



FAMILY HANDBOOK 2023-2024

GRACE EPISCOPAL SCHOOL
1314 East University Ave.
Georgetown, TX 78626
512-863-6214
www.graceschool1992.org

Serving children ages 18 months-kindergarten.

DAYS & HOURS:

Tuesday – Thursday (3-day classes)

Primary, Pre-K 3's, Pre-K 4's – 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Monday – Thursday (4-day classes)

Primary, Transitional 2's, Pre-K 3's, Pre-K 4's – 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Kindergarten 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

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God's most precious gifts to us are our children, and I want to thank you for entrusting us with your most precious gift. Grace Episcopal School education goes beyond cognitive development: our goal is to foster growth in your child's mind, heart, and soul.

At Grace your child will have daily opportunities for challenging, hands-on learning in a loving, positive classroom environment. This is paired with ample time for kids to be kids in play, imaginative and creative expression, and weekly chapel services, in which our children learn the astonishing depth of God's love for each of them. These services are adapted from our rich Episcopal tradition in which we seek to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Parents are always invited to join us for worship.

While some preschool/kindergarten programs are profit-based institutions in which success means maximizing revenues, Grace School is a non-profit ministry of Grace Episcopal Church, and we are here for one reason only: to serve your family. Our Head of School, our School Board, and I are at your service; please don't hesitate to be in touch if there are questions we can answer about your child's experience of Grace.

Yours in Christ,

Mother Mary Ann Huston
Locum Tenens Rector,
Grace Episcopal Church
1314 E. University Ave.
Georgetown, TX 78626
[512-863-2068](tel:512-863-2068)

1314 E. University Avenue 512.863.2068 www.graceepis.org

2023-2024 CALENDAR

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|---|
| August 29 | ----- | Meet-The-Teacher Sessions |
| August 30 | ----- | First Day |
| September 4 | ----- | School Holiday (Labor Day) |
| September 18 | ----- | School Holiday (No school GISD) |
| September 26 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| October 9 | ----- | School Holiday (Columbus Day) |
| October 24 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| October 31 | ----- | Fall Festival and Party |
| November 16 | ----- | Thanksgiving Celebration |
| November 20-23 | ----- | Thanksgiving Holiday |
| November 28 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| December 12 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| December 19 | ----- | Christmas Program & Party |
| December 20 – January 4 | ----- | Christmas Break |
| January 8 | ----- | Back to School |
| January 15 | ----- | School Holiday (MLK, Jr. Day) |
| January 23 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| February 14 | ----- | Valentine’s Party |
| February 19-20 | ----- | School Holiday (Presidents’ Day) |
| February 27 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| March 7 | ----- | Safety City |
| March 11-14 | ----- | Spring Break |
| March 26 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| March 28 | ----- | Easter Celebration |
| April 1 | ----- | Easter Holiday |
| April 23 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| May 14 | ----- | Early Release (Staff Meeting) |
| May 16 | ----- | Last Day of School & Graduation Program |
| May 21 | ----- | Staff In-service |

All students will be released at 1:20 p.m. on Staff Meeting Early Release Days.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Grace Episcopal School is to provide an enriching Christian environment that will enable each child to develop to his/her full potential. We will strive to create a positive, loving environment to help each child develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We will also provide opportunities for creative, imaginative, and artistic expression. Grace Episcopal School shall function as an integral part of the life of Grace Episcopal Church and shall serve as an educational arm of its pastoral and missionary life.

Grace Episcopal School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, disability, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its admissions and educational policies, financial assistance program, employment practices, and other school-administered programs.

PROGRAM

Grace Episcopal School offers a program designed to incorporate developmentally appropriate activities that are interesting and stimulating to the children.

Activities include chapel, story time, circle time, outdoor play, cooking, music class, learning centers, special events, outdoor learning lab, special programs, and field trips. Kindergartners also enjoy art and P.E. classes. Hands-on learning centers include art, reading and listening, writing, dramatic play, construction, games and manipulatives, nature and science, and music and movement.

CHILD/STAFF RATIO

Primary: 7 children to 1 teacher

Pre-K 3's: 9 children to 1 teacher

Pre-K 4's: 10 children to 1 teacher

Kindergarten: 10 children to 1 teacher

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Grace Episcopal School is open from late August through May following the holidays listed on the Georgetown I. S. D. calendar. We hold classes on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. (kindergarten) or 9:00 a.m. (all others) until 2:00 p.m.

Children are placed in classes according to their ages on September 1st of the current year. Grace Episcopal School does not take any drop-in or part-time care children.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Please be on time for the arrival and departure of your child. Please arrive promptly at your arrival time; the class opening sets the tone for the day. The teachers are using the time previous to this to prepare for the school day. Be sure to check your child in through the [brightwheel](#) app.

While occasionally a delay is unavoidable, we hope that parents will generally try to leave sufficient buffer time so that unanticipated traffic, weather, or other delays do not hinder their on-time arrival for drop-off and pick-up. If you will be late or your child will be absent, please contact the school at 512.863.6214.

While we count on parents to respect the importance of these issues for their children's sake, there is also an institutional dimension. Our school has contractual obligations to its faculty to allow them to leave when their workday is complete. When parents are late to pick-up their children, it often requires that a teacher in the child's classroom assume responsibilities beyond their personal expectations or contractual obligations. We therefore encourage parents to set-up back-up systems in case of unavoidable delays.

Some suggestions for parents: [1] Have friends or other family members included on the authorized pick-up list for your child, so that when a delay is unavoidable, alternative arrangements can be made. [2] Create mutually beneficial "late-parent buddy systems," in which a parent of another child in the classroom will pick-up and look after the child of a late parent until the late parent arrives. Include the other parents on the authorized pick-up list. [3] In the event of an unavoidable delay, please call our school to let the teachers know so that they can help prepare the child for the change in routine, and alter their own plans if necessary.

If a child is picked up 15 minutes after their designated pick-up time, a \$10.00 late charge and an additional \$1/minute after 15 minutes will be charged to the next month's tuition.

The teacher or Head of School must be notified if someone other than yourself and persons listed on the Admission Form will be picking up your child from school. We will not release the child unless you have notified us. The unlisted pick-up person must know the code word for the child and present his/her driver's license to the Head of School.

REGISTRATION TIMETABLE AND FEES

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| February 1 – February 14 | Presently enrolled students, siblings, and Grace Church members |
| February 15 - Until full | Open enrollment |

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$120.00 (3-day) or \$140.00 (4-day), or \$160 (kinder) per school year is required of each child upon enrollment. If at any time you withdraw from the program and then wish to return at a later time during the year,

there will be another enrollment fee due. After a child is enrolled in the program and has attended, a registration fee **cannot** be transferred to another child.

Priority for admission is given to children in the following order: [1] those presently enrolled, [2] siblings of those students presently enrolled, [3] members of Grace Episcopal Church, (Priority is given to members of Grace Church by the fact that registration is open to them earlier in the year before it is open to the public. Because our school is small, we depend monetarily on maintaining a full number of student enrollments. Therefore, the school will not hold openings for our own church membership after the early deadline. When the early enrollment period is over, church members will be enrolled as part of the general public.), and [4] new applicants. In the event that the number of enrolled students reaches the limit placed on class size, a waiting list will be created. As space becomes available, the families will be contacted in the order they are on the waiting list. Church members seeking enrollment after the early enrollment period has passed and a waiting list has been formed will have priority on any waiting list. They will not replace any previously accepted student.

TUITION

There is a monthly tuition fee of \$340.00 (3-day), \$420.00 (4-day), and \$450.00 (kinder). Tuition must be paid in full on the 1st of the month. Tuition will be considered late after the 5th of the month, and a late fee of \$10/day will be applied. If the 1st of the month is not a school day, tuition will be due on the first school day after the 1st of the month.

Families with two or more children enrolled at the same time receive a 10% discount off the monthly rate for the first additional child, and 15% for the second and additional children. Grace Church members and employees receive a 10% discount.

Full tuition is due each month regardless of number of days expected to be in attendance. No deductions are made for absences, holidays, illness, school closures, or vacation time. We are a private school and rely on collection of tuition to meet our overhead.

*A 5% discount will be applied if the **annual tuition is paid in full** by September 5th. A 3% discount will be applied if the tuition is paid in two semester-based payments by September 5th and January 8th.*

Payments to Grace Episcopal School can be made online through [brightwheel](https://www.brightwheel.com). Tuition can be paid with: online payments, recurring credit card payments, or recurring payments from checking/savings. In addition, we can still accept cash or checks. Please visit www.graceschool1992.org or [mybrightwheel.com](https://www.mybrightwheel.com) for more information.

Note: There is a \$30.00 fee charged for all returned checks.

WITHDRAWAL

Once a child is officially enrolled, no portion of any fees, paid or outstanding, will be cancelled or refunded unless due to a military reassignment. In the event a student needs to withdraw from the school, please notify the Head of School at least one week (7 days) in advance. There will be no refund for a child withdrawing from school before the end of the month. In extenuating circumstances, a refund of prepaid tuition or cancellation of future obligations will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please speak with the Head of School to discuss these circumstances. If a student withdraws and then wishes to re-enroll at a later date, the enrollment process must be completed again.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We must have on file a completed Enrollment Form, current immunization record, and the completed Admission Requirement.

Keep your child at home when the child is ill and has a fever above 100°F or has had a fever above 100°F within the past 24 hours. If your child has fever, vomiting or diarrhea during the evening, please do not bring him/her to school the next day. However, do notify us that your child will not be at school. Follow doctor's advice for returning to school.

If your child becomes ill with a contagious disease, please notify the Head of School so we can alert the other parents. Please remember that you would not want your child unnecessarily exposed to illness.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified and asked to come pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, we will call the other contact numbers listed on your form.

In the event of a major injury, the parent will be notified immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, the school will notify the emergency contact listed on the enrollment form. It is a policy of Grace Episcopal School that parents list someone other than themselves to be contacted in the event of an emergency. The school will make every effort to locate a parent first, but back-up phone numbers are a must for our records. **The Grace Staff cannot administer or apply any medication or product.**

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

Grace Episcopal School will not provide either sunscreen or insect repellent for the children. A staff member may apply sunscreen or insect repellent only if the product is supplied by the parent or guardian along with a signed and dated note stating that GES employees may apply the product to the child. We recommend that parents apply these products to their children before dropping them off in the morning.

STAFF VACCINATION POLICY

Grace Episcopal School recommends that each employee follow the Texas Adult immunization schedule. Each staff member (unless exempt) of Grace Episcopal School will receive an annual influenza (flu) vaccination by January 31st of each school year due to the risk the disease presents to children – especially those five and under. In addition, GES has created a similar COVID-19 vaccination policy for the staff.

GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES/SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

Constructive discipline practices are used to guide children in our care. We will use a positive approach to assist the children in understanding and using acceptable behavior. We will use “time out” infrequently but when necessary.

If a child is continually disruptive to our program, we will work closely with the family to resolve the situation.

Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports have been exhausted, and it is unanimously determined by the family, teacher, program, and other service providers that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question, all parties will work together to develop a seamless transition plan and use that plan to implement a smooth transition for the child and family.

LUNCH

Send a nutritious lunch and drink to school each day we meet. We are not able to heat or refrigerate lunches. Please be sure the lunch is easy for your child to manage. G.E.S. is not responsible for meeting the nutritional needs of the children. In addition, we request that your child arrives to school with a clean, filled water bottle every day.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Money | Pretend weapons |
| Gum/Candy | Drinks that stain |
| Sodas | Glass bottles or containers |

TOYS

Encourage your child to leave his/her toys at home. We welcome books and other educational materials, especially if they pertain to our theme of study. Occasionally a teacher may request an item to be sent from home that pertains to the unit of study or to Show-and-Tell.

CLOTHING

Send your child in comfortable, washable clothing. We ask that children wear shoes conducive to running, climbing, etc. **For safety and comfort, we do not recommend sandals, flip-flops, or boots for our outdoor play.**

All children should bring a change of clothes in a backpack or bag in case of spills or accidents. Please change seasonally.

WEATHER & OUTDOOR PLAY

Children go outside every day in our program except in extreme weather conditions. We consider outdoor play an essential element of the curriculum that supports children's growth, development, and learning. Extreme weather will include wind chill at or below 15°F, heat index at or above 100°F, or an ozone action day. If a child is well enough to be at school, the child is assumed well enough to go outside. During cold weather, children need to be dressed in layered, warm clothing. Please send appropriate, labeled coats, hats, and gloves. During hot weather, we ask parents to apply sunscreen with protection of SPF-15 or higher and insect repellent in the mornings, if needed.

BIRTHDAYS

We would be happy to celebrate your child's birthday. If you would like to send a special treat for the class, please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

If you would like to donate a book to the school in honor of your child's birthday, please see the Head of School. We will place a bookplate with your child's name and the date in the book. This will be a great remembrance that your child attended our school.

PETS

For the safety of all the children at our school, please do not bring pets without permission from the teacher and the Head of School. We do have a fish tank located in one classroom.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be notified prior to any field trip taken by your child's class. You will be required to fill out a permission slip. We ask parents to provide transportation and may ask for additional assistance on field trips.

Copies of each child's Family Registration Form [with telephone numbers] in the [brightwheel](#) app are taken on field trips as well as a portable first aid kit. If an accident occurs, the faculty will follow emergency and/or first aid procedures as appropriate.

VISITATION AND CONFERENCE

We encourage parent involvement and parent-teacher communication. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time; however, to minimize disruptions in the classroom, please schedule visitation times with the Head of School.

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate. If you have any special talents that you would like to share with us, please let us know.

We will have student evaluations twice a year and parent/teacher conferences once a year. We would be happy to discuss your child's progress with you at any time.

SOLICITING

Grace Episcopal School does not allow solicitation of any kind on the premises.

FUNDRAISING

Grace Episcopal School is able to maintain low student/teacher ratios and keep tuition reasonable due in part to successful fundraising. Parents, along with the school board and the Head of School, are encouraged to take an active role in the fundraising endeavors of the school. Parents will be asked to serve on various committees, and any ideas are always welcomed.

VISION/HEARING SCREENINGS

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act requires a screening for possible vision and hearing problems for all children enrolled in our four-year olds' and older programs by the completion of the first semester of school. Your family physician may perform these screenings, but G.E.S. must have a copy of the results on file. G.E.S. has scheduled these screenings to take place at school on September 26th for families who are interested. Families will be notified of the cost for the screenings and sign a permission slip with Vision and Hearing Screening of Austin, Inc. closer to that date. Screenings will be offered as a convenience to our school families, and parents will be responsible for the cost of the screenings for their child(ren) if they choose to participate.

POLICY CHANGES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

If and when there is a policy change at G.E.S., you will be notified through a message and a document on the [brightwheel](#) app and/or a letter on school letterhead. The letter will need to be returned to the school with your signature and a date, either electronically or a hard copy.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures of G.E.S., you may direct them to the Head of School. You may visit her or call her at the school during school hours, or make an appointment to visit with her (512-863-6214), or notify her by mail (1314 E. University Ave., Georgetown, TX 78626). You may also contact a School Board member – see page 14.

Parents are always allowed to review a copy of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's Childcare Minimum Standards and G.E.S.'s most recent licensing report (posted in hallway).

A parent may contact the local licensing office at (512) 834-3426, 14000 Summit Drive, Ste. 100, Austin, TX 78728; the child abuse hotline at (800) 252-5400; and visit the Health and Human Services website at www.hhs.texas.gov.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

If at any time you have a school-related problem, feel free to present your problem to the Head of School. If after the Head has addressed and handled your situation, you do not feel that your problem was satisfactorily handled, please take the matter to the G.E.S. School Board. If there still remains a problem after the school board has addressed the situation, you may present it to the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, and further, the Vestry of Grace Episcopal Church. The Head of School will provide you with names and phone numbers if needed.

GANG-FREE ZONE

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This statute requires information about gang-free zones to be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers or schools.

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include child care centers and schools. Our gang-free zone is anywhere within 1000 feet of Grace Episcopal School. The purpose of gang-free zones is similar to that of drug-free zones: to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

Please be assured that we are not experiencing any problems in the area of gangs or gang-activity, and we do not anticipate any such problems.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of an emergency, operating procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children. As a first step, 911 will be called. Evacuation Plans: All employees are responsible for moving children to the designated safe area in the back parking lot.

Emergency evacuation and relocation diagrams are located in areas specified by HHS and local authorities. In the event we need to relocate, parents will be called upon to pick up their children. As needed, the local authorities will be called to aid in the transportation of the children to an alternate shelter away from the center. *Alternate shelter*: Southwestern University McCombs Center 1001 E. University Ave. Shelter in Place: Personal alarms will sound, and staff members are responsible for getting all students into a classroom, locking the classroom door, blacking-out the door window and moving students to a “Safe Corner” out of sight. All adults should silence cell phones, radios, computers, etc. Staff members will then do their best to keep all students quiet, and remain hidden until directed by law enforcement officers or an administrator to move or evacuate. Doors are never opened during a lockdown, even in the event of a fire alarm. Severe Weather: Classes will relocate to “Safe Rooms” and wait for further instructions. Staff members should keep their radios and cell phones on and with them. Fire drills are practiced monthly, and severe weather and lockdown drills are practiced every other month. For the complete Emergency Operations Plan for GES, please see any staff member.

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Virginia “Ginny” Herbert

SCHOOL BOARD

Faith Bero
Garret Hayes
Andrea Hunter
Brandi Pelton
Kevin Ross
Julia Taylor
Linda Vaden-Goad

SCHOOL COLORS

Red and Gold

COVID ADDENDUM

(This takes the place of GES's Guide for Managing COVID-19)

The COVID-19 public health emergency declaration ended on May 11, 2023. However, Grace Episcopal School will continue to follow the CDC's guidelines for managing the spread of COVID-19 in childcare settings.

If your child was exposed to COVID-19, please visit the following link to determine isolation and exposure dates regardless of vaccination status or whether your child has previously been infected.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html>

GES will continue to clean and disinfect the school with our normal cleaning routines and the enhanced Top of the Hour disinfection of high touch surface areas. We will also continue to focus on ventilation with the use of our COWAY 4-stage filtration air purifiers with HEPA filters in each classroom.

In addition, GES staff members will teach and model handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill and being hospitalized. Parents should talk to their pediatricians about the COVID-19 vaccine for children. **Please note:** When your child receives any immunizations, including the COVID-19 vaccine, please submit an updated immunization record to GES as soon as possible. We will be audited for vaccination compliance late in the first semester with follow-up of delinquencies in the spring semester.