Finals - TBD

10/30 Championship - TBD

Go Knights!



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 and we have quite a few families who still have balances. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

MAP Growth Testing

debbie.collignon@graceknights.org

Students did an excellent job on their MAP Growth testing over the past couple weeks. Students took a Math test and a Reading test. 3rd - 8th grade students also took a Science test. Results will be sent home for parents to view next week. If your student missed one of these tests, they will be scheduled for a make up test soon.

More information on reading these results coming soon!

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

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.



Middle School Career Day! October 13th!

jennifer.miller@graceknights.org

We know our GCA parents have a wide array of professions and would love to invite you to speak to our students about yours! If you are interested in coming to speak with our middle school students about what you do, please reach out to Jennifer Miller and she will give you more information about the event.

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. 9, 2023

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!

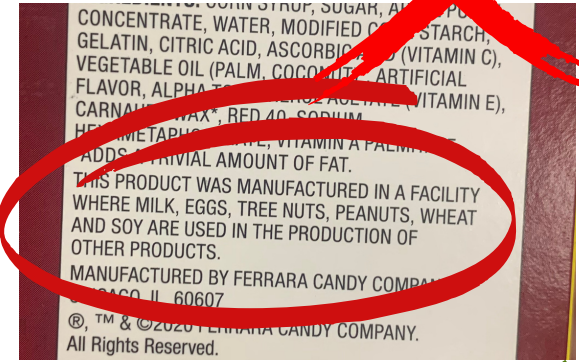
Jennifer Miller

jennifer.miller@graceknights.org



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.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

AR INCENTIVE PROGRAM

cindy.hornickel@graceknights.org

TEACHER

Questions about:

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

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION MEGAN SCHANIEL

Questions about:

- Curriculum
- Employment
- Educational policies and procedures

DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL DWAYNE JOHNSON

Questions about:

- School mission and vision
- School culture and values

DIRECTOR OF SECURITY/DISCIPLINE GREG HARRIS

Questions about:

- School security measures
- School-wide discipline policies

S.T.E.P. CENTER/TESTING DEBBIE COLLIGNON

Questions about:

- Learning Lab
- Entrance Testing
- MAPS Testing
- IEPs, 504s, Educational Services

OTHER QUESTIONS?

- Enrollment, Records, FACTS login - **Lisa Johnson**
- Tuition, Payments, Financial - **Nancy Kemmerer**
- Forms, Attendance, Pickup - **Julie Turner**
- Medications, Student Illness - **Kristin Barber**
- Extended Care, Summer Camp - **Michelle Goodson**
- Athletics - **John Somerville**
- Emotional and Spiritual Support - **Stacie Buhl**
- Parent Involvement, Homeschool - **Amanda Reed**

This year at GCA we are introducing several Accelerated Reader incentives to help motivate and encourage students along their reading journey. Each grade level will be categorized into a department, either Lower Elementary (1st-2nd), Upper Elementary (3rd-5th) or Middle School(6th-8th). Each quarter student and class AR progress will be evaluated, and rewards will be given in each category. We have broken down incentives into the following categories:

*• **Average Points Earned**- When a student takes an AR test, they are given a point value at the end of their quiz. Point averages will be calculated by class and the class with the highest average in each department each quarter will win the reward! Rewards given will be freeze pops for elementary or a snack bar pass for middle school.*

*• **Student Growth Percentage**- After each STAR test a student is given a growth percentage. There are 4 STAR tests in total in a year. The student that shows the most growth from one quarter to the next in each class will receive a library treasure box pass. Some goodies that they may find in the Treasure Box are: squishy stress balls, gummy bear erasers (scented), pens, pencils, backpack clips, book character erasers, and more!*

*• **Above & Beyond!** - Students in each class who are consistently choosing and reading books at the higher end of their reading level or ABOVE will get the chance to have Lunch in the Library with Mrs. Hornickel. This will occur each quarter as students take their AR tests. Lunch will include some special surprises and fun!*

As a school, we want to create a culture of students and teachers who love to read! Throughout the year we have many fun and exciting things planned beyond our incentive program. We hope that our students' success will translate into their everyday attitudes and speech as they excel in reading this school year.

If you have questions about the AR Incentives Program, contact our Librarian, Mrs. Cindy Hornickel.

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.



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:

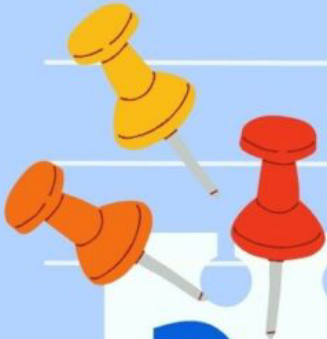
As many of you know, COVID-19 seems to be on the rise again. Per MSDE guidance your child should complete a 5 day isolation period following a positive COVID-19 test. Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the day of the positive test if asymptomatic. After day 5, if your 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-day10).

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. 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

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

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.



Back to School

IMMUNIZATION CLINICS

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| June 6, 2023 | September 5, 2023 |
| June 20, 2023 | September 12, 2023 |
| July 11, 2023 | September 19, 2023 |
| July 25, 2023 | September 26, 2023 |
| August 1, 2023 | October 3, 2023 |
| August 10, 2023 | October 10, 2023 |
| August 15, 2023 | October 17, 2023 |
| August 24, 2023 | October 24, 2023 |
| August 29, 2023 | October 31, 2023 |

**Please call 301-609-6835 to schedule
your appointment**



Date	Day	Event
08/17/2023	Th	Binder Orientation and Study Skills, 6pm (All 3rd graders and new 4th-8th graders)
08/21/2023	M	Meet and Greet, 4pm – 6pm
08/23/2023	W	First Day of School – Begin 2023 – 2024 School Year – Q1
09/04/2023	M	School Closed – Labor Day
09/15/2023	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) AFTER CARE OPEN
10/06/2023	F	Full Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
10/09/2023	M	School Closed – Columbus Day
10/25/2023	W	End of Q1 for 2023 – 2024 (44 days)
10/26/2023	Th	No School for Students (Teacher Professional Development)
10/27/2023	F	No School for Students (Teacher Professional Development)
10/30/2023	M	Begin Q2 for 2023 – 2024
11/06/2023	M	No School for Students – Parent Conference Day (Teacher Workday)
11/10/2023	F	School Closed – Veterans’ Day
11/21/2023	T	Half Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
11/22/2023	W	No School – Thanksgiving Break Begins
11/24/2023	F	No School – Thanksgiving Break Ends
11/27/2023	M	School Reopens
11/28/2023	T	Giving Tuesday – Please consider Donating to GCA
12/20/2023	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday) NO AFTER CARE
12/21/2023	Th	No School – Christmas Break Begins
01/02/2024	T	No School – Christmas Break Ends
01/03/2024	W	School Reopens
01/12/2024	F	Full Day – NO AFTER CARE
01/15/2024	M	School Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
01/18/2024	Th	End of Q2 for 2023-2024 (44 days)
01/19/2024	F	No School (Teacher Workday)
01/22/2024	M	Begin Q3 for 2023 – 2024
02/16/2024	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) NO AFTER CARE
02/19/2024	M	School Closed – Presidents’ Day
03/21/2024	Th	End of Q3 for 2023 – 2024 (43 days)
03/22/2024	F	No School (Teacher Workday)
03/25/2024	M	Begin Q4 for 2023 – 2024
03/28/2024	Th	Elementary Grandparents Day – Half Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
03/29/2024	F	No School – Easter Break Begins
04/05/2024	F	No School – Easter Break Ends
04/08/2024	M	School Reopens
05/03/2024	F	Half Day for All - Quarter Break NO AFTER CARE
05/06/2024	M	No School – Quarter Break
05/24/2024	F	Full Day for All – NO AFTER CARE
05/27/2024	M	No School – Memorial Day
05/28/2024	T	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/29/2024	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/30/2024	Th	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/31/2024	F	Half Day for Students – Last Day for Students – NO AFTER CARE
05/31/2024	F	End of Q4 for 2023 – 2024 (Teacher Workday) (42 days)

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

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

- June 3, 2024 (Snow day number four)
- June 4, 2024 (Snow day number five)
- June 5, 2024 (Snow day number six)