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2019 Student Handbook

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## **Why We Are Here**

*But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen II Peter 3:18*

### **To Minister to Our Students**

**Grace Christian Academy programs seek to lead students to:**

- Know Jesus Christ as their Savior, understand His purpose for their lives, and serve Him wholeheartedly.
- Glorify Him for all He has done in creation and history.
- Grow in spiritual maturity and develop a Christ-like character.
- Enjoy learning and understand that their education is a blessing from God
- Develop godly standards of conduct

### **To Be a Ministry to Our Community and Beyond**

Just as churches are planted to teach God’s word and help people grow to spiritual maturity, so too have our Pre-K through 10<sup>th</sup> grade programs been planted to ground our children’s education upon the solid foundation of God’s word.

Having committed this school to the Lord as His ministry, we count ourselves as missionaries doing the work that He has called us to do. The school is not a business run for profit, or an elite school for the well to do. By God’s grace it will be salt and light for our community and beyond.

We pray that God will use our Pre-K through 10<sup>th</sup> grade ministry to:

- Reach students’ families and friends that they might know the Lord Jesus as their Savior.
- Raise up generations of believers who glorify God’s work in His creation,
- Spark a spiritual revival that spreads far and wide, renewing minds and turning the hearts of many to true faith in Jesus Christ.

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

An excellent Christian education should aim to promote **knowledge, understanding** and **wisdom** based on the truth of God's word.

To be **knowledgeable** as a Christian encompasses knowing the word of God thoroughly, knowing as much as possible about God's creation-its orderly principles and how He sustains it-and seeing the accomplishments of man through the lens of God's providence.

To be full of understanding is to be able to discern good from evil, and truth from falsehood, according to God's precepts.

To be **wise** is to apply this understanding by practicing what is good and teaching others by word and example to do likewise

At Grace Christian Academy, your children are taught that trusting and revering God is the first and most important step in acquiring knowledge.

**At Grace Christian Academy, we recognize that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children, and our faculty and staff regard their mission as assisting parents in the fulfillment of this God-given responsibility.**

The school functions as a nurturing community where all students are respected as unique individuals created in the image of God, each with specific abilities and needs. Students are taught by teachers who love Jesus Christ, love the subjects they teach, and are dedicated to helping children at a wide range of ability levels realize their fullest potential spiritually, intellectually, creatively, socially, and physically.

GCA seeks to serve families at all income levels, and we are committed to seeking funding that will enable us to provide tuition assistance for students who might not otherwise be able to attend.

Student/teacher ratios will be kept low so that each student will receive individual attention and have abundant opportunities to participate and lead.

We seek to raise up a generation of young people who have a genuine love of learning, who love Jesus Christ with all their hearts and minds, and who can articulate the Christian message with clarity, creativity, and power.

# SCHOOL DISTINCTIVES

## **Christ-centered Education**

Our Christ-centered curriculum means we do more than simply provide a Bible class among many other classes; rather, by integrating the Scriptures throughout the curriculum, we present the Lord as the One in whom all knowledge is united. This approach requires that all subjects, whether reading, mathematics, art, or music be taught in the light of God's existence and His revelation to humanity through His Son, Jesus Christ.

## **Serve Parents**

**We recognize that GCA operates as an extension of the family, the responsible unit in God's plan for the education of children.** Accordingly, we see our teachers as functioning with delegated authority from parents who are accountable to God for the education of their children. As a result, we strongly encourage parental involvement in each child's education.

## **Respectful Learning Environment**

An orderly atmosphere is conducive to development and learning. Our intent is to instruct every child to obey his or her parents and to show respect to all persons of authority and to fellow students. Requiring obedience to those in authority provides training for good citizenship and for a lifestyle of obedience to God and His Word.

## **Personal Attention to Students**

Small class sizes at GCA allow teachers to know each student personally and to help develop his or her unique talents, interests, and gifts. Our staff and faculty are men and women of godly character, each of whom possesses a genuine love for students, a love of learning, and a solid understanding of Christian education. The directors and teachers, will strive to know and love every student in a way that will encourage each to reach his or her God-given potential and work cooperatively with others.

## **Student Characteristics**

Because of both funding and curricular limitations, GCA is not able to provide an appropriate educational experience for children with serious learning disabilities or those with very specific and special needs.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

*The directors and teachers of Grace Christian Academy adhere to the following statement of faith. The substance of these statements will be taught as primary doctrine throughout all grade levels. Beyond these primary doctrines, we respect and acknowledge the family and local church.*

*We Believe:*

- *Verbal inspiration and final authority of the Scriptures.*
- *The Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the only way of salvation and God's plan and purpose through the ages.*
- *Trinity of the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *Deity and Virgin birth of Jesus Christ*
- *Christ's physical resurrection from the tomb.*
- *Salvation by Grace alone through faith alone.*
- *Men are justified by faith alone and are accounted righteous before God only through the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

## CHURCH AFFILIATION

**Grace Christian Academy is a ministry of Manahath Educational Center, the educational corporation for the Evangelical Methodist Church of America. We seek the support, involvement and cooperation of many churches in our area in order to make this school truly a community ministry.**

## BIBLE TRANSLATION

**The King James Version** of the Bible will be the primary translation used at GCA, with other translations used for supplemental purposes and comparison studies, having uniformity provides continuity in Bible reading, memorization and study.

## CURRICULUM GOALS

This section summarizes the GCA curriculum goals for various subject areas.

I. **BIBLE:** We seek to:

- Have the students read the actual text for themselves rather than only prescribed verses.
- Begin with an overview of the redemption story and proceed to the study of historic epics.
- Encourage the students to understand verses in context, along with other good interpretation principles.
- Let the Scriptures speak for themselves, with clarification as needed.
- Teach the students to understand the Bible as God's Word.
- Teach the Biblical pattern of salvation.

Encourage each student to come to the Father, through the Son, and grow in his knowledge and love of Him.

II. **ENGLISH:** We seek to:

Equip every student with the skills necessary for good writing, including spelling, grammar, style clarity, proof reading, etc. Strongly emphasize good writing by requiring the students to write often and correctly in each subject area. Encourage clear thinking by requiring clear, focused writing. Introduce the students to many styles of writing using the Bible, poetry, and literature.

III. **READING:** We seek to:

Use phonics as the primary building blocks for teaching students to read. Encourage the students to read correctly beginning in Pre-K. Introduce the students to high quality children's literature and great books beginning in first grade. Have students read a wide variety of Christian and literary classics. Carefully monitor the students' reading abilities to ensure a reasonable level of proficiency, adequate comprehension, and fluency in oral and silent reading. This includes the proper use of word-attack skills (the skills to pronounce and read a new word encountered while reading).

IV. **FOREIGN LANGUAGE:** We seek to:

Instruct students in the fundamental vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language to improve their future by learning another language.

V. **HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY:** We seek to:

Teach the students that God is in control of history and its ultimate outcome. Ensure that the students have a mastery of the grammar of world and U.S. history. Enable the students to see God's hand in the history of the world and the United States, specifically by illustrating the effect His people have had on history. Broaden the students' understanding of history and geography by gradually deepening their level of exposure and research as the students mature from kindergarten through elementary school into high school. Make history and geography "come alive" for the students through the use of many forms of information and research, e.g. biographies, illustrations, field trips, guest speakers, music, art, food, architecture, etc.

VI. **MATHEMATICS:** We seek to:

Ensure that the students have a thorough mastery of basic mathematical functions and tables. Emphasize a conceptual as well as practical understanding of math through the frequent use of word problems. Illustrate God's unchanging character through the timeless, logical mathematical systems He gave to man through His gift of reason.

VII. **SCIENCE:** We seek to:



Teach that God created the Heavens and the Earth, and created man in His image.  
Teach the students that because God made the universe, it has inherent order, which in turn makes it possible to hypothesize and experiment (scientific method). Guided inquiry will reveal to the student the intrinsic laws, systems, and truths God put into Creation.  
Treat the study of science as a “means to an end,” not an end in itself; that is, curiosity, experimentation, demonstration and research should be emphasized as the way of using science, as opposed to merely the study of facts. Facts should be attained as the result of research and discovery, versus lecture. By the time the students enter secondary-level science, they should be extremely familiar with the scientific method, through repeated practice.

**VIII. ART:** We seek to:

Teach all students the basic fundamentals of drawing to enable them to create adequate renderings.

Encourage the students to appreciate and imitate the beauty of the Creation in their own works.

Introduce the students to the works of the masters in Western culture.

Equip the students to knowingly use a variety of art media.

**X. MUSIC:** We seek to:

Train the students to sing knowingly, joyfully, and skillfully to the Lord on a regular basis.

Systematically instruct students in the fundamentals of vocal and instrumental music.

Enrich the teaching of Scripture through exposure to well-written Christian music.

Nurture an appreciation for music of the highest spiritual and musical integrity from all of history.

Encourage the students to select some area of music, vocal or instrumental, to pursue on their own.

**XI. PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** We seek to:

Teach fundamental motor and manipulative skills through exercise, games and activities.

In cooperation with the families, encourage the students to establish and maintain good health and nutritional habits.

To enhance Biblical patterns of behavior through activities requiring cooperation,

team work, and general good sportsmanship.

## **HOMWORK PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDELINES**

Grace Christian Academy assigns homework to its students. Below are the primary reasons or causes for

Homework being assigned:

1. Students often need some amount of extra practice in specific, new concepts, skills, or facts.

In certain subjects (e.g., math or languages), there is not enough time in a school day to do as much practice as may be necessary for mastery. Therefore, after reasonable in-class time is spent on the material, the teacher may assign homework to allow for the necessary practice.

2. Repeated, short periods of practice or study of new information is often a better way to learn than one long period of study.
3. Since GCA recognizes that parental involvement is critical to a child's education, homework can be used as an opportunity for parents to actively assist their child in his or her studies. This will also keep the parents informed of the current topics of study in the class.
4. Homework may also be assigned to students who, having been given adequate time to complete an assignment in class, did not use the time wisely. The homework, in this situation, serves a corrective, as well as practical purpose.

### **Guidelines for Assigning Homework:**

The necessity for doing homework will vary from grade to grade and even from student to student.

The amount of time spent on homework may also vary significantly depending on the student's capabilities

and work habits. The guide below should be regarded as *maximum times*, not as required minimum times,

and then only if homework is assigned. **The guide should also be regarded as applying to the average night**

**during an average week for the average student. Some students may consistently spend more time**

**than the guideline prescribes; some may consistently spend less.** If homework is regularly assigned, the teacher will provide some sort of homework assignment schedule so the students will know what to

anticipate and how to plan for homework.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Maximum Approximate Time Per Week Night*</b>
Kindergarten	Minimal
1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup>	20-30 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>	30-45 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup>	45-60 minutes
7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup>	60-90 minutes
9 <sup>th</sup> through 12 <sup>th</sup>	60-120 minutes

Normally, homework is not to be assigned on Wednesdays, over holidays or vacation periods; weekend assignments should not exceed a regular "weeknight" assignment.

# GRADING

## Letter Grades

Percentage grades are the specific indication of each student's performance in each graded skill or subject. Seventy percent (70%) is required for passing credit in any specific course.

**A** indicates that the pupil has done excellent work and has mastered the course objectives, consistently  
does excellent work with skill and thoroughness; and consistently has applied knowledge gained to new situations.

**B** indicates that the pupil has done above average work, mastered almost all of the course objectives;  
and has applied knowledge gained to new situations.

**C** indicates that the pupil has done average work and has mastered many of the objectives of the course.

**D** indicates that the pupil has done below average work and has mastered few of the objectives of the course.

**F** indicates that the pupil's work fell below a level acceptable for the course and was unsatisfactory.

**I** indicates incomplete work.

Letter grades will be determined according to the following numeric scale for grades 1-5:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>%</b>
A	100-93
B	92-85
C	84-77
D	76-70
F	69 and below

Letter grades will be determined according to the following numeric scale for the middle and high school grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Grade Points</b>
A	95-100	4.0
A-	93-94	3.7
B+	91-92	3.3
B	87-90	3.0
B-	85-86	2.7
C+	83-84	2.3
C	79-82	2.0
C-	77-78	1.7
D+	75-76	1.3
D	73-74	1.0
D-	70-72	0.7
F	0-69	0.0

WP – Withdrawn from course passing.

WF – Withdrawn from course failing.

**Please note that a 4.0 GPA is the highest GPA, which can be earned at Grace Christian Academy.**

Grade point averages (GPA's) will be computed at the end of each year for all students in the 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Independent study courses, college and/or correspondence courses, and work completed at other schools (including home school setting) will be applied towards graduation requirements but will not be factored into the cumulative GPA's.

GPA's are calculated at the end of the year by adding together the grade points earned at course completion, multiplying this number by the course credit hours. The total credit hours are then divided into the total grade points learned. This gives the GPA.

Cumulative GPA's are calculated by adding each year's grade points earned, and credit hours earned to the previous total, and then dividing the total number of credits earned into the total number of grade points earned. So that class rank may be calculated at graduation, the GPA totals will show 3 decimal places to the right of the decimal. Example: 3.446

Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the senior class will be determined on the cumulative GPA at the conclusion of the third quarter of the senior year.

### **Progress Reports**

Every student will receive a progress report at the midpoint of each quarter indicating his performance.

Parents must sign the progress report and return it to the teacher. Teachers are encouraged to telephone parents, send notes, or arrange conferences to discuss the progress of any student who is experiencing unusual difficulties.

### **Report Cards**

The report card is issued to students for delivery to the parent/guardian at the close of each quarter grading period. At least one parent of students must sign the report card and return it within a week to the teacher.

### **Our View of Grades**

Our goal is for every student to do his best and to work up to his potential in every area. One of Grace's greatest strengths is academic excellence. Our curriculum goals are relatively rigorous and demand much effort from every student. We have "set the bar high" in our academic standards.

### **Standardized Test Administration**

Grace Christian Academy shall administer a nationally standardized academic achievement test

to all students  
in all grades during the spring quarter of select years. Parents will receive a report of their children's test scores.

## PROMOTION

### Promotion and Retention

Students who achieve a passing credit (70% or greater) in all subject areas with an all-course annual average of 77% or greater are eligible for promotion to the next grade level. Students who fail to achieve passing credit in one or more subject area may be promoted with qualification, placed on academic probation, or be subject to retention. (See section on probation) Final determination of placement for each child will be based on the results of prayerful discussions between teachers, parents and administrator.

### Academic Probation/Discipline

The purpose of the academic probation policy is to give meaningful ways in which parents and teachers can partner together with the student to create a supportive environment for the child so that each student can bring glory to God by doing their best work possible. Grace students who have been retained, promoted with qualification, or have any combination of unsatisfactory (D) or failing grades in any two classes, for one grading period, shall be placed on academic probation for the ensuing grading period. When a student is placed on academic probation, the student, parents, administrator and teachers must have a preliminary meeting to discuss the reasons for the student's underperformance. An individualized plan will be made to help the student achieve to the best of their God given ability. If the student does not meet the conditions set forth in the Grace, he or she will not earn their way off probation. If the student makes adequate progress toward the meeting of the goals of the Grace, as determined by the teacher and administrator, and does not receive any failing or dissatisfactory grades in the same classes, which caused them to be put on probation, then the student will have earned their way off probation. Students who have earned their way off probation are considered students in good standing at Grace Christian Academy. However, if any of these conditions are not met, then the student will have failed to earn their way off probation, and are considered still on probation. If a child fails to earn their way off probation, and stays on probation for two sequential quarters, they will be demoted or expelled, at the administrator's discretion. As part of probation, the student and at least one parent are required to attend meetings with the student's teachers every other week. During these meetings, the student's progress is discussed in detail, and the teacher will go through a study skills assessment and remediation with the student and family, in order to make progress on the individualized plan agreed upon at the beginning of probation. Systematic failure to attend these meetings and do the required work will be considered a violation of the terms of probation, and the student will be subject to immediate expulsion, or demotion, at the administrator's discretion.

## Grade Advancement

A conference of the directors, primary teachers, and parents may approve a student advancing one grade at Grace Christian Academy based on teacher recommendation. The decision will be based on the student's academic, as well as physical, social, and emotional development as observed in their participation as a student at Grace.

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

## General Requirements

The following requirements must be fulfilled by each student eligible for graduation:

- A. All curriculum requirements must be satisfied (see below).
- B. All financial obligations must be cleared.

## Curriculum Requirements

In order to graduate from Grace Christian Academy, a student must satisfy all graduation requirements.

The curriculum committee has the authority to waive certain graduation requirements and to provisionally approve or disapprove credits transferred from other schools, including home school courses.

Courses taken below 9<sup>th</sup> grade, which are classified as 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade courses will be included in graduation credits and in determination of the final GPA.

## Course Credit Values

Credits are assigned to courses based on the following scale:

- A. Classes meeting 3-5 times per week all year – 1.0
- A. Classes meeting 1-2 times per week all year – 0.5

If classes meet for only one semester, the above credit hours will be halved.

## Credits Required for Graduation

### Diploma – 22 credits minimum

<u>Subject Area</u>	<u>Credits Required</u>
Bible/Theology	4
English/Literature	4
History/Geography	3
Foreign Language	2
Mathematics	3
Science	3
P.E./Health	2
Fine Arts (Music/Art)	2
Economics	1
Electives	2

**TOTAL**                      **26 (minimum)**

### College Preparatory

an additional 5 credits may be taken.

The board of directors must approve all students graduating from Grace Christian Academy. Therefore, each year the directors will present to the board those students who have completed all graduation requirements for Grace, giving the board the opportunity to approve the awarding of diplomas.

## **HONORS AND AWARDS PROGRAM**

- A. Grace Christian Academy will maintain a system of formal honors and awards for several reasons, including:
1. We believe that God is glorified when His people use the gifts He has given them.
  2. The recognition of people who are faithful in using the particular gifts given them by God is endorsed in the Scriptures, from the writings of Solomon (Proverbs), to those of Paul (Romans, Ephesians, I Timothy, etc.). We believe that God has established Grace as an academic institution, and therefore it is proper for Grace to recognize those who use the academic gifts God has given them for superior academic achievement. Therefore, we seek to publicly recognize those students who accomplish the necessary prerequisites to receive the applicable award/honor set forth below.
  3. We recognize that the glory for all human achievement goes to God. We therefore seek to teach our students and their families the appropriate way to give glory to God for the accomplishments that He allows them and others in the school to achieve.
- B. Because we recognize the propensity of human nature to sin, we will seek through the way we approach our honors and awards program both (a) to teach the students who receive honors or awards to give the glory to God and not become prideful and (b) to teach those who do not receive honors or awards not to covet the gifts God has given to others, but rather to be thankful to the God for the particular gifts He has given to them. We recognize that many students who do not meet the necessary prerequisites below are equally faithful in using the academic abilities God has given them.
- C. Accomplishments and correlating honors and awards to be given to students in the first grade and above are as follows. Other awards/honors may be recognized as appropriate:

<b><u>ACCOMPLISHMENT</u></b>	<b><u>HONOR/AWARD GIVEN</u></b>
All A's in a grading term	Placement on A Honor Roll
All A's with no more than 2 B's in a grading term	Placement on A-B Honor Roll
All year placement on "A" Honor Roll Awards Assy.	Certificate/Award received at year-end
All year placement on "A-B" Honor Roll Awards Assy.	Certificate/Award received at year-end

## **COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

We consider it a great privilege to serve families in educating their children from a Christian perspective. We are committed to upholding and supporting each family's authority in the lives of their children. This kind of relationship requires clear

communication. We have outlined the proper lines of communication and dealing with grievances according to the Biblical principles found in Matthew 18, James 3 and James 4:11. We believe that Scripture teaches that conflicts should be handled discreetly and carefully, while believing and speaking the best about each individual involved. GCA staff and administration will abide by these same principles in communicating with parents and students.

### **Parents to Teacher**

If an issue should arise regarding a teacher's behavior, rules or procedures, the parents should speak directly to the teacher. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the parent may bring the concern to the Directors . Students will also have a take-home folder in which they may bring home projects or assignments they have completed in class as well as memos, permission slips, or forms for parents. Parents should be sure to look at the contents of the take-home folder each day.

### **Parents to Directors**

If an issue should arise regarding school rules, procedures, curriculum or the Directors 's behavior, the parents should speak directly to the Director . Parents may also present concerns about individual teacher's behavior, rules or procedures directly to the Director *if the matter was not resolved with the specific teacher first*. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the matter may be taken before the executive director.

### **Parents to Administration**

If an issue regarding any policy, curriculum, and program or staff member has not been satisfactorily resolved with the administration, the parents may present their concerns to the Manahath Educational Center Administration. Parents should communicate with a staff member to schedule a meeting.

While clear communications between the school and families can break down with negative issues, they can break down with positive issues as well. Often parents will have an idea on how to improve the school, but are not sure how to share it. In this case the same principles should apply. If a parent has an idea about how to improve a classroom, he or she should talk to the teacher. If a parent has an idea about how to improve the school in general, he or she should talk to the administration. It is always best to communicate directly with the person primarily in authority over the issue at hand.

### **The Importance of Supportive Parents**

You would be surprised how often a parent will object to just one facet of the curriculum. They may love the reading program, but don't see why their child has to memorize, or wear a school-approved uniform. We have prayerfully made many choices concerning our curriculum and program, and we believe we have made sound decisions. We expect parents to support them. We will constantly seek to upgrade the curriculum and make positive changes to our program. However, no aspect of the curriculum is



optional, and school policies should be willingly obeyed. If your attitude is not supportive, your child will pick it up, and this will be reflected in his work and attitude at school.

### **Grace Christian Academy Presents**

Grace Presents will be the zenith of what your children have worked for all year long. It is a time for students of GCA to give a presentation of what they have been learning during the year to parents, relatives, and to the community. Each child will be given a very important responsibility in this event. Your child will most likely be involved with memorizing Scripture, taking a part in a skit, or taking some other important role in the class presentation. One of our goals at GCA is to teach our students the virtues of responsibility and commitment, thus, your child should be encouraged to commit to participating in this event, which is the high mark of our school year. It is very important for your child's progress that you reserve this event on your family calendar.

### **Calling Your Child's Teacher**

Parents are discouraged from calling any school employee at home in the mornings or at school before class begins. Teachers may not leave the classroom to receive telephone calls except for emergencies. Parents may call the office and leave a message for a teacher to return the call at his/her convenience. Teachers will return phone calls at scheduled breaks during the day or in the evening. Conferences may be held any time at the parents' request.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

As a support and extension of the family unit, Grace Christian Academy considers the family to be of first importance to a child. God, through His Word, the Bible, indicates that the family is the most important human institution He designed. We strive to support the family and respect parental authority and responsibility in all we do. Grace believes in the concept of "in loco parentis"-in the place of the parent. At the core of our philosophy of education is the conviction that parents are ultimately responsible for the education of their children. We see ourselves as "subcontractors" of the parents. The parents are *the* contractors-the ones who are responsible for getting the job done. Our

authority and our task are delegated to us from the parent. Therefore, we strongly encourage parental involvement in our school. We work hard at communicating with our parents to keep them abreast of their children's progress-academically, spiritually and behaviorally. At GCA we are continually seeking ways to actively involve the parents, siblings, and grandparents of our students in the programs of the school.

Below are just a few of the more common ways this is done. Please feel free to ask if you would like to try additional ideas. You may:

- Visit the school/class, or have lunch with your children. (Please call ahead to schedule the visit in case your child's teacher is planning tests.)
- Assist in the classroom. Arrangements should be made with the teacher concerned.
- Act as chaperone on field trips and /or library visits.
- Serve as a story-reader, song-leader, guest artist or offer your special talents.
- With permission and arrangements with the teacher, present your vocation to the class or invite them to your place of business.
- Share your experience, trips, and vacations as they may relate to an area of study in a class.
- Help host class parties, at home or in the classroom.
- Attend all school-wide meetings and assemblies.
- Closely monitor and praise your child's progress by reading all teacher notes and papers sent home.
- Communicate your ideas for school improvement and comments regarding the school program to the administration. We want to hear from you.
- Volunteer your time and effort to help with the school's fund-raisers.
- Serve on one of the school committees

## **VISITORS**

Because of our mutual concerns for your child's safety and educational progress, all visitors must sign in and out at the office.

## **DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

### **General Principles**

The standards for student behavior are very high at Grace . We have no tolerance for disrespect, dishonesty, rebellion, fighting, or obscene language. The goal of all discipline at Grace is Christ-likeness, and we try to discipline in a spirit of grace and compassion. The general rules that we teach children are:

1. **Obey right away** (first-time obedience);
2. **Obey all the way** (do the task completely);
3. **Obey in the right way** (always cheerfully).

We teach “old-fashioned” manners (“Yes, ma’am,” etc.), and cheerful compliance is expected among all students at all times. The vast majority of real and potential discipline problems will be dealt with at the classroom level. The kind and amount of discipline (within these stated guidelines) will be determined by the teachers and Directors . Most children who are misbehaving can often simply be re-directed to another activity. At other times, a time-out may be used to give the child a chance to calm down or may be given as a consequence of a particular behavior. If additional discipline is required, the teacher will meet with the parent(s) to discuss the behavior and possible solutions. As always, the specifics and nature of each discipline incident and the individual personality of the student involved will be considered in the administration of discipline. It is vital for parents and students to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the school and the classroom is critical to the learning process; therefore, these policies must be adhered to. Students will NOT be subject to corporal punishment at Grace Christian Academy. As in all other areas of the education at GCA, love and forgiveness will be an integral part of the discipline of a child. ***It is because we love that we discipline.***

### **Classroom Conduct**

1. No student may talk without permission.
2. No student may leave his desk without permission.

Each teacher is given the liberty to make and enforce classroom regulations consistent with the general policies of the school and to issue enforcement or demerits when necessary.

### **Attitude**

1. Each student entering Grace Christian Academy must comply with all the rules and not gripe or stir up discontent among fellow students.
2. Students are to always show respect to adults and refer to adults as Mr., Mrs., Miss, and respond with yes ma’am, no ma’am, yes sir or no sir.
3. If a student has a question about a teacher’s action, he should personally and politely make an appointment to talk with the teacher after school, or, as time permits, during school hours.
4. A student should realize that his or her attitude can be manifested in a number of ways: by what he says, by his tone of voice, by his facial expression, by the way he stands, sits or walks. Few of us realize that body language often betrays our verbal language.

5. No student will be retained who, after being warned, continues to be disrespectful, rebellious, or to have, what is considered by the teachers and administration a “bad attitude.”

### **Demerit System**

ROMANS 13:3- “Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same.”

HEBREWS 13:17- “Obey them which have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

Our definition of “Discipline” listed in Webster’s Dictionary is “Training that molds and perfects the mental faculties and moral character.” Notice that training is a part of discipline – this is imposed discipline. Hopefully, that kind of discipline will develop into that which molds and perfects its own self-discipline. To help and mold and perfect genuine Christian character in our students at Grace Christian Academy, we are using a demerit system.

The demerit system is primarily a system of recording disciplinary problems. It is designed to give the administration, the parents, and the student a better awareness of these problems so that they may be resolved before getting out of hand. It is not intended to embarrass the student or parents. Records are kept strictly confidential.

Demerits are handed to a Discipline Committee composed of the administrator, a teacher, and a student representative. The committee assesses the offense and assigns an appropriate penalty. This is done only after the offender has had the opportunity to defend himself. As students reach certain levels, their parents are notified, conferences with school administration held, or privileges withdrawn. Serious offenders are placed on disciplinary probation. Expulsion is a final resort. Students are informed about the demerit levels so that questions regarding their meaning can be directed to them. We are also glad to answer any questions that the parents may have.

All demerits will be cumulative for the semester. That means if the infraction is worth one demerit the first time, after the third offense it is worth two; after the sixth offense three; or if the infraction is worth five the first time, after the third offense it is worth ten, after the sixth offense fifteen. After three consecutive offenses for the same infraction, students will be required to attend Detention Hall.

Demerits will accumulate for the semester only with the following penalties:

10 demerits – letter to parents

20 demerits- second letter to parents

40 demerits – disciplinary probation and conference with principal

60 demerits - expulsion from school

The student's demerit total will appear on the report card each marking period. Any total over five (5) for the semester will go on the student's permanent record.

We believe that the demerit system is clear and helpful to both students and school staff and also provides an informative system for letting parents know how their children are progressing in school.

Students are **REQUIRED** to sign the demerits.

### **Demerit System Code**

1. C\* Cheating (minimum of 10 demerits)
2. C D Classroom disturbance (1 demerit) for excessive talking, distractions, etc.
3. DP\* Defacing, misusing school property (minimum of 5 demerits)
4. DD\* Direct disobedience (5 demerits) failure to comply when given a direct command
5. Ds Dress code infraction (1 demerit)
6. DT\* Disrespect to faculty or staff (minimum of 10 demerits)
7. F Failure to meet with the Discipline Committee (5 demerits)
8. G\* Gripping about rules or faculty (10 demerits)
9. GR Ground rules (1 demerit) loitering in hall, in hall without a pass, littering, failure to have locker locked, running in hall, sitting on desks, etc.
10. GC Gum chewing or eating in class – automatic detention hall for one week
11. Hp Horseplay (1 demerit)
12. ISD\* Inter-student discourtesy (minimum of 5 demerits)
13. IR Inappropriate response (2 demerits) i.e. double meaning, sassing, complaining, etc.
14. LA\* Language (10 demerits)
15. L\* Lying (10 demerits)
16. NPC Not prepared for class (1 demerit) forgot book, etc.
17. R Rowdiness in lunchroom or hall (1 demerit)
18. Ts/Tc Tardiness for school/class (1 demerit)
19. UA\* Unexcused absence (5 demerits)

\*Those offenses marked with an asterisk require that the offender meet with the Discipline Committee.

\*\*Double Demerits will be given the last week of the school year.

**All demerits will be cumulative for the semester.**

## **Detention**

Detention Hall will be held on designated afternoons from 3:25-4:00 p.m. Students assigned will report to the room designated for detention by 3:25 of the afternoon detained. Parents will be notified ahead of time so that transportation can be arranged on the days of detention. Detention will either be a study or physical work period.

## **Probation**

For unsatisfactory academic achievement or for repeated misconduct, a student may be placed on either academic or disciplinary probation. This gives the student a six-week period to correct his problem.

## **Social Restriction**

Students may be placed on social restriction when: (1) any act, event or attitude is deemed by the administration to warrant such an action; or (2) the student accumulates 40 demerits in a semester.

Social restriction shall exclude a student from holding any position of leadership and/or participation in athletic programs or school activities for that semester.

## **Suspension – In School**

Students whose deportment has been shown to be unacceptable may be subject to in-school suspension. This means that a student would not be allowed to attend classes for the duration of the period of the in-school suspension.

While on suspension a student must remain in the designated room, have no contact with other students and must complete all assignments given by the teachers.

## **BULLYING/ HARASSMENT POLICY**

Grace Christian Academy is committed to maintaining an academic environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect, which is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation and harassment. Aggressive and mean behavior does not reflect God's love and grace. We are to "love our neighbors as ourselves." **If a student or other individual(s) believes there has been harassment or bullying behavior involving GCA students or staff, regardless of where it occurs or whether it fits a particular definition, s/he should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.**

### **Principles**

**These principles below are the lens through which the administration and staff of Grace Christian Academy view harassment and bullying.**

1. We are made in the image of God therefore every person has intrinsic worth, value and dignity and each believer should assure that others are treated accordingly.
2. Jesus identified the most important commandment is to love God with everything and the second is to love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:18). Aggressive/harassing behavior is rebellion against God's character and command. Therefore, student and parents should be assured that the school takes bullying seriously, and will support victims and their families when bullying is reported and verified. Bullying will not be excused, permitted, or tolerated.
3. God helps us to learn how to love others through the example and instruction of godly teachers. (1 Timothy 4:11-12). The primary responsibility to model and teach how to love others as God commands falls to the parents of children. (1 John 3:23; Deut. 6:6-7; Eph 6:4). Therefore, we expect parents to equip children with the appropriate training and tools to live lives of love and encouragement and then hold them accountable to such.
4. Through the Scriptures, we are taught that relationships inevitably involve conflict (Luke 6:27-28; James 4:1-3). Some conflict is caused by our sinful desires of selfishness, jealousy, greed, arrogance, and rivalry
5. Humility and brokenness are essential to life in a Christ-centered community and will be encouraged and expected of staff, students and parents alike.

### **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment or bullying” is difficult to define and requires judgment and application of cultural norms in light of the circumstances and ages of the individuals involved. Mean Behavior is when anyone inflicts or threatens to inflict physical or emotional discomfort upon another person's body, feelings, friendship, reputation, or possessions. Generally, harassment or bullying is repeated aggressive or mean behavior or actions involving an imbalance of power that are directed at one or more students and adversely affects the ability of the student(s) to participate in or benefit from the school's spiritual or educational programs or activities because the conduct, as reasonably perceived by the person, is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive or threatening as to have this effect. It can be done through spoken words, gestures or written, graphic, or physical acts (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, cell phone, Facebook, Twitter, wireless hand held device). Harassment or bullying can take many forms, such as inappropriate oral or written communication (i.e., sexual, racial or other offensive jokes, derogatory comments, rumors, name-calling, using words to attack, threaten, or insult, verbal taunts, racial slurs, put-downs,), visual conduct (i.e., leering, sexual gestures, suggestive pictures), extortion of money or possessions and physical conduct (i.e., touching, assault, impeding passage, threatening conduct, pushing, tripping, exclusion from peer groups or any sort of violence against a victim).

### **What to do if you Experience or Observe Harassment**

Students who feel that they have been subjected to conduct of a harassing nature are encouraged to promptly report the matter to one of the school officials. All complaints will be promptly investigated.

### **Protection Against Retaliation**

It is against the school's policy to discriminate or retaliate against any person who has filed a complaint concerning harassment or has testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in any investigation proceeding or hearing concerning harassment.

### **Consequences for Harassment**

Any employee or student found to be responsible for harassment in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or termination. The severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction.

### **False Reports**

Intentionally false reporting harassing or bullying behavior is prohibited and is subject to disciplinary action.

### **Bystanders**

Since bystander support of harassment or bullying can cause the behavior to continue or increase. The school prohibits both active and passive support for acts of harassment and bullying. The staff and students should encourage bystanders to either walk away from these acts when they see them or constructively attempt to stop them, and report the behavior to a staff member.

### **Search and Seizure Policy**

Students should not have an expectation of privacy for their book bags, purses, lockers, etc. All items brought onto school premises or to school-related events are subject to being searched, by school personnel. This includes book bags, purses, lockers, etc. Similarly, students will be required to empty their pockets at the request of any schoolteacher or the Directors. The school also retains the right to conduct random locker or book bag searches. Items found to be in violation may be confiscated by the teacher or the Directors and returned to the student at the teacher's or Directors's discretion. Students found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Personal Searches:** A student and/or personal effects (e.g., purse, backpack, etc.) may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. Students may be asked to empty their pockets, pocketbooks, wallets, backpacks, etc. without the parent's permission or the student's permission. Enrollment of the child constitutes parental consent to such searches. If the student refuses and the school feels a personal search of the student's person or belongings are required (as per the safety of that student or any other student), then the parents will be phoned and must come to school to perform



the search. If the parents fail to come to the Academy to perform the search in a reasonable time (one hour) and/or the student refused to empty his/ her pockets or remove from his or her person what is suspected, then the student's privilege to attend this Academy will be revoked. Please understand that GCA views unwillingness to bear testimony to one's own innocence not only as insubordinate behavior but also cause for staff and administration to have a concern of trust and safety of other students.

**Locker Searches:** Student lockers or any other storage spaces are Academy property and remain at all times under the control of the Academy; however, students are expected to assume full responsibility for the security of their lockers. The Academy exercises exclusive control over school property, and students should not expect privacy regarding items placed in school property because school property is subject to search at any time by Academy officials. Students are responsible for whatever is contained in desks and lockers issued to them by the school. Periodic general inspections of lockers may be conducted by school authorities without notice, without student consent, without parental consent, and without a search warrant.

**Seizure of Illegal Materials:** If a search yields illegal or contraband materials, such findings shall be turned over to the proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition.

## CODE OF STUDENT CITIZENSHIP

Grace Christian Academy uses a Code of Student Citizenship based on a practical mixture of: 1) the ethical and moral principles of Scripture, 2) institutional preferences which foster an environment conducive to achieving the school's goals, and 3) expectations for a climate of mutual respect, love and encouragement among students, faculty, and staff. All students are expected to abide by the Code of Student Citizenship. Each teacher will use a system of classroom management to encourage compliance with the school code. Students who do not follow the code will be subject to disciplinary action.

Although many of these items may not seem applicable to Pre-K or Kindergarten students, we believe parents should be aware of the code of conduct that is expected from the upper grade students who share the campus with our younger students.

1. **Reverence for the Lord.** Since God is holy and since His name is to be revered, students are expected to treat worship, prayer and class discussion with proper reverence. Jokes, songs, conversation, or behavior that treats the Lord's name or character with triviality is not permitted.
2. **Honesty.** Fidelity to the truth is commanded by God and is the core of all meaningful relationships. Students will demonstrate honesty in all their dealings with one another and the staff. Students will respect the property and belongings of others.
3. **Promptness.** Since working with others involves self-discipline and gratitude, students will be prompt in their arrival to class and school activities.

4. **Gentleness.** Students will refrain from actions that distract others from their academic pursuits and refrain from rough physical contact with other students such as hitting, punching, tripping, wrestling, and the like.
5. **Good stewardship of one's body.** Since GCA cares about the health and well being of its students and staff, the possession and use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is strictly forbidden on school grounds.
6. **Cheerful obedience.** Since appropriate response to authority is Biblically mandated and critical to the shaping of a child's life, students must obey instructions from the Grace Christian Academy staff and its supporting adults, promptly, willingly, completely and cheerfully. Talking back, arguing and undue familiarity with GCA staff will not be tolerated. An atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy will be maintained between students and staff.
7. **Kindness.** Since words have a power and integrity of their own and since God expects man to be stewards of thoughts and expressions, students will refrain from language and actions, which are vulgar, inappropriate and demeaning to either God or mankind. Teasing, criticizing, put-downs, insults and name-calling are not permitted.
8. **Respect others' property.** Since our physical facilities and school materials exist as God's provision and since some activities are inconsistent with responsible stewardship, students are expected to treat all school materials (e.g., textbooks) and facilities with respect and care. Students are expected to be aware of and avoid the off-limits areas of the building and grounds. Students are expected to keep the school's campus neat and clean. Chewing gum is prohibited on school grounds.
9. **Purity.** Since students are to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Biblical principles of purity and holiness, public displays of affection (e.g., holding hands, kissing, etc.) in the context of boy/girl relationships are not permitted on school grounds.
10. **Good witnesses.** Since our students serve as ambassadors for Christ and representatives of the school, it is expected that students will conduct themselves accordingly whenever they are away from school to participate in field trips or any other school function.
11. **Things to leave at home.** Since some forms of recreation can distract students from their educational pursuits, personal electronic devices, games, toys, roller skates and skateboards, are not permitted on school grounds (unless requested by the teacher for some purpose).

**Weapons of any sort are strictly forbidden on school grounds and may be reason for immediate suspension.**

# **UNIFORM AND DRESS CODE POLICY**

## **General Rationale for a Uniform/Dress Code**

1. Being overly concerned with clothing and outward appearances is contrary to God's will for us as revealed in Scripture (1 Sam. 16:7; Matt. 6:19-21; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17).
2. Pressures felt by children to compete in areas of dress are destructive to the unity of the school and the body of Christ.
3. Clothing should be modest and not draw attention to the individual (1 Timothy 2:9).

## **Specific Rationale for a Uniform/Dress Code**

1. Uniforms are a positive discipline in the school, and GCA emphasizes the value of a disciplined learning environment.
2. Uniforms prevent problems associated with the subjective interpretation of a dress code policy. Uniforms will eliminate any confusion about what is acceptable, modest and appropriate by the school's standards.
3. Uniforms tend to decrease the cost of student clothing. Our uniform vendors provide economical and durable items. Parents generally need to purchase only two or three outfits to last throughout the school year and often these items can be handed down to other children.

## **General Dress Code Guidelines for All Students**

- Belts must be worn with pants that have belt loops.
- Shirts are to be tucked in at all times. "Blousing" of shirts is not permitted.
- Shoes designed for laces are to be worn with appropriate, tied laces. Tennis shoes are permissible as long as they are clean. No high tops or cowboy boots are allowed.
- Shoes for girls may be any color. Toes must be covered and shoes must have at least a strap across the back of the heel. No sandals may be worn except with a medical excuse.

- Shoes for boys may be any color. They must be low top tennis shoes, hiking or dress shoes. No cowboy boots.
- Appropriate hosiery must be worn. Plain white or solid-colored socks or tights are fine for girls.
- Earrings and necklaces are not permitted on boys.
- Jewelry in pierced body parts, with the exception of earrings for girls, is not permitted.
- All students must keep their hair neatly groomed and conservatively styled. Boys may not have long hair or ponytails. Unnaturally colored/dyed hair and visible tattoos are not permitted.
- Excessive jewelry and excessive make-up are not permitted.
- Outerwear, coats and jackets are not to be worn in the building during the school day.
- Any outlandish or distracting clothing, jewelry, make-up, hairstyle, or appearance will not be permitted.
- Shorts from the approved uniform vendor may be worn during the 1st and 4th quarters.
- Skirts and jumpers must be knee length or longer.
- Hip hugger style pants and spandex fabric are prohibited.
- All clothing must fit properly. Clothing that is too tight or too short will not be tolerated.
- Leggings are not dress pants.

### **Enforcement**

The school faculty and administration will enforce the Uniform and Dress Code Policy. Interpretation and application of the Uniform and Dress Code standards will be the responsibility of the Directors. Students not complying with the Uniform and Dress Code Policy will be given a notice to be signed by parents. Cheerful, consistent compliance is expected. Students who violate the Uniform and Dress Code Policy, either by action or by challenging and rebellious attitudes, will be subject to disciplinary actions.

### **Specific Daily School Uniform Guidelines**

#### **Girls:**

- Shirts (polo) – any color
- Blouses – any color
- Pants, shorts – any color but no blue jean material- Leggings are not pants
- Skirts, skorts, jumpers – Any color but no blue jean material
- Sweaters – any color but no writing or pictures on them please.
- Dresses may be worn provided that they are not sleeveless and length is to the knee unless leggings are worn underneath.
- Hoodies – Only school issued hoodies may be worn in class.

**Boys:**

- Shirts (polo) – any color
  - Oxford shirts – any color
  - Pants, shorts – any color but no blue jean materials
  - Sweaters – any color but no writing or pictures on them please.
- Hoodies- only school issued hoodies may be worn in class.

**All Students:**

For field trips, every student must wear a GCA polo shirt or a GCA sweatshirt. Orders for sweatshirts and polo shirts will be taken at the beginning of the school year.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION/FITNESS**

All GCA students will participate in physical education activities. Students are expected to participate unless they have a note signed by a parent to be excused on account of a physical limitation. Each child must wear sneakers for physical education classes.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Parents must call the school when their child is going to be tardy or absent from school due to illness, doctor appointments, etc.

**School Hours**

School begins at 8:20 a.m. for all grades. School will dismiss at 3:20. Children can arrive at the school as early as 8:00 a.m. Please have children at school by 8:15 a.m., so that they have time to put away their things and get prepared for class. Pre-K students should be encouraged to use the restroom prior to the start of school.

**Mandatory Attendance Policy**

It is the law of the Commonwealth of Virginia that school-aged children be in school. Students at private schools are not exempt from this law. Students who stay home from school for part or all of the school day for any reason other than personal illness or prearranged family travel are truant. Furthermore, it is a necessary part of the education process that students be present for instruction offered by the school.

Pursuant to these laws and principles, students who miss more than the equivalent of fourteen (14) days of school (see tardy policy below) without making specific prior arrangements with the Directors may not receive passing credit for the year in question. Students who miss the equivalent of 20 days of school or more will not pass and will have to repeat the grade in question. **Parents must notify the school when their child is going to be tardy or absent from school due to illness, doctor appointments, etc.** In order to be counted as present, a student must be present until 12:00 p.m. or be at school by 11:00 a.m.

## **Types of Absences**

**Excused Absences:** In order for a student to have an excused absence, he must present a written note from his parent stating the reason for the absence. An excused absence will be given to the student in the following cases:

1. Illness or injury prevents the student from being physically able to attend school
2. A local health officer or the State Board of Health orders the isolation of the student.
3. The student is absent due to the death of a family member.
4. The student has a medical or dental appointment.
5. The student is a party, or is under subpoena as a witness in a court proceeding.
6. The student obtains prior approval to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity, such as family travel.

*Note: Excused absences allow a student to make up any missed work during his absence from class.*

**Unexcused Absences:** the following will be considered unexcused absences:

1. All out-of-school suspensions. (A suspended student must still complete all schoolwork during the time of suspension.)
2. Absence from school for any reason other than those listed under excused absences.

**Appointments:** Please submit a signed note to notify us 1 to 2 days in advance of scheduled appointments that will require the student to be gone during part of the school day.

### **Guidelines for Releasing Students from a Classroom:**

- When a student must leave school early, the parent must go to the office to sign out the child. The student will be brought to the office to meet his parent in order to minimize disruption of the teaching schedule.
- When a student is returning to school from an appointment, he must first sign in at the office.
- Teachers are not permitted to release a student to anyone before receiving a permission slip from the office. The teachers and Directors have the responsibility and custody of all the children while they are at school. The office must be made aware of any instance of the legal parent or guardian removing a child during regular school hours. A child is **never** to be released to a stranger until the office and parent(s) have been contacted.

## **Make-Up Work**

- Students may take make-up tests and submit any other make-up work to their teachers. It is expected that the child or the parents will discuss these arrangements with the teacher and take the initiative in completing the missed work.
- Students must complete missed work within a period of day's equivalent to the number of days absent plus one (1) day. (For example, a student absent two days has three days after he returns to school to complete missed work.) Parents are not to give tests to their children at home without prior explicit approval from the teacher.
- When extended absences are voluntary (for example, due to planned travel) we expect all schoolwork to be completed within the time specified by the teacher. We recommend that students complete their assignments **prior** to planned absences. If a test was schedule before the voluntary absence, the student is expected to take the test upon returning to school or on the scheduled day.

## **Tardy Policy**

- A tardy is defined as any occasion when the student is late for school at the beginning of the day or late for a class during the day. To be counted "on time" the student must be in the room, in his or her seat, and prepared for class to begin at 8:20 a.m.
- Students who arrive late must report to the school office to get a tardy slip.
- Three (3) tardies are equivalent to one absence and are considered in the enforcement of the mandatory attendance policy. A note will be sent home stating that the tardies have counted as an absence.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

### **Morning Drop-Off**

Because of the lack of parking space, only parents of Pre-K children should park and take their children to their rooms. If you need to pay a fee or quickly speak with a teacher, park your car where it does not block traffic. The same is requested for after school pick-up. If your child forgets something, please park where the traffic will not be blocked.

### **After School Pick-Up**

A staff member will be present to be sure the child safely reaches the vehicle and to be sure the child is released to the proper individual. You are welcome to come into the school for an appointment with your child's teacher, or to visit the classroom, but please park your car out of the traffic flow if doing so. Please remember that teachers are responsible for their students until all are gone from the classroom. If persons other than parents or legal guardians will need to pick up children, parents must list their names on a permission form.

**It is essential that parents pick up their children promptly at dismissal at 3:15. If your child is participating in after-school program, you will need to park and come into the building to pick up your child.**

## **LEARNING DISABILITY POLICY**

### **Definitions:**

**Severe Learning Disability:** Any condition in a potential student which would require a separate classroom, program or staff in order to provide the educational services desired by the parents (blind, deaf, Down's syndrome, etc.).

**Learning Disability:** Any condition in a potential student which does **not** require a separate classroom, program, or staff in order to provide the education services desired by the parents, e.g., hyperactivity, attention deficit syndrome, dyslexia, etc. For the purposes of this policy, it is not important whether or not the condition was accurately diagnosed and is a genuine learning disability.

### **Policy:**

1. Children with a severe learning disability will not be admitted to Grace Christian Academy due to a lack of adequate staff, funding, and facilities.
2. Children with learning disabilities may be admitted to GCA provided they meet all regular admissions requirements and are capable of functioning successfully in a "traditional classroom" setting.
3. Children with learning disabilities (diagnosed or undiagnosed) will be required to meet the same academic and behavioral standards as all other children in their grade level.
4. Children with learning disabilities (diagnosed or undiagnosed) will be given as much individual instruction and encouragement as their classmates – no more and no less.
5. GCA may make minor classroom accommodations (seating location, allowing use of tape recorders or laptop computers, etc.) to assist students with learning disabilities. Accommodations will be made only for students with learning disabilities that have been clearly diagnosed by a licensed and certified educational diagnostician. Securing a diagnosis of a learning disability will be the



responsibility of the parent(s) of the student. The parent(s) of the student will also be responsible, financially and otherwise, for providing any and all special equipment, supplies and tutors needed to accommodate the student.

6. GCA reserves the right to decline any accommodation to a student with a learning disability, if it deems the accommodation to be a hindrance to the learning experience of other students in the school or if it deems that the accommodation may compromise the school's academic standards.

## STUDENT HEALTH & MEDICATION POLICY

All students attending Grace Christian Academy must have on file with the school office a completed "Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form."

It is expected that students are sent to school healthy, well rested, and ready for class. Students with fevers, diarrhea, contagious viruses, severe colds, and the like, should not be sent to school and will be sent home to avoid infecting others. **If a student has had vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or other symptoms of contagious illness within 24 hours of the current school day, they are not allowed to come to school. Students must be free of symptoms of contagious illness for 24 hours before sending them back to school.** For example, if a student has been sent home from school with a fever or vomiting, he may not return to school the next day.

Students who are lethargic, tired, and unable to do their schoolwork will be sent home for needed rest and recuperation. GCA does not operate as a "day care" facility, and students who are not able to do their schoolwork will be sent home.

Parents should provide the school with emergency numbers of friends and/or family who can pick up their sick child from school if the child becomes ill.

Other forms necessary for student health records can be obtained from the school office. They are the following:

- *Emergency Form*: Lists the emergency contact names and phone number of people who may need notification in a medical emergency.
- *Prescription Medication Administration Form*: see below.

### Medication Distribution

All medication (prescription and over-the-counter) taken by students must be administered by one of the following:

- a. GCA staff person designated by the Directors.
- b. Parent(s) of the student.

***No student will be permitted to administer any form of medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to himself/herself or any other student.***

Prescription and over-the-counter medication will be administered to students only at the written request of the parent. **Parents must complete a Medication Administration Form before any medication can be distributed to a student.** Any request for administration of medicine must include the student's name, description/type of medication, dosage of medication, and the time(s) it is to be given. **All medications, prescription and over-the-counter, must be in the original pharmaceutical container** labeled with the student's name and dosage directions.

Over-the-counter cough drops and throat lozenges may be carried and taken by students if they have a written note from their parents. Over-the-counter cough drops and throat lozenges do not require completion of a Medical Administration Form.

## REGISTRATION FEE POLICY

- The registration fee secures placement and enrolls a child at GCA. Due to the financial commitment GCA makes when a student is enrolled, the registration fee is not refundable even if the family decides not to attend GCA.
- The registration fee will not be covered by scholarship aid. All families must pay the registration fee in order to enroll their children.

## TUITION COLLECTION POLICY

The objective of this policy is to ensure that tuition and fees are collected in a timely manner and to establish policy whereby unpaid tuition and fees can be collected as early as possible. This process must be followed unless other specific arrangements have been made between the administration and the family involved. Good faith will be presumed on the part of the families unless subsequent circumstances indicate no positive action can be expected.

**Tuition is due on the *first* day of each month. Late tuition and fees are defined as tuition and/or fees not paid by the *tenth* of each month.**

The following process is to be followed in the collection of late tuition and fees:

1. In the event that tuition is not paid by the tenth day of the month, a payment reminder will be sent to all applicable families. This will be done no later than the tenth of each month. A late fee that constitutes 10% of the family's monthly tuition payment will be assessed to all accounts past due on the tenth of each month.
2. If tuition is still not paid, or arrangements made within the following 15 days, the board or its delegate will personally contact the family. The essential elements or agreements made at that time will be recorded and filed.
3. If an agreement is not made or adhered to, and payment is not received after 60 days, students will be expelled and grades withheld until payment is received.

## TUITION ASSISTANCE

At Grace Christian Academy, we believe that families from all income levels should have the opportunity to enroll at the school. Thus, GCA actively seeks donations to fund our financial assistance efforts. The amount of tuition reduction that GCA can offer each year depends entirely upon God's provision through contributions.

Families are encouraged to apply for assistance in faith that God will supply funds to GCA as needed.

## ADMISSION GUIDELINES

### **Admission Procedures:**

1. First, parents should read the "Grace Christian Academy Handbook." Speak to the school Directors if you have any questions about Christian education in general or about Grace Christian Academy in particular.
2. Pray for the Lord's guidance in this decision for your family.
3. Complete the Application for Admission and return it to the school office. Include all materials specified in the application. Parents of entering Pre-K or kindergarten students must bring the student's birth certificate to the interview.
4. The school will contact the family to schedule an interview.
5. At the interview, the family's questions about GCA will be answered, and the school's expectations will be clarified. Students must participate in the family interview.
6. For Kindergarten, admission assessment testing may be scheduled.
7. The school will contact the parents with a decision regarding acceptance.
8. In order to enroll your child and secure placement, the Parent Grace Form must be signed and returned to the school with the nonrefundable registration fee.

### **Admission Requirements for Students:**

1. Generally, a child must reach the age of five (5) years by September 30th of the year in which he enters kindergarten at Grace Christian Academy. Exceptions to this rule can be made; however, all children applying for admission to kindergarten must perform satisfactorily on the GCA Kindergarten Entrance Assessment.
2. The child should understand that his parents have delegated their authority to Grace Christian Academy while the child is in school. He is therefore subject to the instruction and discipline of the teachers and staff while at school.

3. Parent should review the Code of Student Citizenship” and “Student Code of Conduct” with their child prior to enrollment at Grace Christian Academy.

### **Admission Requirements for Parents:**

1. Both parents should have a clear understanding of the biblical philosophy and functioning of Grace Christian Academy. Both parents must read the “Statement of Faith” and understand that it constitutes the doctrinal beliefs of the school and that its truths will be purposefully and clearly taught to their children who are enrolled at Grace Christian Academy. These matters will be reviewed in the personal interview.
2. The parents must be willing to cooperate with the policies of the school board. This is most important in the areas of discipline and schoolwork.
3. Parents must understand the school’s commitment to parental responsibility for their child’s education.
4. Grace Christian Academy exists to assist parents in the task of education their children, not to take over responsibility for the education of their children.
5. Prior to final admission of the student(s), both parties should clearly understand the financial arrangements between the school and the parents.
6. Parents need to understand that tuition does not cover all the operating costs of the school, and must be willing to volunteer at least 15 hours of time during the school year to help the school with fundraising. Families receiving tuition assistance will be contacted to discuss the additional volunteer opportunities available for family members.
7. Parents are expected to attend the annual parent orientation meeting held at the beginning of the new school year.

### **Parent/Student Orientation**

Parent – Student Orientation is an important meeting on an evening before the start of school. It is announced in the annual calendar. Teachers will meet with students in their respective classrooms. Desks will be assigned, an overview of the year’s academic and spiritual objectives will be shared, and it is a time of acquaintance for the classmates.

The parents will meet with the Directors where important policies will be reviewed and practical operations (discharge and pick up of students, emergency and crises management, homework expectations, FOG participation, etc.) are described. Parents and students must view this orientation meeting as essential to the efficient and effective ministry of GCA.

## **HOLIDAY OBSERVANCE POLICY**

Observances of holidays at GCA shall be conducted according to the following guidelines:

- GCA recognizes the necessity of joy and thankfulness in the Christian life. The school will seek to provide students with opportunities for joyous celebration and thankful recognition of God’s providence and blessing in their individual lives (e.g. birthdays and personal accomplishments) and in history (Columbus Day and Memorial Day).
- The school will emphasize the scriptural and spiritual elements of holidays such as Easter (the cross and resurrection) and Christmas (the incarnation of Christ), rather than the secular elements (Santa and the Easter Bunny).
- The school is not “against” secular images and symbols. These are matters of personal conscience and Christian freedom for each family. The school simply chooses, as a Christian school, to de-emphasize secular elements in its recognition of holidays.
- Many believers view “Easter Week” as an especially holy week-a week for sober contemplation of the significance of Christ’s death and resurrection. The school will observe the deep significance of the week in classroom devotions and discussions, but will not encourage parties and celebrations.
- Halloween will be ignored at GCA. Other holidays (Columbus Day, Presidents’ Day, Valentine’s Day, etc.) shall be observed when their recognition is deemed spiritually and/or academically beneficial to the students and consistent with the GCA Philosophy of Education.
- Interpretation and application of these holiday observance guidelines shall be the responsibility of the Directors.

## **STUDENT BIRTHDAYS**

It is fine to send treats to school to celebrate a child’s birthday. Please let your child’s teacher know ahead of time if you plan to do this. Invitations to parties may be handed out at school **only** if all children in your child’s class are being invited. If not all children are invited; invitations need to be mailed privately.

## **EXIT INTERVIEW**

If a family chooses not to re-enroll its children for the coming academic year or needs to withdraw during the year, the parents should make an appointment with the Directors for an exit interview. After the interview, if the account is current, records will be sent to the new school.

### **Withholding of Records**

Report cards and all official records are withheld in cases where families have past due balances on their accounts. The report card will be held in the office until the account is cleared. No academic information will be forwarded to any other school or agency for a family whose financial records are in arrears.

## **TEXT AND LIBRARY BOOKS**

Unless otherwise stated, all text and library books belong to Grace Christian Academy and are loaned to our students for a portion or the entirety of the school year. Students will be charged the replacement value of any book that is lost or damaged.

## **LUNCHESES**

Students may bring their own lunches and snacks to school. A lunch plan is available through the school. Kindergarten students have a mid-morning break, and students may bring a small snack for that time. Microwaves are available for lunches. It is the responsibility of parents to notify the teacher of any food allergies/intolerances. Upon notification, accommodation will be made for the child's needs. At times, that may mean that the child receives a different snack than the other students. The child will understand this more fully if parents explain the reasons prior to the start of the school year.

## **SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather, announcements regarding school closing or delays will be relayed to the following media outlets:

**Channel 10 Broadcast (television)**  
**E-mail Message on school email**  
**Channel 7 (television)**

Because GCA does not provide transportation service, the responsibility for getting children safely to and from school rests on parents and their designated representatives. Parents are therefore responsible for discerning if road conditions during inclement weather or other emergencies allow for safe travel.

In the event of inclement weather, even if GCA is officially open for classes, parents who do not believe road conditions in their area permit safe travel should not attempt to get their children to school. They should keep their children at home and notify the school that they are doing so.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

**Grace Christian Academy admits students of any race; color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, Privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, financial assistance, and other school administered programs.**

***It must be understood that not all rules and regulations are recorded in this material. All policies and regulations expressed by the administration of GCA must be followed. Other guidelines are left to the teacher's discretion and may vary due to the ages and abilities of the students.***