



Grace Covenant Academy  
2020-2021  
Student Parent 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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## **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.

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 hiring 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 students in addition to relevant experience. GCA is a school offering excellent academics and a high quality of Christian training. GCA recognizes that it cannot meet the needs of all students and is not equipped to meet certain special needs of students. 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.

## **Vision**

Our students and staff will live out God's plans for their lives. They will fulfill His purposes, using their God-given talents and abilities, and follow the callings He has placed upon their lives.

## **Mission**

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 FORMATION:**

## **SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES:**

We present the Bible as the only inspired Word of God, the final authority for all truth and knowledge

We seek to win those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior

We educate students so that they successfully integrate Christian values into their daily lives

We teach students to live Christ-like in a non-Christian world

We provide daily encouragement and Christ-like love to each child

## **Statement of Faith**

1. Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16-17: We believe the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God: without error, God-inspired, and true.
2. God: Matthew 28:19: We believe in one true God that eternally exists in three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus Christ: Isaiah 7:15, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, Hebrews 9:27-28: We believe that Jesus Christ is God in his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his return.
4. Salvation: Acts 4:12: We believe that salvation is only available by grace, through faith and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe that salvation offers eternal life in heaven rather than eternal separation from God.
5. Holy Spirit: Romans 8:5-6: We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit who lives within, guides us to repentance, and enables us to live Godly lives.
6. Spiritual Unity: Philippians 2:1-4: We believe in the spiritual unity of believers, that all believers are members of His body, the church.
7. Marriage: Mark 10:6-9: We believe that marriage is the covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Sexual intimacy should be only within the context of marriage.
8. Gender: Genesis 1:27-28: We believe that God created all human beings in His image, male and female, with value from conception until natural death. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.

## **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. Students are encouraged to apply biblical truths in their daily lives with family and friends that do not know Jesus Christ as Savior. Classes are given the opportunity to lead the Bible lesson a minimum of one time each year. Teachers seek the input of the students in developing and presenting the chapel presentation. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend, but are asked to sit in the back along with any other visitors. If younger siblings become a disturbance, we ask parents to please excuse them so that the students are not distracted. GCA students will have a weekly chapel on Wednesdays. The first Wednesday of the month we celebrate GCA on MISSION as a chapel focus. Once a quarter our chapel time is dedicated to teaching, affirming, and celebrating practical acts of kindness and generosity as performed by students in their communities (Mark 9:36,41).

### **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. Students are encouraged to develop a personal prayer life with prayer journals and various opportunities to pray. Prayer is not limited to specific times and is encouraged in accordance with 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and James 5:16.

### **CONCERNS or GRIEVANCES**

When a member of the Grace Covenant Academy community has a concern or issue, we abide by the following process:

Grievance Process: Student to Student, Student to Teacher, Parent to Staff Member, Parent to Parent

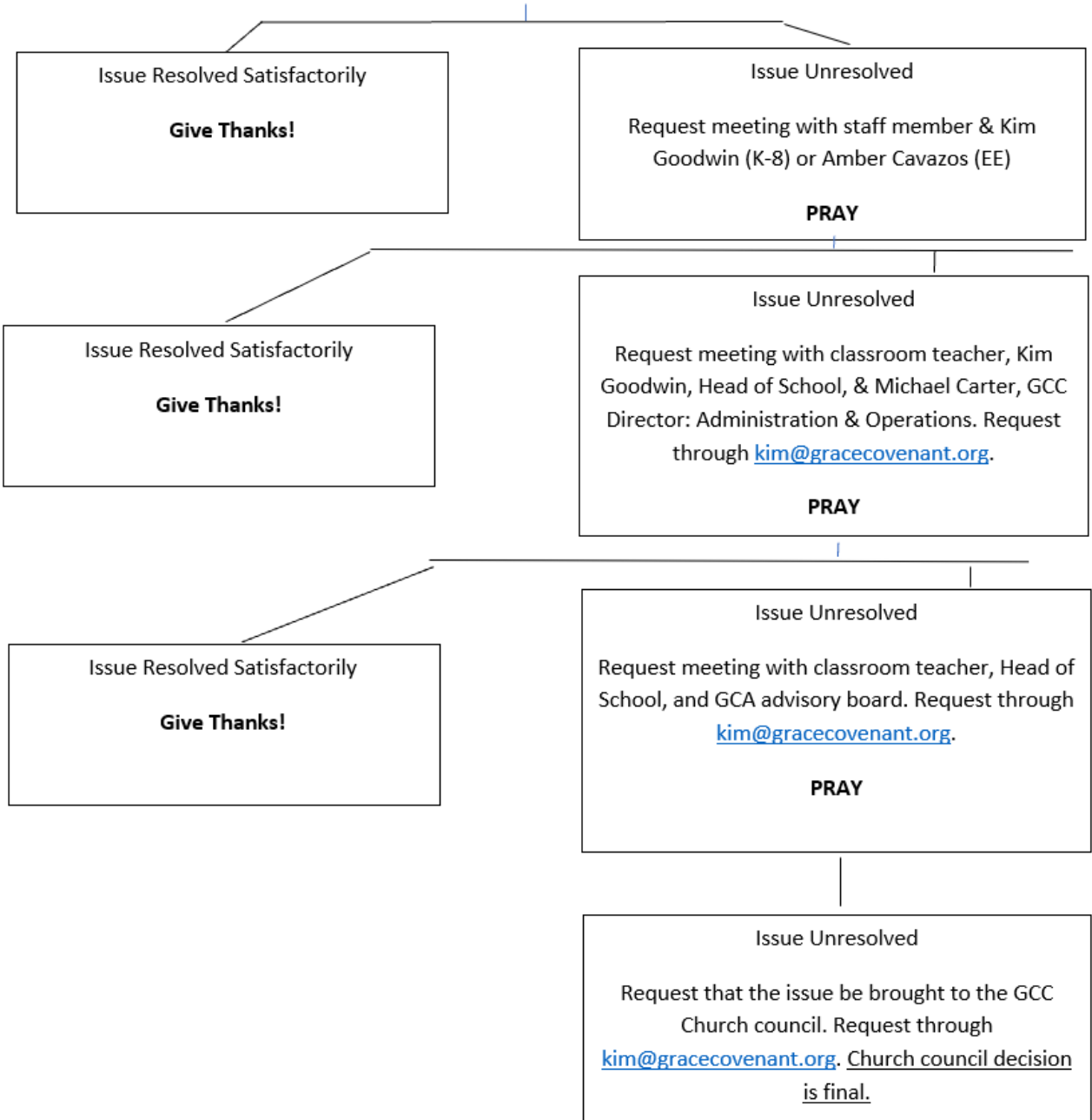
Have a concern? Unresolved Issue? Complaint?  
**PRAY**

**If this is a student/student or student/staff member issue, confirm that your child has talked with the student/staff member.**

**Check to make sure you have all the facts.**

Arrange a meeting with the staff member.

All parties document the issue. Communicate through the process. **PRAY**



# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

## INTELLECTUAL OBJECTIVES:

We facilitate mastery of the skills and standards taught at each grade level

We provide a learning environment rich in opportunities for critical thinking, collaborative learning, and decision making.

We teach through hands-on learning, with a growth mindset, and we differentiate to meet the needs of students

We nurture competency in communication and leadership skills

We prepare each student, through academic excellence, for success in their future

## 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 and middle school 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, STEM, 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 RenWeb at all times for students in second grade and up. Promotion of a student to the next grade is determined by satisfactory progress, developmental readiness, and the proper number of classroom days. A student may need to repeat a grade in order to master the material, as he/she may not be developmentally ready for the next grade.

<b>K-1 Grading</b>	<b>Letter</b>		<b>2-5 Grading</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>MS Grading</b>	<b>Letter</b>
<b>90-100</b>	<b>M+</b>		<b>90-100</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>98-100</b>	<b>A+</b>
<b>80-89</b>	<b>M</b>		<b>80-89</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>93-97</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>70-79</b>	<b>M-</b>		<b>70-79</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>90-92</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Below 70</b>	<b>N</b>		<b>60-69</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>88-89</b>	<b>B+</b>
			<b>Below 60</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>83-87</b>	<b>B</b>
					<b>80-82</b>	<b>B-</b>
					<b>78-79</b>	<b>C+</b>
					<b>73-77</b>	<b>C</b>
					<b>70-72</b>	<b>C-</b>
					<b>68-69</b>	<b>D+</b>
					<b>63-73</b>	<b>D</b>
					<b>60-62</b>	<b>D-</b>
					<b>0-59</b>	<b>F</b>

*-Kindergarten & First Grade: All subjects, N, M-, M, M+*

*-Second -Fifth Grade: All academic subjects A-F; Bible, Handwriting, N, M-, M, M+, Conduct is N, M-, M, M=*

*-Middle School: All academic subjects A-F including enrichment classes; Conduct is N, M-, M, M+*

## **HOMWORK**

At GCA, homework should meet the following standards:

- Homework should be relevant.
- Homework should have a purpose. It is not meant to be given just for the sake of having an assignment. The purpose should be recognizable to both parent and student.
- Homework should be for reteaching, reviewing, or enriching.

Homework should be given following the guidelines listed below. The guidelines reflect the amount of time it would take the average student to complete the assignment.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Days Per Week</u>	<u>Maximum Time</u>
K	daily	5 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup>	daily	10 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup>	daily	20 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup>	daily	35 minutes
4 <sup>th</sup>	daily	45 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup>	daily	55 minutes

During times of projects, half of the work should be completed at school for grades K-5.

## **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 a 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.
- 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 Volunteer Drivers Certificate. Copies of the Volunteer Driving Certificate can be found in the GCA office and online.
- 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.

Academic field trips for Early Education and Elementary students are incorporated into the annual enrollment fee for students. Parents/chaperones are responsible to pay for their own fees.

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, students may be asked to leave electronic devices at home. GCA is not liable for the loss of or damage to any devices.

### **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.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **SOCIAL OBJECTIVES:**

We teach students to respect and relate to one another according to the principles of Jesus Christ  
We cultivate respect for those in authority in the home, school, and community, as outlined in Scripture

We provide students with opportunities for growth in social skills as they engage and interact with one another

We teach and model decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution

We set age appropriate standards of responsibility and independence, preparing each student for success in their future

## **BEHAVIOR**

In order for learning to take place in a classroom, it is necessary for control and good order to be 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 BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Regarding student behavior towards one another, the school's positive behavior expectation will be taught in the following way:

**Honor God:** Each person is made in the image of God and it honors God when we treat others with kindness and love. (Genesis 1:27)

**Be Respectful:** Everyone that is a part of the GCA community is expected to show respect for others as well as their property and ideas, inside and outside of the classroom. (Phil. 2:3-4)

**Be Responsible:** All people are accountable to God and He holds each person responsible for their actions and words. We desire to see students not only take responsibility for themselves, but also look out for others. (Mark 12:31)

**Do Your Best:** It brings honor and glory to God when students do their best, not only in their academics, but also in the way that they interact with others. (1 Cor. 10:31)

Each classroom teacher will handle the discipline of the students under his/her care. This includes counseling, praying with students, warning those regarding unacceptable actions and attitudes, etc. Each teacher will use the following guide in handling student discipline in the classroom, which could include being removed from the classroom and sent to the office.

### **DISCIPLINE PLAN**

The following is a plan for how teachers and staff will handle discipline as the need arises:

**Level 1:** Student does not meet the GCA Behavior Expectation

Consequence: Verbal warning and redirection

**Level 2:** Student continues to not meet the GCA Behavior Expectation

Consequence: One-on-one conference with teacher and warning of loss of privilege if behavior continues

**Level 3:** Repeated Level 2 offense OR disrespectful, aggressive, or intentional misbehavior

Consequence: Loss of privilege and note sent home from teacher

**Level 4:** Repeated Level 3 offense OR stealing, fighting, or other severe forms of aggression such as bullying

Consequence: Sent to the Head of School's office with any of the following results: parent conference, fix-it plan, detention, ISS, OSS, or expulsion. Parents will always be informed if a student is sent to the Head of School'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. 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 child. GCA does not administer corporal punishment.

Weapons of any kind found in a student's possession that could cause harm to anyone will result in immediate suspension. The Head of School 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 one, as deemed necessary by the administration.

## **BULLYING**

Behavior such as intimidation, harassment or bullying is viewed as a violation of the GCA Behavior Expectation and is addressed in the school Discipline Plan. GCA defines bullying behavior as a pattern of picking on, teasing, threatening, or hurting someone physically or verbally in front of people or when no one is looking. As a Christian school, intimidation, harassment, or bullying behavior will be addressed by reaching the heart of the student(s) involved through redemptive discipline. GCA proactively works to instill Christ-like attitudes and behaviors which acts as a deterrent to behaviors such as bullying.

## **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 after first quarter for K-5<sup>th</sup> students. 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.

# **GCA Policies and Procedures:**

## **ADMISSIONS & PROMOTION**

### **Admission Policy**

Admission to Grace Covenant Academy is a privilege, not a right. Grace Covenant Church and Academy are 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 agree with and support the values and 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 (see Potty Training Policy)
- 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)
- 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 and all steps of the enrollment process are completed.
- GCA may grant provisional enrollment to students that are behind in grade level progress, have had significant behavior or discipline issues in the past or at previous schools, or in any other instance where deemed necessary by GCA administration. GCA administration and parents will set mutually agreed upon terms before the child can begin school.

## **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. 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 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 are Tardy: arrive at the front office between 8:30-9:30 AM.
- Students who have a Half Absence: arrive after 9:30 AM or depart school before 2:00 PM.

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.

Students have the number of days absent plus one additional day to complete missed work, unless otherwise noted by the teacher.

## **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), 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 approval of administration. Informational papers for a particular business or personal service will not be approved for distribution. Additionally, in case of urgent matters GCA will utilize a text/phone

call system. All parents should accept calls/texts from this system so as to not miss any urgent notifications.

## **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 in a God-honoring manner.

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.

The following guidelines apply to all students on all school days and school-sponsored, special events:

-GCA students will wear GCA uniforms Monday- Thursday.

-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.

- 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.

- 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, no shorter than 5" above the knee, are permitted on Fridays and Casual Days. Leggings are appropriate for girls on Fridays and Casual Days when worn with shirts/dresses that are no more than 5" 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.

### *EARLY EDUCATION:*

-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 items identified on Lands' End and FlynnO'Hara as GCA approved are appropriate for girls as well.

-Appropriate attire for boys includes: solid navy, khaki or blue denim pants or shorts.

-Sandals must have a heel strap.

**ELEMENTARY:**

- Appropriate attire for Kindergarten- Fifth 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-5 girls. Leggings in red, navy blue and white may be worn as a layering item under skirts and dresses. The plaid items identified on Lands' End and FlynnO'Hara as GCA approved are appropriate for girls as well.
- Appropriate attire for boys includes: solid navy, khaki or blue denim pants or shorts.
- Sandals must have a heel strap.

**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-after PM car line) 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.

**EXTENDED CARE**

Extended care offers a safe, fun place for our students before and after school. Morning extended care is available to all students enrolled at GCA. Afternoon extended care is available to students in Kindergarten through Fifth grade. Morning care is 7:15-8:10 AM, at the rate of \$5/day per student and by reservation only. Afternoon extended care is offered from 3:15-5:45. Students that leave by 4:30 are charged \$8 per day, while those that remain until 5:45 are charged \$15 a day. Weekly and monthly rates are also available. More information regarding extended care can be found in the GCA office or by speaking with the Extended Care director.

**FINANCIAL POLICY**

	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Three Yr. Olds (M-W)	\$2550	\$100
Pre-K (M-W)	\$2550	\$100
Pre-K (M-Th)	\$3200	\$100
Pre-K (M-F)	\$3850	\$100
Kindergarten-Fifth	\$7750	\$250
Middle School	\$7750	\$250

\*Middle School Resource Fee \$100, due by first day of school, charged to RenWeb account

Tuition rates are based on payments over 10 months. The registration fee is nonrefundable and is assessed per student.

**Tuition Discounts:**

*Grace Covenant Church Partners*

Grace Covenant partners receive a discount of \$250. This applies to official church partnership as

determined by church records. Official partnership is obtained through participation in a GCC Partnership Class and completion of required forms. When a family obtains partnership with GCC they are to notify the GCA office so that the discount can be applied.

#### *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, certified funds, or one time payment through FACTS account 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 18, 2020. 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 October.

*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](http://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 a convenience fee will be automatically charged to the card you designate. The convenience fee is in addition to any non-refundable enrollment fee or FACTS charges.

### **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 60 days after notification, the student(s) will not be allowed to return to classes until the account is made current or a plan has been worked out with administration. Accounts that become delinquent after three subsequent withdrawals from FACTS are subject to a late fee of 10% per month in addition to any other penalties applied by GCA administration. 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 RenWeb 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 Parent Enrollment Agreement, parents agree that the enrollment fee is non-refundable. If parents choose to withdraw their student, their decision must be presented in writing including the withdrawal date.

	<u>Financial Penalty</u>
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). Please check their website periodically for specific release dates.

Families that qualify can also apply for the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship. [www.ncseaa.edu](http://www.ncseaa.edu)

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

## **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*

GCA staff 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. The student's Student Medical Form must be completed on RenWeb 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. 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.

### *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.

### *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.

## **HOURS**

### **School Hours**

Classes begin and conclude at these times:

3s & Pre-Kindergarten	8:30 AM to 12:30 PM
Kindergarten-Fifth Grade	8:30 AM to 3:00 PM
Middle School	8:30 AM to 3:15 PM

### **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) are available for use.

Early Education and K-8 students may enter the school 20 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 school wing at 8:30 A.M.

### **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 4-8 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**

Lunch is an opportunity for social interaction, where community and relationships are strengthened. In order to take advantage of this social opportunity, technology should not be used for lunch at Grace Covenant Academy. In Elementary classrooms, teachers may ask students to have no more than 10 minutes of "quiet time" at the beginning of the lunch period so that students can eat, and then have social time.

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.

### **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.

### **Car Line:**

Car line is for all students. 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 12:45 any remaining Early Education students will be brought to the GCA office where families will be billed at the rate of \$1 per minute until the child is picked up. At 3:35 p.m. all K-5 students who remain will be checked into the Extended Care Program with applicable fees. Seventh grade students will wait at the office at the rate of \$1 per minute. If no one is able to sit with 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the office that student will be placed in Extended Care, still at the rate of \$1/minute.

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 3:00-3:15 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 any K-5 student, 12:30-12:40 PM to retrieve a Pre K student. The Transportation Form on RenWeb 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 RenWeb.

### **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 – Thanksgiving at GCA is a celebration of thankfulness. We teach gratitude on a daily basis but our goal through Thanksgiving celebrations is to celebrate the goodness of God, family, friends, and the blessings in our lives. Our students reflect on the first Thanksgiving as a historical event between Native Americans and European settlers who came together to celebrate the harvest. We strive for age appropriate historical accuracy while maintaining a focus on the Biblical themes of gathering together, working together in unity, and celebrating thankfulness. 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. We will have Easter celebrations the day prior to Spring Break.
- 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.

If an accident occurs the parent will be called. The parent must respond by coming to school if there is no change of clothing available, if the teacher deems the accident unmanageable by the student, or if the child is unable to dress himself fully.

If "regular" bathroom accidents happen (more than 3 in a month) the parent will be asked to keep the child at home for 1 week to "retrain" bathroom expectations. Upon return, if the child has more than 2 accidents in a month the parent will need to complete another week of bathroom retraining outside of school.

## **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 for all Early Education and Elementary students. 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.
- 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.
- There are always two adults at recess, one of them being a GCA staff member.

## **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, and/or by email.

### **VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS**

GCA loves volunteers! We welcome the opportunity for volunteers to assist at GCA- in the classroom, the office, and in other ways. Our priority is always to protect the learning environment first and foremost. Volunteers can contact the office or their child's teacher to learn about volunteer opportunities. All volunteers, whether parents or otherwise, must have an approved background check on file with the Academy prior to working in the classroom or alone with any student.

Visitors and guests are welcome at GCA during appropriately scheduled times. They are expected to sign in at the school office and receive a nametag. Visitors and guests should contact the teacher/school office prior to coming. 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. Teachers have the authority to assess the classroom environment when a visitor arrives and decide if it's a good time for a visitor to come to the classroom.