

SEPTEMBER 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:

- 9/6 - Claire's Gourmet Kickoff
- 9/7 - CFA Lunch begins
- 9/8 - Pizza Lunch begins
- Monday, 9/11 - Patriotic Day
- Friday, 9/15 - Half Day
- Tuesday, 9/19 - Panda Express Lunch begins
- Tuesday, 9/19 - Middle School Back to School Night 7pm
- Thursday, 9/21 TAG Day
- **9/21 - Oct. Lunch Forms Due**
- Friday, 9/22 - Mid-Quarter
- Tuesday, 9/26 - Elementary Back to School Night 7pm

Message From the Office

Greeting GCA Parents, Guardians, and Friends

Welcome back! We have been in school for about two weeks and God has been good to Grace, with increased enrollment, we have been very busy over the summer enhancing every area of our school to help prepare our students for a constant-changing technical global world. Your students may have come home already with excitement from the changes at Grace. You will see these changes in many areas of our school. God has blessed us with experienced teachers that are ready to engage your student to prepare them for the next chapter in their God-given purpose; We have overhauled our entire internet by going wireless throughout the building, which will allow us to be more responsive to the changing technology needs of our students; We hired a STEM teacher to concentrate on preparing students for the future; We have updated our water fountains to increase health and safety measures; Installed new carpets in many rooms in the building and in our mods, just to name some of the things Grace has done and will continue to do as we invest in our school and students as we prepare them to become "Kingdom Kids".

I want to thank each one of you for allowing Grace to be your choice for Christian Education. We do not take what God has called us to lightly and we look forward to what has already been a great start to the school year. Remember to note key upcoming dates as you peruse this month's school newsletter. I look forward to a great year as we continue to serve our families for His glory.

**Lunch Forms Found
HERE!**

In His Service,
Dwayne Johnson,
Director of School

Back to School Nights!

Middle School: 9/19

Elementary: 9/26

Our Back to School Nights are coming up soon! Please mark your calendar and try your best to find child care 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.

More information to come!

GCA Athletics

It's almost time for Volleyball games to begin! The sports schedule is found [on the school's website](#).

9/11 Home vs Kendall School 4PM

9/14 Away @ SMCA 2pm

9/22 HOME vs Kings Christian 4PM

9/26 Away @ Holy Trinity 4PM

9/28 Home vs. Riverdale 4PM

john.somerville@graceknights.org

Go Knights!

Program Fees

nancy.kemmerer@graceknights.org

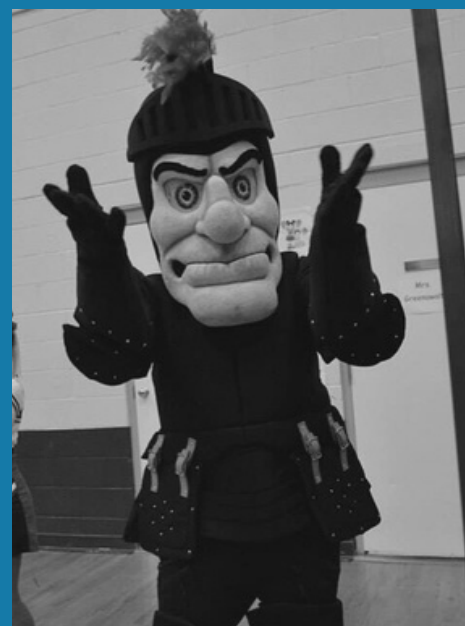
This is a reminder for those who have not paid their program fees for the year. Please log into your FACTS account to check your balance. These fees should be paid at the start of the school year and we have quite a few families who still have balances. If you still have a balance, it is due no later than 9/15. Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Claire's Gourmet

stacie.buhl@graceknights.org

Claire's Gourmet fundraiser will kick off on Wednesday, September 6th! Help support our school with this easy fundraiser and ask friends and family to purchase some delicious food.

More information will be sent home with students on the 6th and throughout the fundraiser.





Fall MAPS Testing

debbie.collignon@graceknights.org

We will begin our Fall MAPS Growth Testing in a few weeks! Students in Kindergarten - 8th grade will take a Math test and a Reading test. Students in 3rd - 8th 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.

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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



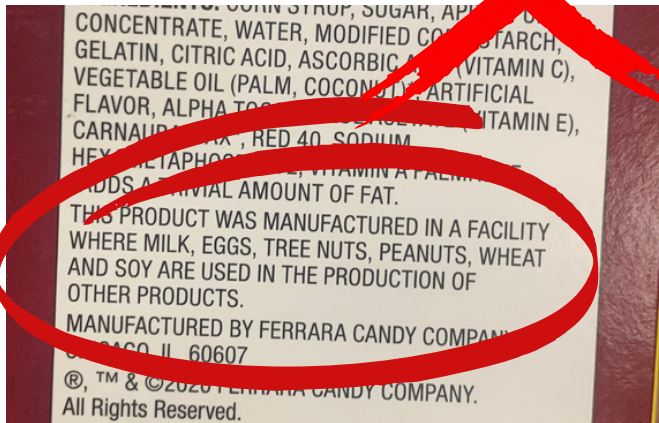
Birthday Parties

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.**

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

Hearing and Vision Screening Sep 28th

The health department will be here to conduct vision and hearing screening for PreK 3, PreK 4, Kindergarten & 1st grade who have not been previously screened and ALL 8th graders. Also any new students to the State and students referred by teachers, parents, and the IEP review team or Student Support Team(SST). Permission slips will be coming home soon.

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:

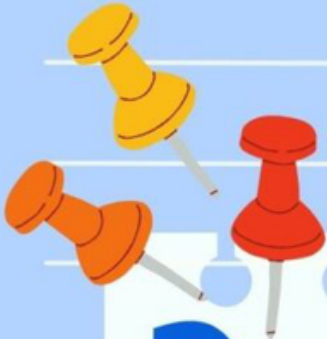
As many of you know, COVID-19 seems to be on the rise again. Per MSDE guidance your child should complete a 5 day isolation period following a positive COVID-19 test. Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the day of the positive test if asymptomatic. After day 5, if your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



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)