

Student/Family Handbook
2026-2027

10-18-26

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Dear GCA Family,

Welcome to the new school year at Grace Christian Academy!
As we start a new year, let's take a moment to remember why we do, what we do. Why have we chosen Christian education for our children? We believe an excerpt from a poem by Carolyn Caines says it very well . . .

If I have memorized addition facts, multiplication tables, and chemical
formulas, but have never been disciplined to hide God's Word in my heart,
I have not been educated.
If I can recite the Gettysburg Address and the Preamble to the Constitution,
but have not been informed of the hand of God in the history of our country,
I have not been educated.
If I can play the piano, the violin, six other instruments, and can write music
that moves men to tears, but have never been taught to listen to the
Director of the universe and worship Him, I have not been educated.

In a world that teaches our children knowledge but not necessarily wisdom, we are fortunate to be able to attend Grace Christian Academy, where students are grown to live Christ honoring lives AND flourish academically.

We are thankful for each family God has brought to GCA and look forward to what God will do here this year. We, as school board members, have been blessed to see God providing the talent and skills in our staff and volunteers that will propel GCA forward as we strive to provide excellence in teaching and learning that is biblically sound, academically rigorous, socially engaged, and culturally relevant. As we continue to grow our fine arts and STEM programs, improve campus security, and enhance our science lab and athletic field, it is more important than ever that you be praying for our students, staff and volunteers and that you get involved in PTF and your child's classroom. It won't be the same without you! Thank you for choosing GCA as your partner in educating your children!

In Christ,
GCA School Board

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

School Motto:

EDUCATION IN CHRIST - PREPARATION FOR LIFE

GCA Mission Statement

The Mission of Grace Christian Academy is to partner with families in growing students who live Christ honoring lives and flourish academically.

School Verse

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths".
Proverbs 3:5-7

Accreditation

Grace Christian Academy is accredited by the
Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).
This process holds schools to a standard of excellence:
a higher standard academically, administratively and spiritually.

ACSI ACCREDITED

THE APOSTLES CREED

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hades. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen."

OUR DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

We affirm these truths for our faith and witness:

1. **God**. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. **God the Father**. We believe the Father is spirit, who is holy and righteous, full of compassion, merciful and gracious, forgiving, unchanging, and our final judge.
3. **God the Son**. We believe Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, is fully God and fully human; one person with two natures. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, substitutionary and atoning death through His shed blood, bodily resurrection, ascension to the right hand of the Father, and future personal return in power and glory.
4. **God the Holy Spirit**. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit of truth who convicts the world of sin, of God's righteousness, and of coming judgment. We believe He indwells the Christian, enabling him to live a life pleasing to God.
5. **Scripture**. We believe the Bible, comprised of 66 books, to be the inspired and only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
6. **Humanity**. We believe man and woman were created in the image of God to be like Him in character, the supreme object of God's creation. We have inherited a sinful nature with a disposition of disobedience which separates us from God and makes us objects of His wrath. We are incapable of saving ourselves and in need of a Savior.
7. **Salvation**. We believe salvation is a gift of His grace received through repentance of sin and our rebellion against Him, and by exercising faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior. We become a child of God with our sins forgiven and with Christ entering our life through the Holy Spirit, giving us new life in Christ, and the assurance of eternal life with Christ.
8. **Church**. We believe all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are members of the body of Christ, the one true Church universal, and that spiritual unity is to be expressed among all believers with acceptance and love for one another. The local Church is a group of believers, each gifted by the Holy Spirit with spiritual gifts for service to others, who gather as a community of faith for worship, prayer, instruction, encouragement, mutual accountability, and as a witness to the world, making disciples of all nations.
9. **Sacraments**. We believe the sacraments of baptism and communion, ordained by Christ, are outward physical symbols of our inward union with Christ. We believe baptism is, as an outward testimony of our belief in Christ, symbolizing our death to sin and being raised to new life in Christ. We believe the sacrament of communion is given to all believers by Jesus Christ in remembrance of His sacrifice for us and to symbolize the new covenant. The elements of bread and fruit of the vine are symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood.
10. **Marriage and Sexuality**. We believe God ordained marriage to be the union of one man and one woman in a covenant relationship where they are committed to each other in steadfast love, devotion and marital fidelity as representatives of Christ's love for His bride, the Church. Sexual intimacy is only acceptable within the covenant relationship of marriage. We believe that God has prohibited intimate 3 sexual activity outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual content, bestiality, incest,

pornography, and attempting to change one's biological sex or otherwise acting upon any disagreement with one's biological sex) or advocacy of sexual immorality, is sinful and offensive to God.

11. **Christ's Second Coming**. We believe in the imminent personal return of Jesus Christ, appointed by God the Father to judge the living and the dead, granting eternal life to those who belong to Jesus Christ and subjecting those outside of Christ to God's eternal wrath.

STATEMENT OF SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT AND DOCTRINE

Grace Christian Academy (GCA), as a ministry of Grace Community Church, is committed to the development of a student's spiritual life while pursuing academic excellence. The following information clearly states the school's position on spiritual and educational priorities and perspectives.

Philosophy and Objectives of Grace Christian Academy

GCA is committed to the Christian perspective of life as set forth only in the Bible, acknowledging the following aspects of the Christian faith:

First, that God is a physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual being and is the sovereign creator and sustainer of the universe.

Second, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and extends salvation to all who place their faith in Him.

As an extension of the spiritual education of the home, the school endeavors to aid each student's understanding of God and man to assist the student in growing in Christian maturity and utilizing the individual's unique potential in Christ to the fullest.

From these premises stem particular goals:

Expected Student Outcomes

Spiritual

- Teach that the Bible is a daily guide for living out God's word.
- Empower each student to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, follow Him as Lord and Savior, and seek to understand and do God's will.
- Learn how to study the scriptures for personal spiritual growth.
- Recognize that Jesus has a plan for each student and respond to life's situations using biblical principles.

Intellectual

- Help students see God's revelation in creation and in Scripture through every subject they study.
- To cultivate a curiosity and passion for life-long learning.
- Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills with biblical discernment.
- Acquire grade level competency in each subject area.

Social

- Encourage an individual sense of personal worth as a special creation of God and recipient of His love.
- Promote healthy relationships by showing Christian love and seeking first to understand other's viewpoint.
- Guide students to practice good citizenship and take responsibility at home, in their community, and in their country.
- Facilitate a love of serving others just as Christ served the church.

Physical

- Promote health, fitness, and coordination.
- Foster good sportsmanship.
- Instruct students to treat their body as a temple.
- Model lifelong healthy habits.

Christian Perspective Relating to Education

Life: Human life is a gift of God. God created mankind to live their lives in total commitment to Him. He demands us to educate our children to that end.
Bible: The Bible, as the only written Word of God, is the truth by which the Holy Spirit enlightens our understanding of God, ourselves, and the world. It is the infallible authority by which He directs and governs all our activities, including the education of our children.
Creation: The creation, preservation, and ultimate restoration of the world is the work of the triune God. We can only rightly understand the world when it is studied in the relationship of God for the purpose of glorifying His name.
Mankind: Mankind was created in the image of God to enjoy fellowship with their Creator. Mankind is to reflect in their person and works, the excellence of their Maker. Mankind is instructed to exercise dominion over the world in loving obedience to God and interpret all reality in accordance with His design and will.
Sin: Sin is the disobedience to God's will. Mankind, by sinning, estranged themselves from God and their neighbor, and brought God's curse upon the creation. As a result, mankind has become corrupt in heart and blind to the true meaning of life. They repress and misuse the knowledge of God, which confronts them in creation and Scripture.
Christ: Jesus Christ, our living Lord, of whom the Scriptures speak, has reconciled the world to God and redeemed our lives in their entirety. Until His return, our lives should express themselves in constant gratitude to Him in Christian service for His redeeming and reconciling work.
Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit renews our hearts to love God and our neighbors. He directs our understanding to rightly know our God, ourselves, and our world. The Holy Spirit guides us into a personal relationship to Jesus Christ.
Purposes of Education: The purposes of Christian education are to direct our understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and righteousness in order to perform competent and responsible service to God in the home, church, and society. To encourage each child into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and make Him Lord of his/her life.
Parents: God gives parents the responsibility to nurture and train their children. Christian parents may choose to share this responsibility with institutions able to carry forward their God-given task.
The Child: The child, entrusted by God to the parents, needs ordering, correcting, and instructing. Children of Christian homes share in the Gospel and are, therefore, entitled to study the Word and deal with life's issues and problems from a Christian perspective.
The Teacher: The teacher is a servant of God, and is therefore called to walk in the ways of the Lord and teach the child the same. The teacher must be committed to Christ and help the child experience relationships that can guide the child toward a personal relationship and a committed life in Christ. The teacher partners with the parent, because the school is the extension of the Christian home.

Pledge to the American Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to The Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Pledge to the Christian Flag

"I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again, with life and liberty to all who believe."

Pledge to the Bible

"I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God."

FOUNDATIONS

History

Grace Community Church began a Preschool in 1967 called Grace Community Children's Center. Many of the parents of the preschoolers made inquiries about beginning an elementary school to continue their children's Christian education. In 1975, Grace Community Church met that challenge by starting a primary school, which has now grown into a K-8 academic school with approximately 300 students and a Preschool of nearly 70 students. The school has positioned itself for the future by changing the name to Grace Christian Academy (2016-2017 year) and placing added emphasis on academic achievement while strengthening our commitment to developing students who live a life that honors Christ.

Leadership

The school is a ministry of Grace Community Church under the direct authority of the GCA Governing Board appointed by the Grace Community Church Council of Elders. The Head of School is responsible to the Governing Board for the daily operation of the school.

Students

GCA offers a Preschool program for 3, 4 and 5 year olds; and classes for Kindergarten – grade 8. Our maximum class size is 20 students for Kindergarten, 24 for grades 1-5, and 26 students for Grades 6-8.

Financial Support

GCA is a ministry of Grace Community Church to Christian families. Our support comes through tuition and private donations. Various fundraising projects are conducted to help defray operating costs, capital improvements, special activities, and projects. All voluntary contributions are income tax deductible and may qualify for employer/employee matching donations.

Facilities

GCA campus is maintained by the GCC Church Facilities Staff.

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (PL 99-519: USC 2641 et seq.) Asbestos has been identified in the existing classrooms. To obtain information please contact the school office. Annual management plan: constituents will receive annual notification of this information through the inclusion of the above in our annual Handbook.

Staff & Faculty

The staff of GCA consists of teachers, support staff, and health coordinators. The Head of School is careful to select teachers who have a personal commitment to and relationship with Jesus Christ and have high academic qualifications. Our teachers in the K-8 program have college degrees and many are certified by the state of Arizona (or equivalent) and ACSI.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(All policies are subject to change without prior notice. If a policy is changed, parents and students will be notified.)

Admission

The school is open to all children regardless of race, color, sex, or national origin, whose parents show evidence of genuine, positive interest in Christian education. At least one parent/guardian must profess to believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and attend a Bible-believing church. All rights and privileges are afforded to all students. Grace Christian Academy is a covenant Christian school.

Application and Registration

Registration of new students is handled on an individual basis. Please call the school office for proper forms and procedures.

Enrollment begins in January; siblings of existing families are considered first and then all Grace Community Church families. Children of alumni and staff will be given special consideration.

Student Information

Student Information is on FACTS Family Portal (a software program specifically designed for school use) and available at all times. ***Parents are responsible to notify the office of any changes as it relates to student information, which can be made in the FACTS Family Portal under Family Demographics. (home link contact information)***

Student Records

Student records may be viewed by making arrangements with the school office.

Withdrawal

Should a student withdraw following the first day of school, a 30-day written notice is required and all tuition and fees due at the end of that notice (30 days hence) must be paid in full. All pre-paid fees that remain in the student's account following the end of the 30 day notice period will be returned to the responsible party after all incidental charges and fees have been paid. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the front office or requested via email.

Financial Matters

Application Fee

A non-refundable application fee is due at the time of application for all K-8th students, including siblings of current students and students who will be entering kindergarten who are currently enrolled in the GCA preschool program. This fee is not eligible to be paid with STO (Student Tuition Organization)/Tax Credit Scholarship funds.

Commitment Fee

A Commitment Fee is due at time of enrollment and is non-refundable. This fee is not eligible to be paid with STO (School TuitionOrganization)/Tax Credit Scholarship funds. This applies to students enrolled for the full term or for part of the term.

New Family Capital Improvement Fee

The Family Capital Fund is charged at the time of enrollment. This is a one-time payment applicable when a family's first student enters into K-8th, & remains consecutively enrolled. Once the enrollment document has been processed, the fee will be added by the business office to the family's FACTS incidental Expense billing, and FACTS will process the payment approximately 10-14 days later. This fee is not eligible to be paid with STO/Tax Credit Scholarship or ESA funds.

FACTS Payment Plan Fee

FACTS will charge a per family Payment Plan Fee, the cost of which is dependent upon the Payment Plan that is utilized. The payment of this fee will be processed by FACTS approximately 10 days after tuition has been added to the family's account.

Testing Fee

Testing for grade placement may be necessary. A testing fee may be charged to cover the expense of administering the test.

Tuition

Each year the needs of the school are assessed by the GCA School Board and a tuition schedule is published. Since these costs vary from year to year, the school should be contacted for up-to-date information.

Tuition Payment FAQs

Additional information about Tuition/Incidental Charge Payments and some specific help with procedures can be found in the Tuition Payment FAQ located in the FACTS Family Portal.

Billing Procedures

Families will select a payment plan and a payment method for tuition and incidental billings during the enrollment/re-enrollment process. Financial information will be accessible through the FACTS Family Portal system and it is the family's responsibility to check their account regularly. Notices of charges added and reminders of payments due will be sent electronically by FACTS on a regular basis. It is the family's responsibility to monitor their email for these notices and review their account.

Parents are ultimately responsible for their children's tuition and other fees. Tuition/fee payments may come from other sources such as grandparents, trust fund, etc., but the parents are the responsible party.

Payment is due on the first of each month and must be paid on or before the 15th of the month. A $30 late fee will be assessed on the 16th of the month to any account not paid in full. Families may not postpone payments due because of anticipated STO (e.g., ACSTO) Tax Credit Scholarships or ESA funds.

If there is an outstanding balance, a late fee will be assessed every month. Late fees accumulate until there is no longer a balance.

- **All eighth grade** students must have all tuition and outstanding fees paid in full by the first Friday in May or final exams will not be administered to those students. Additionally, eighth grade students that have an outstanding balance may not participate in the 8th grade trip, year-end school activities or graduation until balances are paid.
- **6th and 7th grade** students that have an outstanding balance after the first Friday in May will not be able to take final exams or participate in school activities until the outstanding balance is paid in full.

Delinquent Accounts

Parents are responsible for contacting the school if their account is delinquent in order to set up a payment plan. When an account is 30 days past due, the bill must be paid or an additional payment plan to satisfy the past due amount must be set up. The GCA Finance Committee must approve all payment plans. It is the parent's responsibility to verify if the payment plan has been approved. If financial arrangements are not made within 30 days (60 days overdue), the child may be dismissed from the school.

No student may be enrolled in the school unless past due accounts are brought current or arrangements are made with the Head of School. Current students may not be re-enrolled for the next school year if an account is past-due.

If satisfactory arrangements have not been made with the administrator, report cards, school records, and graduation privileges will be withheld from those students whose tuition, preschool charges, and incidental expenses are delinquent.

Returned Payments
A $30 fee will be assessed for any returned checks/FACTS payment. FACTS will re-attempt tuition payment plan** requests twice (a total of three attempts per payment plan installment), which could overlap with the next payment withdrawal date, resulting in multiple payments being withdrawn at the same time.**NOTE: FACTS will only attempt automatic collection of Incidental Expenses once. Therefore, in order to clear these charges, families will have to pay either with cash/check to the school or directly authorize a new payment of the charges online.

Half Day Dismissal - Students Not Picked Up On Time
Any student remaining after 12:15pm will be charged at the rate of $5.00 for the first 15 minutes. After 12:30pm there will be a charge of *one dollar for every minute* until the student is picked up. A student not picked up by 12:15pm must come to the school office and must be signed out.

Tax Credits / Scholarships

Individuals may donate funds to various tax credit scholarship organizations. A certain portion of donations may qualify as a state tax credit. Contact the school office for forms and information.

The tax credit laws have become stricter due to Supreme Court rulings and GCA will abide by those rules. Tax credit scholarship donations recommended for students are only a recommendation and not a guaranteed scholarship. Families must apply to each School Tuition Organization (STO) every year to be eligible for scholarships.

Scholarships can only be applied to accounts after the actual funds are received (notice of awards do not indicate receipt of funds by GCA). Tax Credit Scholarships received prior to 3 business days before the 15th of each month can be applied to the current month's tuition due to adjust the total balance due that month. Tax Credit Scholarship funds received after that will be applied to tuition *starting the next month*. Families cannot delay payment beyond the 15th of any month in anticipation of expected Tax Credit Scholarship funds and late fees will apply to any unpaid balance.

Empowerment Scholarship Accounts
Important Note: *Tax Credit Scholarships (aka STO funds) and Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) funds may not be* utilized in the same academic year.

Any family accepting an ESA contract for their student must forward a copy of the signed contract to GCA immediately after signing (GCA-Accounts@grace-az.org) if the Direct Pay option and Quarterly billing will be utilized. Forwarding the contract is optional for those families choosing reimbursement, but we do require that you notify us of ESA acceptance so that STO/Tax Credit Scholarships are not accepted for that student, which would put your ESA compliance at risk.

Direct Pay Option (families paying GCA directly from ESA/Class Wallet for tuition)
If a family wishes to use the "Direct Pay" (previously known as "Pay Vendor") option, tuition for students using ESA Funds will be due on a quarterly basis to coordinate with the ESA quarterly funding cycles (July, October, January, April). ESA's payment provider (currently, ClassWallet) will retain a portion of the total ESA contract amount (currently 2.0%), and GCA will receive the remaining amount (hereafter, "expected ESA funding"). As a courtesy, the expected ESA funding amount will be deferred approximately 25 days to the 10th of the following month (e.g. to Aug. 10, Nov. 10, Feb.10, and May 10) to allow time for ESA accounts to be funded. In the months the quarterly ESA payments are due (normally July, October, January, and April) the family is expected to pay the difference between the quarterly tuition and the expected ESA funding, in addition to any other charges due

that billing month.

Families must submit a request that GCA be paid immediately upon their ESA/ClassWallet account being funded (no later than 3 days after funding). Failure to promptly submit charges causes a delay in payment to GCA and **will result in the remainder of tuition** (the expected ESA funding amount) **being collected from the family on the deferred amount's payment date**, and late fees will apply on any unpaid balances.

Reimbursement Option (families paying GCA directly and then being reimbursed by ESA/Class Wallet)
Families who will be utilizing ESA on a reimbursement basis will be set up on the standard monthly tuition payment plan (not the ESA-Quarterly plan). There are no deferred payment options for families utilizing the reimbursement option.

Refunds of Out-of-Pocket Paid Tuition
If you pay toward your student's tuition during the school year and later receive tax credit scholarships or ESA funds to cover that tuition, a refund of the tuition you paid out-of-pocket will only be considered once a year in June after all other year-end charges have been satisfied. Parents of continuing students must request a refund or the credit will remain on the account for use the next academic year. Refunds for families who are not continuing (e.g., last student graduated from 8th grade) will be refunded after all account charges are satisfied.

Special Fees
Musical Instrument rental, Sports, and extracurricular activities, including camps and clubs, may require additional fees. The parent will be notified in advance. GCA makes every attempt to keep these fees minimal, recognizing that each family has made sacrifices to place their student(s) in a Christian school.

Educational Enhancement Tuition
Educational Enhancement tuition is based on individual needs. Once established, these charges are communicated through the EE department.

School Fines and Fees
Instruments, textbooks/Library books, and sports equipment/uniforms may be assigned or checked out to each student during the year. Students are expected to keep all instruments, books, and equipment/uniforms they are assigned or use in good condition. Students are not to write in or deface books in any way. If sports equipment/uniforms, GCA merchandise (such as books), or borrowed musical instruments are damaged, lost, or not returned by the due date, a fine will be charged to the student/family account. Items not returned by due dates will result in a lost/damaged charge to replace the item. Items that have already been replaced, or are returned after the end of the school year due date, will not receive a credit.

Fundraising
Organizations within the school may conduct fundraising projects to raise funds for a specific purpose. Any proceeds earned from these efforts are to be used for that stated fundraising purpose. Should a fundraiser be designed to help off-set a specific student's activity cost (e.g., 8th Grade Graduation Trip) and that student is not able to participate in the designated activity for any reason, the funds raised remain with the designated activity/organization. Students/families shall have no ownership or decision-making rights to the funds raised.

School Schedule

Daily Schedule
- Monday – Thursday: Kindergarten – 8th Grade 8:15am – 3:15pm
- Friday: Kindergarten – 8th Grade 8:15am – 1:30pm

Student Achievement

Mid-Term Reports

A mid-term report will be available on FACTS Family Portal in grades 1- 8 during each quarter. Optional reports may be sent to students who are achieving below grade level.

Report Cards
Report cards will be available on FACTS Family Portal at the close of each nine-week quarter and emailed to parents.

Grading Scales
Kindergarten uses a percentage-based method of grading:

E = Excellent	S = Satisfactory	N = Needs Improvement
E+ 100 E 93-99 E- 90-92	S+ 87-89 S 83-86 S- 80-82	N Below 80

Grades 1-8 use a percentage-based method of grading as follows:

A	B	C	D	F
A+ 100 A 93-99 A- 90-92	B+ 87-89 B 83-86 B- 80-82	C+ 77-79 C 73-76 C- 70-72	D+ 67-69 D 63-66 D- 60-62	F Below 60

Testing
As part of our ongoing commitment to provide data-driven, excellent instruction, GCA students in kindergarten -8th grade participate in the MAP Online testing two times a year. MAP provides wonderful, immediate data that assists GCA administration and faculty in adjusting instructional goals and evaluating curriculum

Honor Roll
Middle School students with a grade point average of 97-100% will be named to the Administrator's Honor Roll and those with a grade point average of 92-96% will be named to the quarter's Honor Roll. A student with any grade below 78% will not be considered for the Honor Roll.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian for eighth grade are selected by the Middle School Administration. Grade point average, service and character are all considered in the selection process.

Curriculum and Student Activities

Chapel and Devotions
All grades have prayer and devotions in their own classrooms. Grades K-8 have a weekly chapel. Preschool students attend chapel services once a month.

Textbooks
The school provides all necessary textbooks, workbooks, and some supplies. Textbooks and curriculum are reviewed on a regular schedule and replaced when deemed appropriate.

Textbooks are the property of the school and should be cared for properly. Students will be assessed fees for

unreasonable damage to any textbook at the end of the year. If a textbook/workbook is lost and a replacement is provided to the student by the school, the full cost of that item will be assessed.

Library

Our library is in J-Building. Books may be checked out of the library for classroom use. A regular schedule will be set up for checkouts.

School Supplies

All personal supplies for the student are to be provided by the parents. A list of all necessary supplies for each grade is sent home at the beginning of the school year. We require all students in Grades 1-8 to purchase a Bible (version to be listed on the current Supply List). The Supply List is available in the FACTS Family portal.

Homework

Grades K-4 will have homework depending upon subject matter. Expect projects or large assignments and more time at home to finish these.

Grades 5-8 will have homework. Students are expected to have their homework completed on time. Expect projects or large assignments and more time at home to finish these.

Music Activities

Students in Kindergarten-4th grade have music or choral classes several times weekly with a certified music teacher. Band and Choir is offered in Grades 5-8.

Music programs are scheduled throughout the year. All performing students are required to attend programs. Lack of attendance will reflect in the lowering of the student's music grade. Exceptions must be requested in writing two weeks prior to the program.

Physical Education

All students in Grades K-8 participate in physical education classes. Grades K-4 places special emphasis on muscular development and movement. Grades 5-8 begin to develop the skills necessary for various organized sports.

A written note from a parent is required if a student is unable to participate in physical education classes. A note from a doctor must be sent to the school if a child needs to be kept from P.E. classes for more than one week.

Students in K-8 will participate in P.E. with their normal school attire. Students in all grades must wear tennis shoes or soft-soled shoes during P.E.

Computer, Library, Art, and Spanish Programs

In addition to our core curriculum we provide computers and for grades K-5. Art and Library may be offered in each class up to grade 5. Spanish is offered to all students K-8.

Education Enhancement

The purpose of the Educational Enhancement (EE) program at Grace Christian Academy is to provide Christ-centered academic support for students who have demonstrated signs of learning challenges. Students who show signs of learning challenges may receive additional help in that specific area. Parents and teachers will work together to help identify learning challenges and a plan may be set up.

After School Clubs/Enhancement Programs

GCA has a vision for high academics, STEM, Fine Arts, and strong spiritual development. A variety of classes are offered throughout the year such as; Spotlight (drama, music), Chess Club, Robotics, STEM, and Coding Club.

Field Trips and Camp

Each class may have several field trips throughout the year. Field trips are a privilege and a student's behavior and attitude will determine participation.

5th grade students will attend Science Camp in the spring. Attendance at this camp is mandatory. Parents are encouraged to volunteer as counselors. A fee will be assessed to parents who attend.

6th, 7 and 8th grade students will attend Leadership Camp in the fall. Attendance at this camp is mandatory. Parents are encouraged to volunteer as counselors. A fee will be assessed to parents who attend.

California Trip

Those students who have successfully completed their eighth grade year are rewarded with a trip to Southern California. An extra fee is charged. Fundraisers are available throughout the year to help cover this cost. Parents are encouraged to come along. If a student is sent home due to a discipline issue the parent is responsible for all related expenses.

Volunteers – Background Check

All volunteers are required to have a background check. Volunteers are considered anyone who will be acting in the role of a chaperone, driver, coach, classroom volunteer or other such capacity where that adult may be interacting with our students. If you already have a Level 1 Fingerprint Clearance Card on file with GCA you do not need to complete a background check.

All volunteers serving as Head Coaches for GCA athletics and leading GCA activities are required to have an IVP clearance card.

Drivers for Field Trips and Athletics- In addition to a background check, all drivers need to supply a copy of their Driver's License and copy of current auto insurance. Volunteer drivers for field trips are to take the students directly to and from the field trip destination. If a route is designated by the teacher, the volunteer driver is to take the designated route. Stopping for food and/or drink is prohibited.

Parties

Parties will be scheduled by each homeroom teacher. Invitations to personal parties are not to be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited, or all girls or all boys.

A student may bring a treat for his/her birthday. Please check with your child's teacher for an acceptable date and type of treat. Birthday celebrations are treats only, no game time.

Gifts for Teachers

Students may present their teachers with a gift at Christmas or other special occasions; however, there is no obligation to do this.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Middle school students (grades 6–8) are eligible to participate in Grace Christian Academy's after-school competitive team sports programs. Grace Christian Academy is a member of the Cactus Christian Schools League, a competitive league encompassing charter, private, and non-parochial schools. Teams are organized in a Varsity/Junior Varsity format, when applicable. Placement on a sports team is determined through a formal tryout process (see Athletic Contract and Tryout Information for details).

Varsity-level teams at Grace Christian Academy are designated as Middle School only and are limited to students in grades 6–8.

Fifth-grade students may participate in competitive team sports under the following conditions:

- If a sport offers a lower-level team (e.g., Junior Varsity, 5th/6th Grade, or "C" team), eligible fifth-grade students may participate **only at that lower level**.

- If a sport offers only one team level, 5th-grade students may be eligible to participate o**nly if there are insufficient middle school (grades 6–8) participants to field a full team.**
- If a sport offers only one team level and **there are enough middle school participants to field a team**, fifth-grade students may choose instead to participate on the **Academy** team for that sport, when available, at a reduced athletic fee.

All participation is subject to final approval by the Athletic Department, based on roster size, league requirements, and developmental appropriateness.

Sports seasons are approximately 10 weeks in duration and consist of practices, home and away games, and tournaments. Practices will be held after school (times communicated by the coach). Any student not picked up after practice on time will be sent to aftercare. Normal aftercare fees will apply.

Fall Sports: Co-Ed Soccer; Girls Volleyball

Winter Sports: Girls Softball; Boys Baseball; Co-Ed Cross Country; Boys Volleyball

Spring Sports: Boys Basketball; Girls Basketball; Girls Cheer; Co-Ed Golf

For each sports team, an athletic fee for league-related expenses will be due prior to tryouts. (With each sport or activity, there may be some added expenses for equipment or outfits, such as shoes, dresses, pants, cheerleading uniform, etc.)

An athletic contract must be signed by parents and students participating in GCA team sports. This contract must be completed prior to trying out for a team.

If a student-athlete is placed on probation, they may be prohibited from participating in team sports (see Discipline and Middle School Academic Probation).

Student Council

Middle School students develop leadership skills, demonstrate servanthood and build school spirit as they plan GCA student activities and volunteer projects for the whole school. Students must desire to lead by example in creating, organizing, working and serving in all planned events. These include Spirit Week, See You at the Pole, various service projects, campus open houses, school socials, prayer walks, etc. Students who are selected as officers are expected to be in Student Council for the entire year.

Parent Involvement

Parent Volunteers/Background Check

All volunteers are required to have a background check. Volunteers are considered anyone who will be acting in the role of a chaperone, driver, coach, classroom volunteer or other such capacity where that adult may be interacting with our students. If you already have a valid Level 1 Fingerprint Clearance Card on file with GCA you do not need to complete an additional background check. Please provide the office with your card and we will copy it for your records. All drivers need to supply a copy of their Driver's License and copy of current auto insurance.

Classroom Volunteers

● Dress <u>modestly</u> (no workout attire) when in the classroom or helping with parties, field trips, etc.
● Check in and out in the office with a photo ID and wear the visitor sticker for the duration of the visit on campus.
● You may be asked to help with chapels, school programs, class parties, and/or special projects.
● If you have a question about your child's progress, make an appointment with the teacher for an appropriate time.

● **Remember:** The teacher is the person in charge. All arrangements and plans must be approved by the teacher. Be sure to check with the individual teacher on what they may want you to do and how they want it done. We appreciate your willingness to serve in so many different capacities.

Parent-Teacher Fellowship (PTF)
This fellowship consists of all faculty, staff, and parents of GCA. Its purpose is to promote fellowship of parents and staff and to provide service and assistance to the school and its families. General membership meetings are held periodically, usually to correspond with a special event. All parents are encouraged to become involved.

Parent-Teacher Conferences
A formal parent-teacher conference is held each fall at the end of the first nine-week quarter. The report card is given to parents at this conference when the student's grades, conduct, and progress are discussed. Other conferences may be arranged between parents and teachers as desired.

Visitors to Classrooms
Parents are encouraged to visit the school and become acquainted with the teachers and students. Classrooms are open to any visitor, providing prior permission has been obtained from the administrator and teacher. These arrangements should be made through the school office; at least 24 hours prior. Visits should not be more than 30 minutes. Parents of students who are currently attending GCA should not request or expect to observe teachers of the next grade during the month of May.

Teacher Requests
Requests for a specific teacher by the parents or guardians will not be considered.

Communication between Parents, Teachers, and Administrators
GCA is committed to positive communication and resolution of potential conflicts before they arise. This can best be accomplished with open communication between individuals at the beginning of the year or at the first appearance of difficulty. Expectations and issues related to specific student or family situations should be communicated at the earliest possible time, remembering that the school and family are partners in the bringing up of a child "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6: 4 NIV). When there is a potential misunderstanding or conflict, **parents should contact the teacher first and try to resolve the problem** (see Matthew 18). If this fails, then the parent may contact the administration. If this does not resolve the issue, the administrator may arrange for a parent/teacher/administrator meeting to be held with or without the student involved. Every effort will be made to handle all conflicts according to Biblical guidelines, with the expected result being the edification of all involved. Please note that teachers and staff have 24 hours (excluding weekends) to reply to parent emails.

Student Services

Pictures
Individual and group pictures are taken early in the school year. There is NO obligation to purchase these pictures, but all students' pictures will be taken for the school yearbook.

Transportation
No bus transportation is available through GCA.

Lost and Found
Articles found anywhere on the campus should be taken to the Lost and Found area near the school office. All unlabeled and unclaimed items will be donated to Gracie's Thrift Store.

Telephone Usage
Students must obtain permission and a hall pass from their teachers before going to the office to make calls during school hours. Students will be permitted to use an office phone for necessary phone calls only. Telephone calls should be made before or after school when possible. If parents call, messages will be transmitted upon request. The phones in the church Connection Center are off-limits.

Electronic Devices (cell phones, smart watches, etc.)
Cell phones may be brought to school, but must be turned off and put away during school hours (7:55-3:30). If electronic devices are used during school hours, they will be sent to the school office and released to parents. Wrist watches (Apple/Smart Watches) with phone or cell capabilities fall under the same rules as cell phones and may not be worn on campus, but must be placed in a backpack or locker

Lunches
Lunch is available for purchase through My Hot Lunchbox (https://www.myhotlunchbox.com/). Vendors and pricing vary and will be made available starting with each new school year. Typically, local food chains deliver individualized packaged meals Monday - Friday each week.

Students not purchasing a school lunch are to bring their own lunches. Lunch containers should be selected which do not have questionable decals, slogans, or pictures. K-5 eats lunch in their classrooms. Middle School has designated areas.

Students leaving campus for lunch must return in time to resume classes. Students must be checked out and checked in at the office by the adult taking them to lunch.

Extended Day Care
Before school care is available from 7:00-8:15am at the rate of $6.00 per day. After school care is available from 3:30-4:30pm for $7.00 per day. Any child remaining after 4:30 until 6:00pm will be charged $12 per day. If a child is picked up after 6:00pm, late fees will apply. Childcare charges for after care do not start until 3:30pm. **No childcare will be provided on days when school is dismissed at noon or on school holidays, unless otherwise noted.**

Children in the before/after care area are supervised by GCA staff. Families will be charged even if parents are present on campus.

Any student remaining after 6:00pm will be charged at the rate of **$5.00** for the first 15 minutes. After 6:15pm there will be a charge of **one dollar for every minute**. All students in Grades K-8 must be under supervision and will be required to be in extended care after 3:30pm unless participating in a supervised, extra-curricular activity.

Student Health and Safety

Supervision of Students

Once students are dropped off in the morning they may not leave campus for any reason without being signed out by a parent or an adult designated by parent. Parents must sign students out in the school office.

A note must be sent to the teacher at the beginning of the day stating the time the student is to be dismissed. If the student returns to the campus that day, he/she must be signed back in by an adult at the school office before returning to class.

Please note that no student may remain unsupervised on campus at any time. Unsupervised students will be taken to extended care 15 minutes after dismissal and appropriate fees will be assessed. Students dropped off

before 7:55am will need to check into before care. We do not allow students to wait at the gates.

Health Care

All students are required to have a health form on file in the school office. Each student **is required** to have on file a physician certified immunization record stipulating that the student has received the immunizations prescribed by the Arizona Department of Health. The school reserves the right to request a parent to obtain a health physical any time there is a question regarding the child's health and its reflection on his/her school work. For any questionable disease, the school reserves the right to consider attendance on an individual basis.

Medication

A health coordinator will be on duty each school day and available to administer medications. ***All medications must be brought to the school health office in the container in which it was dispensed by the pharmacist***. Parents must sign a form authorizing the nurse/office staff to administer prescription and over-the-counter medications. Students are NOT allowed to carry medications or keep them in their classrooms. EXCEPTION: inhalers, and EPI-PENS may be carried in a student's backpack after a signed consent form is received by the health coordinator. Please contact the health office for the Authorization Form.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Hearing and vision screening are given periodically in all grades. Parents will be notified if a student needs additional testing.

Treatment of Head Lice

To protect students from the spread of head lice the following procedures will be followed:

1. A student presenting symptoms that may indicate an infestation of head lice will be screened by our school nurse or a health coordinator.
2. If the student is found to have head lice or nits (eggs); the student's guardian will be notified and asked to pick up the student from school and follow the directions for effective treatment provided by the health office.
3. The student should be treated immediately including removing all of the nits by hand.
4. Before returning to the classroom, the student must be declared lice and nit free by the school nurse/health coordinator.

GCA Health Policy

Your child must be kept home if any of the following symptoms of illness appear:

- Fever/Temperature/Chills: Temp 100.0 or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Unusual level of fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

In addition, please keep your student HOME for:

Pink eye: Your child may return to school AFTER a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment or a doctor's note.

Strep-throat: Your child may return to school AFTER a full 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and they are fever free.

Student Conduct

Arrival and Dismissal

Students should not be on campus before 7:55am or 15 minutes after dismissal unless involved in a supervised extra-curricular activity. Please see the Extended Day Care section above regarding being on campus before or after these times.

Parking Lot Policy & Procedures

Students must conduct themselves in an orderly manner when they are dropped off or waiting to be picked up. For the safety of our students and surrounding community, students may not be picked up or dropped off on or across Terrace Road.

Refer to the Parking Lot Policy & Procedure information sheet for additional information.

Absences and Tardiness

"Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it." Proverbs 22:6 (NLT)

At Grace Christian Academy we value responsibility and punctuality. In Colossians 3:23 we are given this instruction: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord…" We expect our students to give their very best effort to the educational program, including not missing or being late to class.

Absences

Parents are responsible to notify the school of a student's absence before class sessions begin that day. If calling outside school office hours, please leave a message at 480-966-5022, ext. 8249.

Excused Absences:

Absences for the following reasons will be excused:

- Personal illness
- Family emergencies
- Appearances in court when required by law
- Religious observances
- Doctor or dental appointments

In order for an absence to be excused, the parents provide the following information: date, name of student, reason for absence, and the parent or guardian's name and contact phone number. If the absence has not been communicated with the office, it will be counted as unexcused. FACTS keeps a record of all absences and tardies and will send out notifications.

Parents of a student not accounted for will be notified by the school by 11am. Without parental notification, the student's absence will be considered "unexcused." Parents of students with excessive unexcused absences will be called by school administration to discuss the child's academic progress.

If a student is expected to be absent for an extended period of time, the parents are responsible for discussing the extended absence in advance with the teacher and/or administration. Parents will be asked to fill out an assignment request page and get that to the office at least one week in advance. Please note some work will be available before the absence and some may not be available until after the student(s) return. Students will have one week to complete all missing assignments from the extended absence. With any absence, it is the responsibility of the student to make up all missed assignments and turn them in.

Students absent from school are not allowed to participate in school sports and activities on the day(s) of the absence(s). In rare circumstances participation may be cleared through administration. Written permission must be obtained in these circumstances.

Make Up Assignments
Generally, students will have at least one day for each day absent to make up work; however, special circumstances (extended absences due to illness, etc.) may require a different time schedule. This schedule should be worked out with the student and each individual teacher, with the approval of administration

Tardy Policy
Students are considered tardy if they are not through the gate by 8:15 a.m. Tardiness is defined as arriving through the gate any time after 8:15 up until 10:30. Students who arrive after 10:30 will be counted as only being present for half the school day.

If your child will be late to school, parents must park and escort your child(ren) to the front office to sign them in.

Tardiness due to medical appointments or circumstances beyond a student's control will be excused. Within the middle school, if a student is late in arriving to class after a passing period, the tardy is considered unexcused unless a student has a hall pass. Repeated tardiness will result in a phone call to parents from the teacher or administration.

Excused Tardies:

Persistent tardiness interrupts instruction and undermines morale, which, in turn, affects all students and families. If a student accumulates unexcused tardies in a quarter, they will receive consequences as follows:

- 5 Tardies: Parents will receive an email from the Assistant Administrator.
- 10 Tardies: Parents will receive an email from the Assistant Administrator.
- 15 Tardies: Meeting with administration regarding tardiness and creating a plan.

Personal Property
All personal property that is worn or brought to school should be labeled with the student's name. (Clothes, purses, shoes, notebooks, bikes, lunches, etc.)

Students riding a bike to school must walk the bike on campus and park and lock the bike in the bike racks provided. Students riding a skateboard, scooter, or wearing skates (including shoes w/wheels) to school must carry them on campus and place them in the classroom or locker. No bike riding or skating is permitted on the campus. If a bike, skateboard, scooter, shoes with wheels, or skates are ridden on campus, they may be confiscated and kept at the school office until a parent or guardian claims them. Please leave all toys at home.

Extraneous Items
Students are NOT to bring sharp objects such as knives, flammable materials, or any other potentially dangerous items to school. If such items appear at school, they will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian at the school office. Inappropriate items are determined at the discretion of administration.

Damage to School Property
Any church or school property (windows, desks, etc.) carelessly broken or damaged by a student(s) will be paid for by the student(s) involved.

Grace Christian Academy Code of Conduct

All schools have a standard for student behavior. The difference is that we at GCA have, and we believe rightly so, set our standards above those of most other schools. This means that a student and his or her parents that select our school are saying, "I agree with the school's standards for my conduct." When a student, along with his or

her parents, makes this kind of decision, he/she is not going along with the rules as much as he/she is saying, "The standards of this school are essentially the high set of standards I have set for myself."

Standards for GCA students include:

- **Respect for other people-** every person deserves courteous, kind treatment.
- **Respect for others' belongings-** never taking anything belonging to someone else without permission; returning in good condition anything that is borrowed.
- **Respect for the school-** not littering, defacing, or risking damage by chewing gum or eating in unauthorized places.
- **Correct dress and grooming-** two basic principles are modesty and appropriateness. Specific dress guidelines are noted in this handbook.
- **Respect for learning-** on time for all classes; respect for others' rights to learn by not disrupting class; prepared for all classes; assignments in on time and completed to the best of the students' abilities.
- **Respect for spiritual standards-** willingness to look to God's Word for guidance for behavior, refraining from unbecoming speech, i.e., profanity, coarse language, inappropriate jokes.

Grace Christian Academy Dress and Grooming Standards

Dressing appropriately reflects the desire of Grace Christian Academy to hold our students to a Christ-honoring standard of excellence. The school administration reserves the right to make "modifications" to the dress standard for special occasions. Students will be expected to adhere to the guidelines as outlined in the handbook.

All students in grades K-8 are required to wear an authorized GCA shirt Monday - Friday. Uniforms (royal blue polo & khaki bottoms) are to be worn for Chapel, field trips, ACSI Meets and special school events. All GCA shirts may be ordered from the GCA website.

School Days (M,T,TH)

GCA blue or gray logo t-shirt, current year GCA Spirit Shirt, or GCA blue polo shirt available on our website

Chapel Day (Wednesday)

GCA blue polo shirt and khaki bottoms (skort, shorts, or pants)

Designated Spirit Day (Friday)

Any of the above, including any year GCA Spirit Shirt, or GCA Athletic event shirt

Outerwear

Students are permitted to wear any purchased GCA logo sweatshirt/hoodie or any solid color sweatshirt, sweater, or hoodie (preferably in school colors) free of images and designs. Students must wear a GCA logo shirt underneath outerwear.

Outer coats may not be worn in the classroom.

Bottoms

Students can wear any appropriate shorts, pants, or skirts on non-chapel day. On Chapel Day, students must wear Khaki bottoms (skort, shorts, or pants)

- Pants and shorts must be of twill material (no athletic wear, sweats, leggings, or jeggings allowed)
- All bottoms need to be free of rips/holes, no cut-off shorts. No excessively baggy pants or shorts may be worn
- Grades 5-8 shorts (and skorts) must have a 6-inch inseam, K-4th should be mid-thigh or longer
- All skirts and dresses must be mid-thigh or longer (Even when shorts or tights are worn underneath)

- Girls in grades K-4 are encouraged to wear shorts under dresses, jumpers, and skirts

Note: Proper dress is expected at all school related events. (i.e. – music concerts, sporting events, graduation)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Hair: (Boys)

- Needs to be kept clean, neatly brushed or combed, natural in its color, not distracting in style
- Hair cannot obstruct vision or be a safety issue

- No bleached hair or bleached tips allowed
- No mohawks allowed

Hair: (Girls)

- Clean, neatly brushed or combed, natural in its color, not distracting in its style
- Any hairstyle considered inappropriate by administration may not be permitted

Shoes:

- Shoes designed for laces must be laced properly
- Backless shoes may not be worn

- Shoes with any type of wheel are not permitted
- Shoes must be worn at all times

Makeup:

- Students in Grades K-5 may not wear makeup of any kind
- Girls in Grades 6-8 may wear makeup with modesty

Chains:

- Chains may not be worn by students, with the exception of necklaces and bracelets

Hats/Sunglasses:

- Hats may not be worn in the classroom. (Hats/sunglasses may be worn outdoors for sun protection during recess and P.E.)

Body piercing & tattoos:

- Tattoos and Body Piercing (other than the piercing of girl's ears) are not allowed

Any student in violation of the dress standard will be referred to the GCA school office. A student may be asked to wear clothing provided by the health coordinators office or parents will be called to bring proper attire. The decisions of appropriateness will be determined by administration or designee. Clothing checked out from the school office must be cleaned and returned the following day. Parents should consult administration if they have questions regarding the dress code. The school administration reserves the right to make "modifications**"** to the dress standard at any time.

8th Grade Graduation Attire:

- Ladies shoulders must be covered. Strapless or spaghetti strap dresses may not be worn. No cleavage is to be shown.
- Dresses should fit appropriately and not be too form fitting. Ladies dress or skirt length must be mid-thigh or longer and heels may not exceed 3 inches.
- Gentlemen must wear dress slacks and dress shirts. Ties are not required but encouraged.
- Shoes must be clean and neat.

Dress Code Violations

1st occurrence:

- Verbal warning and sent to the health office for appropriate uniform.

2nd occurrence:

- Call home or email sent and the student is sent to the health office for appropriate uniforms.

3rd occurrence:

- Call home or email and lunch detention. Students will be sent to the health office for a uniform.

Please note parents may be called at any time to bring in proper uniforms.

Student Behavior

Expected student behavior includes respect for authority, respect for one another, and consideration of the safety of others. Violation of these behaviors will result in discipline according to the school's discipline policy. The guide for discipline is II Timothy 3:16,17 (NIV), "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

The goal of discipline is that students might learn a lifestyle in conformity with God's Word, not just a set of facts, standards, or skills. Self-control and responsibility are encouraged by rewarding acceptable behavior and by taking actions against misbehavior. Any activity that interferes with the learning environment is considered undesirable and will be dealt with accordingly. This includes things like classroom disruptions, cheating, stealing, public displays of affection, and more as decided by administration.

Matters of Discipline

GCA expects full cooperation from the home in matters of discipline. There must be a team effort, and only when the school and home work together, will the goals of Christian education be realized.

If the student continues to be unresponsive to discipline, a behavior plan will be sent home to be signed by the parents and student and returned on the next school day. Disciplinary actions will continue to be administered until the student chooses to comply with the rules of the school, the student is withdrawn from the school, or the student is expelled by the School Governing Board. The decision rests with administration as to whether the student will be admitted for the following school year.

Examples of disciplinary actions which may occur are loss of privileges, detention, class suspension (student designated to one class for the period of time), and in-school suspension.

In-Home Suspension: In the case of serious offenses, students may be suspended from school for a designated period of time. Students must complete all class assignments before re-admission. Assignments will receive a "zero" grade. Parents and the GCA School Board will be notified of the suspension.

Expulsion: A student may be expelled by the GCA School Board for serious and/or repeated misconduct. Parents will be notified of the action and will be permitted a hearing before the GCA School Board.

Harassment and Intimidation are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Harassment includes making unwelcome sexual advances, engaging in improper physical contact, making improper sexual comments, and displaying suggestive visual material.

Anti-Bullying Policy

"My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you." John 15:12

GCA strives to create an environment of love and support for all children. Recognizing that sin is in the world and

children will not always interact with each other in love; it is important to correctly identify bullying and deal with it accordingly and appropriately.

Definition of Bullying

Intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may be physical, verbal, relational, or carried out via technology. (Psychology Today)

Bullying is differentiated from being rude or mean.

Rude = Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else

Mean = Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once or a few times

Consequences of Bullying

Protocol for teachers and administration for dealing with interpersonal issues identified as bullying:

- Teacher - Student conference (to involve parties involved)
- Teacher - Parent conference or phone call
- Teacher - Parent - Administration conference or phone call and documentation
- Consequences will be determined by the teacher/administration and will follow the school's progressive discipline plan
- Administration reserves the right to “fast track” discipline plan based on circumstances
- In extreme cases the administration’s recommendation may be sent to the school board for approval (As with all discipline issues other steps may be needed and utilized)

Illegal Substances

The use, possession, or distribution of alcohol and other illegal substances on the school campus or at any school function on or off campus, or in other circumstances verified by facts deemed to be detrimental to the school's image is prohibited and will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Smoking, Vaping, JUUL, and/or Tobacco

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, distributing, or selling tobacco, tobacco substitutes, electronic cigarettes, chemical inhalation devices, JUUL, and/or vaping products while on school property, in adjacent parking lots, on the surrounding streets, on any school transportation, or when students are representing GCA in the public. Such actions are subject to disciplinary action.

Sexting Policy

In keeping with the school’s responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students, the board has established the following policy regarding the issue of “sexting.” *Sexting* is the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit or suggestive messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital device. Students engaged in such activities are subject to state laws, federal laws, and school discipline. The school considers sending, sharing, possessing, or even viewing pictures, text messages, or e-mails that contain a sexual message or image a violation of this policy, a violation that will result in school discipline, up to and including expulsion, and in the notification of local law enforcement. Students are required to immediately report any such activities to a teacher or a school administrator.

K-5 Discipline

Discipline issues will be handled within the classroom by the teacher. In addition, a progressive discipline plan will be followed with the classroom teacher and may have these components involved:

- Step 1 – Warning
- Step 2 – Teacher meeting with student
- Step 3 – Possible morning recess and/or lunch detention (loss of recess time), parent

phone call
- Step 4 – Teacher, parent meeting
- Step 5 – Teacher, parent, administration meeting

Documentation will be given to the office that involves all discipline procedures.
As with any discipline issue, steps may increase and/or administration will become involved as necessary.

Middle School Discipline

The following discipline procedures will be followed for the current school year.

Detention Policy
As consequences for the lack of obedience to God's Word and stated GCA rules, the following steps will be followed:

- Step 1 – warning
- Step 2 – discussion with student
- Step 3 – lunch detention (phone call to parents)
- Step 4 – phone call and personal contact with parents

Lunch Detention
After three lunch detentions in a quarter, students may be given an after school detention. Each subsequent detention may be an after school detention.

Documentation will be given to the office on all discipline procedures issued after the first warning.

If problems continue after these steps have been implemented, the following procedures will occur:

- 1 detention – 45 minute work detention after school
- 2 detentions – 45 minute work detention after school
- 3 detentions – One 1 ½ hour or two 45 minute work detentions after school

After 3rd after school detentions, parents will be called in to meet with the teacher(s), and intervention by the administration is required. This could result in an In School Suspension or Out of School Suspension depending on the infraction.

School Discipline and GCA Athletics
When a student receives disciplinary action during the school day, the GCA Athletic Director will be notified. Students may have to miss practices and games or face suspension from the athletic team.

Middle School Academic Probation Policy

The purpose of the Grace Christian Academy Academic Probation Policy is to hold students accountable for academic achievement and to facilitate time management skills.

A student who wishes to be involved in athletics or be eligible for middle school activities at GCA must adhere to the following requirement:
Each student must maintain a 75% or higher average in **ALL** classes in their schedule.
Grade Check Format:

- Cumulative student grades will be reviewed every **Tuesday** morning by the middle school staff beginning the 3rd Tuesday of every quarter. (All missing work is due Fridays by 1:30pm)
- Students will be notified of advisement status or probation by the beginning of the day

Tuesday.

- The probation period is **four days** from Tuesday through Friday.

Policy Consequences
Student-Athletes and Student Activities

*A student will be placed on advisement status for the first offense if he/she fails to meet the policy requirement. There are no consequences associated with this status. However, the student is expected to show improvement in the class or classes during this period. (*Advisement status may be used only once per student per semester.)*

Each student will receive a clean slate quarterly. Note:
The winter season carries over into 2nd semester. The policy states that students receive a 'clean slate' at the beginning of the new semester. However, current GCA student-athletes will receive their 'clean slate' – as noted in the policy – after the student-athlete's final winter season game.

Cheating Policy
One of our goals is to prepare our students to become people of integrity. Therefore, we want student's work (class work, homework, tests, quizzes, projects, etc.) to be the actual representation of who that child is and what he/she actually knows. When students share answers/take answers or change answers when grading their own work, it is considered cheating. When a parent revises and/or changes a student's work, it is considered cheating. When students copy the words of another person without giving credit to that person, this is considered plagiarism, a form of cheating.

Cheating may also include:

- Looking at someone else's paper during a test
- Copying someone's homework
- Copying an internet source and turning it in as your own work such as using Chat GPT to pass off generated content as one's own (plagiarism), or without prior approval from the teacher, is prohibited
- Whispering, talking or any behavior that leads the teacher to believe that cheating is taking place

Cheating Consequences
GCA has a zero tolerance for cheating. The consequences are as follows:

1st offense: The assignment will be recorded as a zero, the student will receive a double detention and parents/guardians will be notified.

2nd offense: The assignment will be recorded as a zero, the student will receive an in-school suspension and a conference with administration will be scheduled.

3rd offense: The assignment will be recorded as a zero and the student will be suspended for two days. A conference with administration will be scheduled and a behavior plan will be implemented.

4th offense: The assignment will be recorded as a zero, the student will be suspended for up to one week and student dismissal could be recommended.

Discipline Referrals

Referrals will continue to be issued as a result of severe behavioral problems; the consequences will be handled by the administration on an individual basis. For repeat offenders, a behavior plan will be developed for the student and parent to sign and must be adhered to in order for the student to remain at GCA.

This document may be updated as deemed necessary due to pc correct typos, or clarify information. Please always refer to the most current published document which will be available in you

GCA PARKING LOT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

To ensure a more **safe, secure, and efficient** school campus,
the following procedures are required.

TRAFFIC DIRECTION AND TIMES – See map

- All traffic will flow from **east to west** from **7:45 – 8:45am** and from **2:45 – 3:45pm**
- **Drop-off** time is **7:55am for grades K-8**
- K-8 students arriving before 7:55am are to be at Before-School Care or participating in a school program (music, sports, etc.)
- No parking behind E-Building on K-8 school **half-days from 11:00am – 12:30pm**

ENTRANCE

- **ALL TRAFFIC FLOW IS EAST TO WEST!!** Enter campus from Dorsey Lane.
- **Form two lanes as you enter the parking lot –** left lane for Connection Center; right lane for E Building and Kindergarten.

DROPOFF / PICKUP ZONES

All students in grades 1-8 will be dropped off and picked up in one of the two loading areas: (A) By the Connection Center or (B) Behind the E-Buildings. Kindergarten – see below for pickup.

Students may enter / exit vehicles in the following zones:

- **Connection Center**: After turning at the Connection Center, the right lane is used for unloading/loading, which is located adjacent to the sidewalk at the Worship Center and going all the way to the stop sign. Pull forward as spaces open up (never crossing into handicapped spaces.)

  Students can only load into a vehicle from a loading zone – no crossing through parking.

  Once students are unloaded / loaded, pull out into a continuously moving lane to your left. There will be **NO drop-off or loading from this moving lane**. Proceed to stop signs.

  Connection Center has three exit options: (1) Turn right at crosswalk and proceed to Southern Avenue, (2) Turn right past basketball court and proceed to Southern Avenue, (3) Proceed to Dorsey Lane.

- **E Building:** The left lane behind the E-building is used for unloading/loading. The zone starts at the lockers. In the morning, be prepared to unload immediately to facilitate a smooth continuous traffic flow. Pull forward toward the stop sign as spaces open up. (Please, no multiple stops within a zone to unload different grade level students.)

  Once students are unloaded/loaded, pull out into a continuously moving lane to your right. There will be **NO unloading/loading from this moving lane**. Proceed to stop signs and alternate turns. Zone B exits onto Terrace Road.

- **KINDERGARTEN PICKUP:** Kindergarten students will be picked up in the secure, gated, shady area next to the Terrace Center. Only Kindergarten drivers are allowed in this drive area.
  1) Enter at Terrace Rd.
  2) Your child will be walked to you by a staff member and loaded into your vehicle.
  3) Students in grades 1-8 with siblings in Kindergarten may be picked up with the Kindergarten students in Zone C
  4) Exit at the Terrace Center driveway.

PRESCHOOL PARKING

All Preschool parents will bypass Connection Center by the Worship Center to access the designated Preschool spaces east of the Worship Center. Students are encouraged to hold their parent's hand in the crosswalk.

Choose one of two exit options: (1) Turn right past the basketball court and proceed to Southern Avenue, or (2) Proceed to Dorsey Lane.

HANDICAP PARKING

There will be **no parking in any handicapped spots** between the Connection Center and the crosswalk behind the Worship Center directly south of the median (without official insignia permit) for the following reasons:

1) It is against the law to park in a handicap spot. By ignoring the law, we are giving a very negative message to our children and to campus visitors.
2) We share our campus with the church. During the week and at unscheduled times these parking spaces are needed for handicapped visitors.

TEACHER PARKING

The spaces north of the loading E Building and the gym are designated teacher/staff parking **only**. No parking at any time please.

PARKING NOTES

- In loading zones, stopped cars must always be placed in Park. The driver must always remain behind the wheel.
- No parking E-Buildings during unloading/loading times (7:45-8:45am & 2:45-3:45pm).
- No parking in the spaces reserved for teachers/staff.
- No parking in the designated Preschool parking spaces east of the Worship Center unless you are Preschool driver.
- No backing in. Parked cars should always pull forward into spaces.
- Never leave cars **unattended** in loading zones.

IMPORTANT

- To ensure the safety of all students and the efficiency of the loading process, the school desires that all students wait in a designated loading zone when being picked up after school. This will decrease foot traffic through the parking lot and in the crosswalks.
- It is understood that some students walk to and from school. These students will walk in appropriate crosswalks when leaving the campus.
- When the need arises for parents to park and come onto the campus, please use appropriate crosswalks.
- When school is dismissed, students should go directly to the loading area that their parents have determined to ensure an efficient pick-up time (Connection Center or E Building). Kindergarten students (and their siblings) go directly to the Kindergarten area.
- When school is dismissed, students who participate in After-School Care should go directly to the After-School Care area.
- All athletes going to Jason Field after school are required to use the crosswalks and sidewalks instead of walking within the parking lot.
- Students on campus 15 minutes after dismissal must go to After-School Care unless they are participating in a school activity. Students may NOT wait at Dorsey Center to be picked up at the end of the school day.

IF YOU NEED TO PARK, PLEASE PARK

- Anywhere beyond the crosswalk; a crossing guard will assist students in the afternoons.
- To the north of the median by the Connection Center. If you park here, you MUST use crosswalks.