



GRACE COVENANT  
ACADEMY

2018-2019 Parent Student  
Handbook

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***“Teach your children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it.”***  
**Proverbs 22:6**

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## **ABOUT GCA**

### **Vision**

Our students and staff are living out God's plans for their lives. They are fulfilling His purposes, using their God-given talents and abilities, and following the callings He has placed upon their lives.

### **Mission Statement**

We equip students for life by releasing their God-given potential. We nurture decision making and problem solving skills, enabled through the application of God's Word and excellent academics.

### **Philosophy & Purpose**

Grace Covenant Academy holds that education is designed to meet the needs of the total student. Our program will help the student grow and develop emotionally, intellectually, socially, physically and spiritually. Our desire is that each student will develop an eagerness and love for learning.

### **Spiritual Objectives**

- To present the Bible as the only inspired Word of God, the final authority for all truth and knowledge.
- To seek to win those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.
- To educate students so that they successfully integrate Christian values into their lives.
- To teach students to live Christ-like in a non-Christian world.
- To provide daily encouragement and Christ-like love to each student.

### **Intellectual Objectives**

- To facilitate mastery of the basic skills of reading, mathematics and language.
- To provide a safe, fun learning environment where the student is encouraged and loved.
- To nurture competency in communication and in the ability to make mature decisions based on Biblical principles.
- To prepare each student, through academic excellence, for success in their calling.

### **Social Objectives**

- To teach children to respect and relate to others according to the principles of Jesus Christ.
- To develop respect for authority and discipline in the home, school and community as outlined in Scripture.
- To provide students with opportunities for growth in the social skills as they interact with one another.
- To instill appreciation and respect for government; church; national, state and Christian flags; and for officials in national and local places of authority.

### **Overview**

Established in 2001 as a ministry of Grace Covenant Church, Grace Covenant Academy is approved as an educational institution as defined by the North Carolina Constitution, the North Carolina General Statutes and the Rules and Regulations adopted by the State Board of Education of North Carolina. The Academy is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the Greater Charlotte Association of Christian Schools (GCACS). GCA is pursuing

accreditation through ACSI as well as AdvancEd.

Grace Covenant Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Our key to excellence in education is caring, committed Christians who are spiritually and academically qualified to provide an education with a Christian perspective. We hire teachers who have a passion for children in addition to relevant experience. GCA is a school offering excellent academics and a high quality of Christian training, but is not designed to be a correctional institution for problems beyond those encountered in certain school children. GCA recognizes that it cannot meet the needs of all children and is not equipped to meet certain special needs of children. GCA does not admit students whose special education, behavioral, or physical needs cannot be met by our existing program, services, or staff. In the best interest of the student and their classmates, we reserve the right to dismiss a student if they are unable to continue successfully.

## **ADMISSIONS & PROMOTION**

### **Admission Policy**

Admission to Grace Covenant Academy is a privilege, not a right. Grace Covenant Church is committed to ministering in relevant ways to both our congregation and our community however administration reserves the right to refuse admission to the Academy to anyone not meeting the following:

- The student and parents must want to be a part of the daily training program of GCA.
- Students and parents share the same set of values and agree with the biblical truths taught at GCA.
- After reading the handbook and all forms for enrollment, the parents must agree to abide by and support the educational philosophy, Bible doctrines, practices, standards, policies, rules, regulations, etc. of the Academy.
- All students Pre K and up must successfully complete the academic testing and assessment as required or by GCA.
- All students must be able to consistently and independently use the restroom.
- Prior school records must document successful completion of requirements for each preceding
- grade/school year.
- At the time of enrollment, parents shall provide all relevant documents concerning custody or
- visitation of each student enrolled at GCA. Parents of enrolled students shall have an ongoing duty to provide any documents and information relevant to a change in current custody or visitation rights to GCA within seven days of change or at the time of reenrollment if the school has dismissed for summer break.
- GCA is a religious institution providing an education in a distinct Christian environment, and it
- believes that its biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to be Christ-like. On those occasions in which the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home is counter to or in opposition to the biblical lifestyle the school teaches, the school reserves

the right, within its sole discretion, to refuse admission of an applicant or to discontinue enrollment of a student. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, living in, condoning, or supporting sexual immorality; practicing homosexual lifestyle or alternative gender identity; promoting such practices; or otherwise having the inability to support the moral and biblical principles of the school (Leviticus 20:13a, Romans 1:27, Matthew 19:4-6)

### **Registration Policy**

Students must have reached the minimum age for their class by August 31. Exceptions for birthdays through the first week of September may be granted by GCA Administration based upon the students successfully completing the GCA entrance assessment and observations of the student. Students are considered registered when the online enrollment packet is submitted and all applicable fees are paid in full.

### **ASBESTOS COMPLIANCE**

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires that all public and non-public schools be inspected by a certified inspector verifying that the building is asbestos-free. AHERA excludes schools from the inspection requirement if A) the school was constructed after October 12, 1988, and B) the school has a signed statement from the architect or project engineer responsible for constructing the Grace Covenant Church building that states that no asbestos-containing materials were specified for use in its construction. Our school has been provided such a statement, and is, therefore, exempt from the requirement to conduct an asbestos inspection. In addition, the management plan is available for review and copies may be requested through the Academy office.

### **ATTENDANCE**

While law mandates school attendance, punctuality and dependability are learned qualities. Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in the classroom. In addition, students are to be on time. A student coming in late, for whatever reason, disrupts the flow of the class. Promptness is the parent's responsibility. Parents are asked to notify the child's teacher in case of an absence. Parents are to sign the student in at the office when they arrive later than 8:30 A.M. Grace Covenant Academy converts three tardies into one absence. On ParentsWeb, days absent are recorded as excused absences. Tardies are noted as the total number of days the child was tardy. For the purpose of counting total absences, GCA staff will convert tardies into absences and keep families notified if students have reached the point of excessive absence. If a student exceeds eighteen absences in the school year, the administration reserves the right to retain the student in their current grade for the coming year. The possibility of retention is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the student was at the doctor and can supply a note from the doctor's office, a tardy will not be recorded if in school by 9:30 AM. Students are considered absent for ½ of a day if they arrive after 9:30 AM or leave before 2:00 PM. Students who must leave during the school day for a physician's visit and return within a reasonable amount of time will be granted certain exceptions by submitting a note from the physician's office. Students have the number of days absent plus one additional day to complete missed work, unless otherwise noted by the teacher.

## **BEHAVIOR**

It is impossible for learning to take place in a classroom unless control and good order are maintained. We expect students to adhere to a code of conduct not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well. Our aim is not to focus only on the negative, but to acknowledge and encourage positive behavior as well.

GCA students are *taught and expected* to do the following:

- Honor God
- Be respectful
- Be responsible
- Do your best

Each classroom teacher will handle the discipline of students under his/her care. This includes counseling, praying with students, warning those regarding unacceptable actions and attitudes, etc. A student who fails to respond to normal classroom discipline procedures may be removed from the classroom and sent to the principal's office. We fully recognize the right of every parent in Biblical methods of discipline. We support and work in cooperation with parents who place their children in our program. In discipline, we hold that praise and reinforcement are effective methods of managing the behavior of children. We desire to see each student develop self-discipline, respect for others, and a value system based upon the Bible. Children receive notes home, praise, and encouragement, etc. Communication will be made regularly to keep parents informed of student's progress.

If students do not meet behavior expectations, the following plan of action is taken:

- Dialogue with student
- Separation from activity & note sent home
- Loss of privilege & note sent home
- Fix-It-Plan –signed at home
- Visit to the office– parent called
- Parent called in to discipline.

God gives children to parents, not to a school, church, or state. Therefore, when all forms of discipline patiently administered fail to result in an acceptable outcome, we will call the parent and ask them to come to the Academy within one hour to discipline their student. GCA does not administer corporal punishment.

In the event that a student's behavior is extreme or inflicts injury upon another student, the offending student may be suspended. Weapons of any kind found in a student's possession that could cause harm to anyone will result in immediate suspension. The director will determine the length and location of suspension. No financial reimbursements will be made for days of suspension. Students serving out-of-school suspension will be considered absent. Any work missed while on suspension will be graded on a reduced grading scale. Expulsion may be the result of an extreme offense, or a habitually repeated offense, as deemed necessary by the administration.

## **CHAPEL**

All students attend chapel weekly where God's Word is brought to life through amazing worship and relevant teaching. This is a time when students and staff come together for prayer, worship and Bible study. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend. All visitors are asked to

sit in the back. If younger siblings become a disturbance, we ask parents to please excuse them so that the students are not distracted. Our three- second grade students will have weekly chapel on Wednesdays from 9:30-10:00 AM. Our third through sixth grade students will have chapel on Wednesdays from 8:45-9:15 AM. The first Wednesday of the month we celebrate GCA on MISSION as a chapel focus.

## **COMMUNICATION**

E-mail is the prominent means of school communication. In case of an emergency or urgent matter, a phone call would be given; however, for group announcements and class information, GCA communicates via e-mail, the GCA website, Facebook (Grace Covenant Academy), Twitter (GCAcademy), and Instagram (gracecovenantacademy and gca\_preK). Because GCA staff are busy working with students throughout the day responses should not be expected immediately; however, a response will be given within 24 hours during the workweek. Please do not click on "unsubscribe" for any emails or you will be opted-out of receiving important communications from GCA.

GCA requires approval from administration prior to the dissemination of information to students or families. No items can be put in teachers' boxes for distribution to students or families without the administrator's approval. Informational papers for a particular business or personal service will not be approved for distribution.

## **CURRICULUM, GRADES, & TEACHING METHODS**

Various teaching methods and curricula are incorporated to provide an exciting, challenging, and fun learning environment. We encourage innovation and creativity in the classrooms using a variety of curricula. Our early childhood programs provide outside play, learning centers, music with movement, and hands-on manipulatives to help the student grow and develop fine and gross motor skills. Elementary students receive instruction in various core subjects such as math, language arts, science, social studies, and Bible; and enrichment classes such as performing arts, physical education, art, library, technology, and Spanish.

There are four quarters during the year. Report cards are issued at the end of each quarter for students in Kindergarten and up. Grades are accessible online via ParentsWeb at all times for students in second grade and up. First grade students are issued a mid-quarter progress report as well, beginning in second quarter. Kindergarten and first grades subjects, along with Bible, Character, and Handwriting in grades 2-6, are graded with letter grades of N (Needs Improvement), M (Meeting grade level), M+, M-. Beginning in second grade, students are graded on a ten point scale (90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D, below 60 F) for all other subject areas. Promotion of a student to the next grade is determined by satisfactory progress, developmental readiness, and the proper number of classroom days.

## **DRESS CODE**

The goal of our dress code is to establish high Christian standards for our school and our students. GCA, through its dress standards, seeks to encourage its students to think and act like Christian ladies and gentlemen. The following guidelines apply to all school days and school-sponsored, special events:

- Students wear GCA shirts in red, navy or white. Only shirts from the vendor selected by GCA are to be purchased. Shirts are available for purchase on-line, and you can find the link on the GCA website. Tops must completely cover the midriff even when arms are raised.
- Appropriate attire for 3s and Pre K girls includes: solid navy, khaki, or blue denim pants, jumpers, skirts, skorts, capris, and shorts. Shorts should be worn with jumpers and skirts so that girls may sit comfortably and decently on the floor. 3s and Pre K girls may wear navy, khaki and denim leggings as an outer garment. The plaid skirt identified on Lands' End as GCA approved is appropriate for girls as well.
- Appropriate attire for Kindergarten- Sixth Grade girls includes: solid navy, khaki, or blue denim pants, jumpers, skirts, skorts, capris, and shorts. Shorts should be worn with jumpers and skirts so that girls may sit comfortably and decently on the floor. Leggings and jeggings are not considered appropriate attire as the outer garment for K-6 girls. Leggings in red, navy blue and white may be worn as a layering item under skirts and dresses. The plaid skirt identified on Lands' End as GCA approved is appropriate for girls as well.
- Appropriate attire for boys includes: solid navy, khaki or blue denim pants or shorts.
- All garments must be modest, neat and clean. Jeans, or any other denim article of clothing, should be free from rips and tears above the knee. Camouflage and athletic pants of any color are not uniform attire
- Pants are to be worn at the waist. Skirt, skort, and short length must be no more than 5 inches above the knee.
- All layered clothing (shirts and leggings) should be red, white, or navy blue; however the outer garment must be uniform attire (shirt, sweatshirt, jumper, or jacket) while inside the building.
- Sandals must have a heel strap for students in Early education and elementary grades.
- On Fridays, GCA on Mission days, and Casual Days, uniform shirts are not required and pants do not have to fall within the GCA color guidelines. Athletic shorts, at the appropriate length, are permitted on Fridays and Casual Days. Leggings are appropriate for girls on Fridays and Casual Days as long as their bottoms are covered by a long shirt.

The administration will have the final decision concerning any questionable appearance presented by a student. The administration reserves the right to require any student unacceptably presented to change his or her appearance before attending classes.

Parents should ensure the student is dressed appropriately for the weather. However, hats are not permitted to be worn indoors during school hours, except on appropriate school spirit days.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones or personal electronic devices that can access the internet or be used for communication must be in backpacks/lockers and cannot be used during school hours (8:00-3:30) as well as during Extended Care times. Violations of this policy will result in confiscation of the electronic device until the end of school on the following day. Only parents will be allowed to retrieve confiscated items from the school office. GCA is not responsible for loss and/or damage of personal property regardless of its value.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are part of the educational process at GCA. The teachers and staff make every effort to ensure that the trip is interesting and safe. Full cooperation by parents and students is essential to make these experiences profitable. The following is required of every student going on a field trip:

- A field trip registration and permission form with an electronic signature must be completed by a parent or guardian before the trip. This permission form includes a release for emergency medical services. Emergency Forms from student files will be in the possession of the leader during the trip so they can be available immediately if needed. Students will not be allowed to attend if the permission form is not returned or is not complete.
- Parents and designated chaperones for the field trip must have an approved background check on file with Grace Covenant Academy 2 days prior to the trip. Adults transporting children besides their own must annually complete a digital version of the Volunteer Drivers Certificate.
- GCA reserves the right to limit the number of chaperones for each trip. Chaperones are to use discretion in discipline and bring significant challenges with students or otherwise to the teacher.

Parents may not bring siblings or younger children on field trips, except for newborns.

In some cases, older grades may have opportunity to use GCA bus transportation. If so, each student is expected to utilize the transportation provided by the school; otherwise, parents are responsible for transportation. Any deviation from this policy requires the permission of the administrator and written consent of the parent involved.

Any expense for a field trip is the responsibility of the parents unless stated otherwise.

The administration reserves the right to amend or suspend the participation in any trip or activity for any child with behavior plans when the rules, regulations, and nature of the trip objectives conflicts too vastly with the child's ability to master stated expectations. In some cases parents may be required to chaperone their child during a field trip.

Since the very nature of educational experiences outside of the classroom can be greatly diminished when students are distracted by electronic devices, no student will be permitted to have any electronic device on his person during an educational trip or activity. The exception to this policy is given only for cell phone usage during overnight trips. Students will be allowed to have cell phones secured in their suitcases so that they can phone home at the end of the day's events.

## **FINANCIAL POLICY**

	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Registration</u>
Three Yr. Olds (M-W)	\$2400	\$100

Pre-K (M-W)	\$2400	\$100
Pre-K (M-Th)	\$3050	\$100
Pre-K (M-F)	\$3700	\$100
Kindergarten-Sixth	\$7200	\$250

Tuition rates are based on payments over 10 months. The non-refundable registration fee covers the application and enrollment. The registration fee is assessed per student.

**Tuition Discounts:**

**Grace Covenant Church Members**

Grace Covenant Members receive a discount of \$250. This applies to official church membership as determined by church records. Official membership is obtained through participation in a GCC Partnership Class and completion of required forms. The membership discount is given at the time of enrollment.

**Senior Pastor**

GCA chooses to honor senior pastors of area churches by offering a 50% tuition discount.

**Multi Sibling**

For families with more than one student enrolled at GCA a multi sibling discount will be extended. The second enrolled sibling will be given a 3% discount, third or more students will receive a 5% discount.

**Payment Options:**

**Annual:** A single payment by check, cash or certified funds is made to the Academy for the entire year's tuition. A 2% tuition discount is given for annual payment paid via cash, check. Annual payments made via FACTS forfeit the 2% discount due to processing costs incurred by the school. The annual payment deadline is June 15, 2018. Failure to make tuition payment arrangements will force forfeiture of the student(s) spots.

**Semi-Annual:** A FACTS draft can be set up for two drafts to occur, half in June and the remainder in November.

**Monthly:** The monthly payment plan allows budgeting for school tuition over ten months, beginning in May, skipping June, continuing July through December, skipping January, and ending in April. As a courtesy to our families, the January tuition draft will be skipped so that families may pay for the following year's registration payment during January or February. If the December FACTS draft was not successful, this case would be an exception to the policy. By choosing a monthly payment plan, FACTS is authorized to draft a checking or savings account on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. At no time does GCA or FACTS have knowledge of a bank account balance. A yearly FACTS administrative fee will be drafted from the bank account. The FACTS contract should be completed on-line using FACTSTuitionMgt.com.

**Credit Cards:** FACTS has elected to make credit and debit card payment options available for enrollment via telephone. If you elect to pay by credit or debit card your annual, semi-annual, or monthly payment along with a convenience fee will be automatically charged to the card you designate. The convenience fee is in addition to any non-refundable enrollment fee.

## Missed Tuition Payments

If checks written to GCA are returned with insufficient funds, a \$30 returned check fee will be charged to the student's family. An invoice will be sent from Grace Covenant Academy requesting payment.

FACTS will charge a \$30 Non-Sufficient Fund fee (NSF) for each tuition payment or reattempt of a missed tuition payment. FACTS will reattempt collection for missed payments and NSF fees on the next scheduled payment date (either the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup>). If two consecutive payments to FACTS are missed, the account becomes delinquent and parents will be contacted by the accounting department.

## Delinquent Accounts

GCA is dependent upon the prompt payment of student accounts for its operating finances. It is very important that all families keep accounts current. If an account becomes delinquent, FACTS will notify parents via email. If an account remains delinquent more than 30 days after notification, the student(s) will not be allowed to return to classes until the account is made current. Days missed will be counted as absences. A student's records will be withheld until the account is paid or arrangements made. An evaluation of the financial situation will be done prior to the student's re-enrollment. A student with an outstanding balance will not be allowed to re-enroll and records will not be released.

Beyond tuition fees, all other fees are charged to the family ParentsWeb account. Potential fees include: library book replacement fee (\$5 per book), replacement of textbook or other school materials (varies), GCA lunch option fees (\$5 per lunch), extended care fees (varies) and other miscellaneous fees as incurred by the student. All outstanding fees left unpaid by the end of the year will result in the office holding final report cards and school records until the balance is cleared.

## Tuition Refunds

By signing the Student Application, parents agree that the registration fee is non-refundable. If parents choose to withdraw their student, their decision must be presented in writing including the withdrawal date.

### Financial Penalty

Withdrawal Date before May 1	Non-refundable registration fee
Withdrawal Date after May 1	Non-refundable registration +10% annual tuition
Withdrawal Date on or after Day 1	Non-refundable registration+ tuition for days attended + half of remaining days

An exception will be made for students who move their residence to a location outside of the school area and a distance greater than or equal to 50 miles from the school. In case of relocation, the financial penalty may be waived; however, the registration fee remains non-refundable. The financial agreement should be entered into as seriously as any other legally binding agreement executed in good faith. The financial health of GCA depends on the commitment of parents to uphold the contract.

## **Scholarships**

Financial assistance is available for families who qualify based on financial need as determined by an outside service (FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment). The financial aid application process requires detailed financial information, including a copy of the most recent tax documents. Financial assistance applications are to be completed online by the specified deadline. Families who have completed the application will be interviewed by the financial assistance committee. Financial assistance is based on financial need and is awarded to students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin. Scholarships awarded will never exceed 50% of the annual tuition. Scholarship recipients and their families are expected to model obedience and adherence to school and classroom rules. In addition, the administration reserves the right to suspend remaining awards should a student fail to follow stated guidelines and expectations.

Residents of Mecklenburg County seeking scholarship dollars can apply to: [www.csfcharlotte.org](http://www.csfcharlotte.org). On-line applications for 2018-2019 will be available at the following times:

- 1) Requalifying/renewing families – end of February/first of March
- 2) New families – mid-March.

Please check their website periodically for specific release dates.

## **Subsidies - Governmental**

Because of our non-profit status, Christ-centered curriculum and Biblical teachings, we do not accept tuition assistance from any government agency.

**Tax Reporting** Our Tax I.D. # is 56-1217531.

## **CONCERNS or GRIEVANCES**

When a parent has a concern, it is biblical to follow instructions given in Matthew 18 by politely and privately discussing the matter with the teacher or staff member by appointment. If parents do not feel satisfied with the outcome, the parents should speak with the next level of authority being administration.

## **HEALTH**

An Emergency Contact and Medical Authorization Form signed by the parent must be on file in the school office for each student.

**Medical Emergency:** In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called. If necessary, students will be transported to the hospital/emergency room designated on the medical permission form. Parents or a designated emergency contact will be called immediately and informed of any emergency situation. Designated emergency contacts are essential in case a parent/guardian cannot be contacted.

**First Aid:** School personnel are all certified in first aid and CPR. GCA staff will only administer simple first aid (bandaids, ice, etc) except in the case of an emergency. When a student becomes ill or sustains an injury, the teacher will take the student to the first-aid area of the school. If it is

necessary for the student to go home, a parent (or an emergency contact) will be called by GCA staff. The parent or designated person must come to the school office to sign the student out.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Parents are expected to contact the office if their student has contracted a communicable disease or virus so we can monitor this for the welfare of our other students. We appreciate full cooperation in an effort to provide the best environment possible. The administration reserves the right to contact a parent and send a child home based on the child's behavior, cough, overall attitude, etc.

GCA requires that students with the following conditions be kept at home:

- Chicken pox—kept at home until all lesions are crusted over (about 4-6 days after rash appears).
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) – kept at home; may return 24 hours after medication has begun.
- Fever - Students who have experienced fever within the last 24 hours must be kept at home. A fever is considered a body temperature of 100.0 degrees or more.
- Fifth Disease—student may return as physician directs or when fever has subsided.
- Head Lice—kept at home until treated and head inspection by staff or documentation provided by pediatrician and/or pharmacist confirm that live nits (eggs) are no longer present. Parents are to notify the school if their student has lice. At that time, a notice will be sent home to all families explaining possible exposure to head lice. Having head lice is not an issue of poor hygiene, as they actually prefer clean hair. Nonetheless, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the infected student. Should a classroom outbreak occur, additional steps will be made to limit the spread of infection. This includes but is not limited to head checks, quarantining book bags, removing carpets, etc.
- Hepatitis A & B —kept at home until a physician's note is turned in which designates a return date.
- Influenza—kept at home until symptoms are gone.
- Impetigo—may return 24 hours after treatment is begun and no drainage present.
- Measles/Mumps—kept at home until a physician's note designates a return date.
- Mononucleosis—kept at home as the physician directs.
- Pin Worms—kept at home; may return 24 hours after medication has begun.
- Rashes – note from parent concerning cause, but student may be sent home; sometimes physician's approval may be needed for student to return to school.
- Ringworm – kept at home until treatment has begun, and note from physician or parent.
- Scabies – kept at home until student and household contacts have been treated, and note from physician.
- Strep Throat – may return to school 24 hours after medication is begun if no fever is present.
- Vomiting/Diarrhea - Students must be kept home until they have been diarrhea/vomit free for 24 hours.

### **Medication**

We strongly encourage that, whenever possible, the timing of taking medications be scheduled so that they can be taken at home. Only when no other arrangements can be made will it be acceptable for them to be taken at school. If it is necessary for your student to be given a

medication at school, the following requirements must be met: Written request by physician and parents for prescription medications; or/and a written request by parent/guardian for all non-prescription medications. All medications that belong to the student must be in an adult's possession while the student is at school. Any prescribed medication that needs to be administered during the day must be in the original container from the pharmacy. A medical administration form must be completed online or turned in to the office authorizing GCA staff to administer medications. No medications will be given without completion of one of the above forms.

## **Grace Covenant Academy Anaphylaxis & Inhaler Policy**

### **Policy statement and purpose:**

Grace Covenant Academy believes that the safety and well-being of children who are at risk of anaphylaxis is a whole community responsibility. The school is committed to:

- Providing a practical, safe and healthy environment
- Raising awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis among the school staff
- Ensuring each staff member has adequate knowledge of allergies, anaphylaxis and emergency procedures
- Facilitating communication between all staff and affected students to ensure the well-being of children at risk for anaphylaxis

### **Background:**

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. Up to two percent of the general population and up to five percent of children are at risk. The most common causes in young children are eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, cow milk, bee or other insect stings, and some medications.

Young children may not be able to express the symptoms of anaphylaxis.

A reaction can develop within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but with planning and training, a reaction can be treated effectively by using an adrenaline auto-injector called an EpiPen.

The school recognizes the importance of staff responsible for child/children at risk of anaphylaxis undertaking training that includes preventative measure to minimize the risk of an anaphylactic reaction, recognition of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and emergency treatment, including administration of an EpiPen.

Staff and parents/guardians need to be made aware that it is not possible to achieve a completely allergen-free environment at GCA. Grace Covenant Church is open to the community and we cannot control allergens that are used on property. Staff and parents should not have a false sense of security that an allergy has been or can be eliminated from the environment. Instead GCA recognizes the need to adopt procedures and risk minimization strategies to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Anaphylaxis:**

Anaphylaxis can affect any part of the body and cause various symptoms. The most dangerous symptoms include breathing difficulties and a drop in blood pressure or shock, which are

potentially fatal. Other signs and symptoms are hives, itching, red watery eyes, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, change of voice, coughing, wheezing, throat tightness or closing, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, sense of doom, dizziness, fainting or loss of consciousness, change of skin color.

**Medications:**

- Epinephrine
- Antihistamines (Benadryl)

**Treatment:**

Treatment is centered on treating the rapidly progressing effects of histamine release in the body with epinephrine. The allergen should also be removed immediately.

GCA has EpiPens on site so that they can be administered in the event of unsuspected anaphylaxis. Students with a known allergy are required to have an EpiPen available for use.

In the event that an EpiPen is used, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the nearest emergency room.

**Action Steps for Anaphylaxis Management:**

*GCA Office:*

Identify students at risk and communicate with all school staff

Train all staff in recognizing anaphylaxis and administering EpiPens. This will be done during the annual staff work week in August.

*Classroom Teachers:*

Check for outdated EpiPens at the end of second quarter

Classroom teachers will have EpiPens available at recess along with a cell phone to contact the GCA office and emergency personnel, if necessary.

Classroom teachers will inform all other parents in the class of the known allergy, keeping the specific student anonymous. With food borne allergies, classroom teachers will remind parents of this allergy any time there is food brought into the class for specific event (birthday, class party, etc).

*Enrichment teachers:*

Enrichment teachers will have EpiPens available during their classroom time along with a cell phone to contact the GCA office and emergency personnel, if necessary

*Parents:*

Parents are responsible to provide their child's EpiPen.

Parents should keep emergency medical forms updated with detailed lists of any known allergens and emergency contact information.

Parents will complete the EpiPen/ Inhaler Administration form on an annual basis.

**EpiPen Administration Protocol:**

- If student is known allergic, we will follow protocol per physician order.
- If no instructions are on file and/or this is a previously undiagnosed student:
  - If signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis are visible- instruct someone to Call 911. If no one else is around administer to the student first. Call the school office. The office will call parents.
  - Inject the EpiPen into the fatty part of outer thigh (through clothing is fine). Hold for 10 seconds. A child weighing between 30-60 pounds will be given an EpiPen Jr. A child weighing over 60 pounds will be given an EpiPen.
  - Immediate evacuation to the nearest emergency medical facility. A copy of the student's emergency medical form should be sent with EMS.
  - A repeat injection may be given in 10 minutes if symptoms do not improve or before medical assistance arrives.
  - Monitor blood pressure. Elevate legs if blood pressure is low. Cover with blankets if necessary.

### **Carrying an EpiPen & Prescription Inhaler**

A student may possess an EpiPen and prescription inhaler and may self administer an inhaler on school property or at a school related event, if the student has written permission via the EpiPen/Inhaler Administration form as signed by the student's parent; and an up to date prescription from the student's physician or licensed health care provider.

The following requirements must be met prior to a student being allowed to carry his/her inhaler or EpiPen:

- The parent has not requested that school personnel administer the student's inhaler; and
- The school receives an annual written authorization from the student's parent for the student to self carry and self-administer (inhaler only) (EpiPen/ Inhaler Administration Form); and
- The inhaler / EpiPen is properly labeled for that student; and
- The school administration have assessed the student's knowledge and skills to safely possess and use (inhaler only) their EpiPen/ Inhaler in a school setting and have entered a plan to implement safe possession and use of the EpiPen/inhaler into the student's permanent file.

### **EpiPen / Inhaler Administration Form**

*GCA allows students to self-carry prescription EpiPens and Inhalers at the discretion of the school administration and with the agreement of the parent and student.*

*I fully understand this medication is only intended for me and I will not administer it to any other person.*

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) for which authorization is applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Medicine being administered: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Medical professionals suggest a dosage of an antihistamine after administering an epi-pen. If the antihistamine is necessary, the parent must supply it with the epi-pen and give dosage instructions.)

Dosage instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

My child \_\_\_\_\_ does or \_\_\_\_\_ does not have my permission to self carry the medication listed above.

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student if self carrying: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of GCA administration: \_\_\_\_\_

## **HOURS**

### **School Hours**

Classes begin and conclude at these times:

3s & Pre-Kindergarten 8:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

Kindergarten-Sixth Grade 8:30 A.M. to 3:15 P.M.

### **Office Hours**

The school office hours are 8:00 A.M. to 3:45 P.M., Monday through Friday during the school year.

The telephone number for the school is (704) 892-5601. The fax number is (704) 892-7206.

Voicemail and email ([academy@gracecovenant.org](mailto:academy@gracecovenant.org)) are available for use.

Early Education and K-6 students may enter the school 15 minutes before class begins. GCA is not responsible for any students dropped off prior to the allowed times. A student is considered tardy if not in the classroom at 8:30 A.M.

## **INTERNET USE**

The use of the internet must be in support of education and academic research and consistent with the educational objects of GCA. Students are permitted and encouraged to use the internet for: investigation of specific topics being studied in school, investigation of opportunities related to community service, etc. Internet activities that are not permitted: searching, viewing or retrieving materials that are not related to school work or community service; browsing or posting to social media, copying or saving copyrighted material; subscription to any services or ordering of any goods; sharing the student's home address, phone number or other personal information; playing games or downloading any programs not approved prior by the teacher; or any activity that violates a school rule or a local, state or federal law. In addition, using computer technology, whether on or off campus, to communicate inappropriate, demeaning, harassing or threatening messages will be subject to disciplinary action. The police may be contacted when/if necessary.

All students kindergarten and up are required to sign and submit a technology contract at the beginning of the school year.

### **LOCKERS & DESKS**

Student lockers and desks are the property of GCA and is at all times under the control of the school. School personnel may perform general inspections of lockers, desks, personal backpacks/lunchboxes/purses at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Students in grades 3-6 will be issued lockers by the teacher. Students must keep them neat, clean and may not use aerosol cans, store candy or food, or use tape or stickers in the locker. Food containers in lunchboxes may only be stored for that day. Lockers may not be decorated on the outside at any time, and anything inside must be morally and ethically acceptable to the administration. Only non-glue stickers or magnetic items may be used on the inside. Only combination locks (no keys) are allowed. The homeroom teacher will keep the locker numbers and combination on record. Students are encouraged to use locks on their lockers after school hours and on weekends. No student should ever enter another student's locker.

### **LUNCH/SNACKS**

Lunches and snacks are parent-provided including days that pre-paid hot lunches are offered. As the Academy encourages good health and proper nutrition, please support us in that by providing a healthy and nutritious variety of meals/snacks for the student. Student lunches are not refrigerated and cannot be heated. In case of absence, lunch will be held in office for pick up until 3:15 if parents request. In the event a child does not have a lunch, the GCA office will attempt to contact the family. If the family cannot be reached, a GCA lunch will be provided. The family will be invoiced for the cost of the lunch. Lunches cannot be heated nor refrigerated.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Experience has shown that children whose parents are directly involved in their student's school and education are much more likely to reach their full potential. GCA asks that parents embrace the opportunity to volunteer as much as possible throughout the year to increase parent involvement and strengthen a sense of community.

We offer many opportunities for parent partnership and volunteerism in a variety of areas including, but not limited to classroom and office volunteers, various teams and community service.

### **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

A mandatory parent/teacher conference occurs at the end of the first quarter. Either at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter or beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter another scheduled parent/teacher conference is offered. Parent/teacher conferences are also scheduled on an informal basis throughout the year. Conferences may be requested at any time by a parent or the teacher.

### **PARKING AND PICK-UP POLICY**

Please follow pick-up and drop-off procedures. These procedures are in place for the safety and security of our students. If you are coming into the school building, please park your vehicle in the parking lot but not in the car line nor under the portico. Our goals during drop-off and pick-up are expediency and safety. After the first week of school, in order to foster independence we ask that all students utilize car line in for both morning and afternoon pickup.

Failure to follow these rules jeopardizes the safety of the students:

- Car lines are **CELL PHONE FREE ZONES**.
- **Do not** pull out and/or drive around car lines. No passing will be allowed in car line.
- **Excessive speed** is never excusable on a school campus, but especially during school hours.
- **Note:** If you have a change in your after school pick up plan, please notify the school in advance in writing the morning of the change. Phone call requests for changes cannot be guaranteed in the last hour of the school day. Also, please be sure to call or send written notice if someone other than a parent is coming to pick up your child. Texting and other forms of social media are not acceptable methods for this important communication.

All students must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after class concludes. Parents must call the school office if a student will be picked up late. At 3:35 p.m. all students who remain will be checked into the Extended Care Program with applicable fees.

If a student will be picked up early, the student must be signed out. In order to minimize class disruptions, students may not be signed out between 2:45-3:15 without prior notification. Parents must communicate with the teacher or school office when the student will be picked up before the conclusion of the school day. This will greatly aid in preparing the student to leave early. In order to maintain order and safety during afternoon car lines the office will be unable to interrupt car line from 3:00-3:15 PM to retrieve an K-6 student, 12:30-12:40 PM to retrieve a Pre K student. The Student Pick-Up Permission Form allows persons other than parents or guardians to pick-up the students from school. If someone listed on the Pick-Up Form is picking-up the student, it is requested that the school office be contacted prior to 2:45 p.m. so car line coordinators can be made aware of this change. Anyone not listed on the Pick-Up Form will be required to show identification before the student will be released to their care. If parents are divorced or separated and one parent has restricted access to a student, a certified copy of the court order of final judgment must be provided. All pickup forms and requirements can be updated online anytime via ParentsWeb.

## **PARTIES**

Permission for class parties or activities, other than those scheduled on the school calendar, should be requested through the teacher. All requests for parties shall be submitted in writing at least one week prior to the event. In order to minimize distractions and to limit peer pressure concerning special occasions, parents are asked to not send gifts, floral arrangements, balloons, etc. to their children at school. If any of these types of items are brought to school, they will be kept in the school office to be picked up at the end of the day.

Parents are encouraged to join their student during lunch on their birthday and refreshments can be shared. Birthday celebrations are limited to refreshments only. Birthday invitations should be mailed or e-mailed; however, they cannot be distributed in the classroom.

## **Holidays and Celebrations**

- It is our policy that the way we celebrate holidays be as distinctively Christian as possible.

- Class parties are planned by the room mom(s) with the cooperation of the teacher, following the guidelines set forth by GCA administration.
- Halloween - As a Christian school, we do not commemorate Halloween. It is our policy that no ghosts, witches, bats, goblins, black cats, etc., be made or displayed by faculty or students.
- Thanksgiving – We focus on giving thanks throughout the year. 3s and Pre-K will have a family Thanksgiving Feast. Each elementary class will celebrate separately.
- Christmas – We will have Christmas celebrations the day of dismissal for Christmas break. While we respect the decision of each family to celebrate Christmas as they feel best, we have certain guidelines to protect the environment such as: we will avoid references to Santa Claus, Elf on the Shelf, reindeer and other cultural issues that may distract from Christ. Students will be discouraged from discussing such issues as families have differing opinions about such items.
- Valentine's Day- Cards will be exchanged if done for the whole class.
- Easter- We will focus on the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. Easter chicks, eggs, bunnies, etc., are to be left out of the holiday focusing instead on the reality of our risen Savior.
- Earth Day- At GCA, we focus throughout the year on honoring God and being responsible with what He's given us. Protecting the environment is part of that responsibility. We do not worship a day or an event, but encourage our students to learn to be good stewards by protecting God's creation, a blessing from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## **PETS**

Pets are not allowed on Grace Covenant campus, except for prior permission granted by school administration for school events.

## **POTTY TRAINING POLICY**

Children enrolled in all grades must be potty-trained before attending school. We do not have the facilities or supplies required to change children in these classrooms. We feel that children of these ages deserve privacy. We realize that "accidents" will happen. "Accidents" by definition are unusual incidents and only happen infrequently.

Potty-trained school children:

- no longer wear diapers (disposable or cloth) or disposable underwear (pull-ups)
- can tell the teacher when they need to go to the bathroom
- can attend to their own hygiene. (Teachers will not be able to assist. This is an issue which protects all concerned.)

If your student is not completely potty-trained as described above when school starts, you may choose one of the following options:

You may withdraw your student from school and place their name at the top of our waiting list. Registration fees are non-refundable; however, if your student is placed in a class at a later date, you will not need to pay additional fees.

You may continue to pay tuition to hold your student's spot until potty-training has been completed.

## **PRAYER IN THE CLASSROOM**

Grace Covenant Academy believes in prayer in the classroom. The teacher has the privilege and responsibility of conducting prayer with the class. Each day begins with prayer and pledges to the American flag, the Christian flag, and the Bible. Prayer is not limited to specific times and is encouraged in accordance with 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and James 5:16.

## **RECESS**

Wind chill, precipitation, ozone level, temperature, and wet grounds are some of the factors that will be considered regarding cancellation or shortening of recess. Recess is scheduled for approximately 30 minutes. In the event of questionable weather, plan for your children to be outdoors.

- There will be no outside recess or PE if the temperature and/or heat index is above 100 degrees or if the temperature and/or wind chill is below 32 degrees.
- On ozone alert days, outside recess and PE will be restricted to 15 minutes.
- Teachers are to use caution on other days when the temperature or heat index is high.
- Teachers are encouraged in making decisions regarding other students based on individual health needs or considerations beyond these general guidelines.

## **SAFETY DRILLS**

Students practice tornado, fire and lock down drills to prepare in the event of an emergency.

Grace Covenant Church has a complete alarm system. Fire drills are held monthly on different days and at various times of day. Students are given instructions on how and where to exit the buildings. An evacuation diagram is located in each classroom.

Tornado drills are held throughout the year. A weather alert system is in place and students will be relocated if bad weather is predicted.

Lockdown drills are conducted throughout the year. A specific announcement will indicate to all teachers to immediately proceed to lock-down. Students will be seated on the floor in an area that prohibits being viewed from the hallway door or windows. Students will remain in this position until an administrator physically comes to each classroom indicating students may return to their normal schedule.

## **SUPPLIES**

Students may not bring any item to school that the administration considers contrary to biblical standards or harmful to the Christian testimony of the school or its students. No toys (unless teacher initiated and communicated to parent) or video games may be brought to school. We expect cooperative and Christ-like behavior from parents and students alike.

**WEATHER**

GCA does not follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System schedules for inclement weather closings and re-openings. Please check the following listings for this information: WSOC Channel 9, website, Facebook page, Twitter, and/or by email.

**VISITORS**

Parents and other family members are welcome to visit the school. Parents are asked to notify the teacher in advance of visit, so he/she can plan accordingly. All visitors must report to the school office and sign in before entering the classroom. In order to minimize disruptions, we ask that parents show consideration to teachers, students, and their instruction time by not coming for unscheduled drop-ins.