



**GRACE
COVENANT
ACADEMY**

**PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK
2022 – 2023**

“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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NOTICE OF DISCLAIMER

This handbook is in no way contractually binding on Grace Covenant Academy or its employees. The handbook is subject to change without notice from the school’s governing body.



GRACE COVENANT ACADEMY

Excellent Academics on a Foundation of Faith

ABOUT GRACE COVENANT ACADEMY

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).

Grace Covenant Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Grace Covenant Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

MASCOT & COLORS

School Mascot Warriors

School Colors Red, Blue, and White



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FOUNDATIONAL STATEMENTS

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.

VISION

The Grace Covenant Academy 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.

PHILOSOPHY

Grace Covenant Academy holds that education is designed to meet the needs of the whole student. Our program will help the student grow and develop emotionally, intellectually, socially, physically, and spiritually.

Grace Covenant Academy bases its philosophy of education on the Bible, the authoritative Word of God and develops its curriculum not contrary to the faith and practice of Grace Covenant Church. Each child is created in the image of God and yet has a fallen nature. Therefore, children are treated with love and respect and given appropriate instruction for proper Christ-like behavior. The development of the whole child – emotional, intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual – is the priority.

The home is the primary instructional environment for children and so a quality, cooperative relationship between home and school is sought. The highest level of academic instruction, appropriate to the variety of learning styles and developmental needs of the students, is provided. Teachers model in lifestyle and daily practice their living and vital relationship with Jesus Christ as they provide a positive, godly learning environment for their students.

PRINCIPLES OF KINGDOM EDUCATION

GCA embraces the philosophy of Kingdom Education. This philosophy has been compiled in the book by Dr. Glen Schultz, *"Kingdom Education: God's Plan for Educating Future Generations."* GCA's desire is to have its advisory council, administration, faculty, staff, and parents know, understand, and commit themselves to the ten principles of Kingdom Education. These principles are:

1. The education of children and youth is the primary responsibility of parents (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:18-21; Psa. 78:1-7; Psa. 127:3; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 2:13-16; Eph. 6:4).
2. The education of children and youth is a 24 hour-a-day, 7 days-per-week process that continues from birth to maturity (Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Prov. 22:6).
3. The education of children and youth must have as its primary goals the salvation of and discipleship of the next generation (Psa. 78:6-7; Matt. 28:19-20).
4. The education of children and youth must be based on God's Word as absolute truth (Matt. 24:35; Psa. 119).
5. The education of children and youth must hold Christ as preeminent in all of life (Col. 2:3; 6-10).
6. The education of children and youth must not hinder the spiritual and moral development of the next generation (Matt. 18:6; 19:13-14; Mk. 10:13-16; Lk. 18:15-17).
7. The education of children and youth, if and when delegated to others by parents, must be done so with utmost care to ensure that all teachers follow these principles (Ex. 18:21; I Sam. 1:27-28; 3:1-10).

8. The education of children and youth results in the formation of a biblical belief system or worldview (Lk. 6:40).
9. The education of children and youth must lead to true wisdom by connecting all knowledge to a worldview frame of reference (Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1; Prov. 4:5,7; 3:19; 9:10; Psa. 104:24; 136:5; Jere. 10:12; Rom. 11:33; Luke 11:52; Col. 2:3; I Cor. 8:1; 13:8; Rom. 1:28).
10. The education of children and youth must have a view of the future that includes the eternal perspective (Col. 3:1-2; Matt. 6:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Acts 20:24; Heb. 11:13; Col. 3:23-24).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of Grace Covenant Academy's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the Lead Pastor of Grace Covenant Church and the Foursquare denomination are Grace Covenant Academy's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application. The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs.

Bible - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

We believe the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God — without error, God-inspired, and true.

God - Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

We believe in one true God that eternally exists in three persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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.

Salvation - Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8

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.

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.

Human Nature - Genesis 1:27; Romans 5:12

We believe that man is created in the image of God but, by voluntary disobedience, fell from perfection—thereby imbuing humanity with sinfulness.

Spiritual Unity - Philippians 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12:27

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers, that all believers are members of His body, the church.

Gender, Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully (Ps. 139:14) and immutable creates each person as male or female from conception until natural death. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, covenant, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-9). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; 7; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Covenant Academy, and to provide a biblical role model to GCA students and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Grace Covenant Academy in any capacity, or are students of Grace Covenant Academy, agree to and abide by these Statements on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

EXPECTATIONS OF A WARRIOR

At Grace Covenant Academy, we build the following biblical truths into the life of each student, encouraging them to be more Christ-like.

Honor God - Genesis 1:27

Each person is made in the image of God and it honors God when we treat others with kindness and love.

Be Respectful - Philippians 2:3-4

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.

Be Responsible - Mark 12:31

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.

Do Your Best - 1 Corinthians 10:31

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.

EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES

Spiritual

Students...

- comprehend, memorize, and apply the Word of God to their daily lives.
- passionately pursue a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- carry out the Great Commission locally and around the world.
- exemplify Christ-like character.
- practice spiritual disciplines and engage with a faith-based community.
- employ apologetic skills to clearly articulate, share, and defend their faith.
- critically engage the world around them through the lens of a Christian worldview.

Intellectual

Students...

- demonstrate mastery of the academic standards.
- think critically and collaborate to solve real world problems.
- communicate effectively.
- show proficiency in mathematics.
- understand the design and history of God's world.
- appreciate the creative arts as expressions of God-given creativity.
- utilize technology with wisdom and skill.
- appreciate the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle.
- become life-long learners who are prepared for the future.

Social

Students...

- respect peers and those in authority in the home, school, church, and community.
- demonstrate growth in social skills by independently and confidently interacting.
- lead themselves and others well.
- value differing opinions when they are consistent with the principles of Scripture but learn to stand alone when those principles are challenged.
- resolve conflicts in a biblical manner.
- develop God-given spiritual gifts to love and serve in the body of Christ.

FACULTY & STAFF VALUES

1. Respect one another in our conversations and actions
2. Appreciate and celebrate one another
3. Assume positive intent and engage in open and honest communication
4. Be supportive and collaborative
5. Create a culture of fun and enthusiasm
6. Operate with an abundance mentality
7. Authentically care for one another

FACULTY & STAFF CODE OF ETHICS

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Philippians 1:27

All who are called by God to be a part of the Grace Covenant Academy team commit to a lifestyle of joyful obedience and selfless service to glorify God and strengthen His people. Therefore, GCA faculty and staff will:

Pursue Integrity

1. **In personal character.** Seeking to exalt Christ, not self, a GCA staff member will be honest and truthful; peace-loving, patient, and diligent. GCA staff members commit to avoid and, when necessary, report conflicts of interest and seek counsel. GCA staff members will maintain appropriate relationships with students both inside and outside of the classroom, as laid out in the Faculty & Staff Handbook.
2. **In personal care.** GCA staff seek to follow the instructions of 1 Corinthians 6:19 “Care for the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical facts of yourself, for your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.”
3. **In preaching and teaching.** GCA staff will interpret Scripture accurately and apply it with discernment. GCA staff will seek to speak the truth in love and with words conveying grace.
4. **In professional practice.** GCA staff will be attuned to their own needs as an individual and will seek Godly guidance and counseling if needed. GCA staff will conduct themselves as professionals in all dealings with supervisors, coworkers, students, and parents.

Be Trustworthy

1. **In leadership.** GCA staff will model the trustworthiness of God to encourage and develop trustworthiness in others. GCA staff will use power and influence wisely and with humility, fostering loyalty and demonstrating a commitment to the wellbeing of GCA and other staff members. GCA staff will keep promises, be true to their word, and respond with sensitivity to requests and needs.
2. **With information.** GCA staff members will carefully guard confidences, communicate truthfully, and will discreetly deal with sensitive issues. GCA staff members will maintain confidentiality in conversation, correspondence, file material, or electronic information, with the understanding that knowledge about people gained because of staff relationship must be closely guarded.
3. **With resources.** GCA staff members will seek to steward well the resources given. GCA staff will be honest and truthful with personal and organizational resources.

Seek Purity

1. **In living a Christian life.** GCA staff will uphold and live by a biblical standard of life including purity with all aspects including but not limited to physical relations, communications, both written and verbal and all manner of daily living.
2. **In spiritual formation.** GCA staff will earnestly seek the help of the Holy Spirit for guidance and spiritual growth. GCA staff will remain involved with a local church through regular attendance and service. GCA staff will remain consistent in their own personal prayer and devotional life, understanding that their ability to teach and serve flows from what God pours into them first.
3. **In theology.** GCA staff will study the Bible consistently and carefully to understand its message and doctrine. In forming theology, biblical teaching is authoritative over all else. GCA staff commit to abide by the GCA Statement of Faith in their teaching and instructing and attend all training provided by GCA.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

All GCA faculty and staff are called upon to be spiritual leaders. Classroom teachers are especially called to this role. Teachers integrate biblical principles and teach from a Christian worldview, but they also model the Christian life. It is expected that all GCA faculty and staff are committed Jesus followers who are growing daily through the spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, worship, involvement with a local church, etc. GCA leadership and GCC staff is also committed to support and foster this growth within faculty, staff, students, and families.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

It is expected that students are given the opportunity to participate in the development of spiritual disciplines such as prayer, bible reading, worship, journaling, etc. as appropriate for their grade level. Teachers should be modeling these disciplines out of an overflow from their own lives.

CHAPEL & WORSHIP

Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. – 1 Chronicles 16:24

All students and faculty attend weekly chapel services, usually held on Wednesday mornings. Chapel services are designed to give students and faculty an opportunity to corporately worship God and learn from His Word through teaching, music, prayer, service, drama, and other spiritual disciplines. Different chapel services will be scheduled based on grade level to ensure age-appropriate ministry. Students are expected to bring Bibles and be ready to participate. Teachers should plan follow-up discussions, activities, or prayer when applicable. Students will be given opportunities to lead in chapel in various capacities throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged and invited to attend chapel but are politely asked to sit in the back rows and not interfere with their child's class.

GCA ON MISSION – MISSIONS & SERVICE

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. – 1 Chronicles 16:24

GCA On Mission encompasses everything we do to bring the light of the gospel and the love of Jesus to those around us. The goal of GCA on Mission is to love God, serve others, and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we proclaim the gospel, we teach our students care and compassion through service projects, local outreach, global missions, and general awareness. GCA on Mission is emphasized in chapel the first Wednesday of every month. This time allows for updates concerning our local and global partners, the collection a GCA on Mission offering, and an opportunity to celebrate. GCA students partner with local and global organizations to accomplish this mission.

MENTORING & DISCIPLESHIP

Students are given the opportunity to be mentored and discipled in many areas within the ministry of GCA. Classroom teachers, chapel speakers, bible study leaders, athletic coaches, club leaders, etc. all serve as spiritual mentors that are committed to discipling the students within their care. Students are also given the opportunity to lead other students within these areas.

BIBLICAL INTEGRATION

Students are taught to see the world through the lens of God’s Word. While biblical integration can take many forms depending on the subject matter, teaching from a Christian worldview forms the foundation. It is also something that is both intentionally planned and organically occurs when approaching each subject from a Christiana worldview.

BIBLES IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers and students are expected to use the Bible daily to support class standards and biblical integration. The bible version used for K-8 at GCA is the New International Version 2011 (NIV, 2011). Each K-8 student is required to purchase a Bible through GCA. This allows for consistency in the classroom. The exact Bible for each grade level is provided on the supply list for that grade level.

PRAYER IN THE CLASSROOM

Grace Covenant Academy believes in prayer in the classroom, and each teacher has the privilege and responsibility of conducting prayer with the class. Students are also encouraged to develop a personal prayer life by utilizing personal prayer journals and being given various opportunities throughout the day to pray. Prayer is not limited to specific times and is encouraged in accordance with 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and James 5:16. We also ask that our families and community commit to praying for GCA and its mission.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

CURRICULUM & TEACHING METHODS

The academic standards at Grace Covenant Academy are designed to provide a biblical-based education consistent with the school's mission.

Various teaching methods and resources are used to provide an exciting, challenging, and fun learning environment based on GCA curriculum standards. We encourage innovation and creativity in the classrooms. Our early childhood program provides 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 fine arts, physical education, visual arts, library, STEM, technology and Spanish.

GRADING

There are four quarters during the year, and report cards are issued at the end of each quarter for students in Grades K-8. Grades are accessible online via RenWeb for students in grades 1-8.

ACADEMIC GRADES

All students will be graded on their academic performance using the following reporting scale.

Elementary (K- Grade 5)

Kindergarten – Grade 2 / Grade 3-5 Enrichments / K-5 Conduct

Exceeds mastery of grade level standards M +

Masters grade level standards	M
Partially masters grade level standards	M -
Does not meet grade level standards	N

Grades 3 – 5 Core Classes

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
Below 60%	F

Middle School (Grades 6 – 8)

98-100%	A+
93- 97%	A
90 – 92%	A-
88 – 89%	B+
83- 87%	B
80 – 82%	B-
78 – 79%	C+
73- 77%	C
70 – 72%	C-
68 – 69%	D+
63- 67%	D
60 – 62%	D-
Below 60%	F

In addition to the above grading scale, all GCA middle school core subject grades will be weighted as follows:

- 70% Mastery - tests, quizzes, projects, lab reports, and formal assessments grades
- 30% Practice - homework and classwork grades

GRADE PROMOTION & RETENTION

Promotion of a student to the next grade (including PreK to K) is determined by satisfactory progress, developmental readiness, and the proper number of classroom days. Students may need to repeat a grade to master the material, as they may not be developmentally ready for the next grade. In addition, middle school students who fail multiple classes may be at risk for retention. All promotion and retention decisions are made at the discretion of the Head of School.

HOMEWORK & TESTS

Homework should be relevant and support academic learning standards. Homework is not assigned on Wednesdays to encourage participation in a church's midweek activities. Homework is also not assigned on inclement weather days or distance learning days. The following times are the recommended amount of time students should spend on homework. **Homework does not include daily independent reading.**

Grade	Days Per Week	Maximum Time
K	M-T-TH-F	5 minutes
1st	M-T-TH-F	10 minutes
2nd	M-T-TH-F	20 minutes
3rd	M-T-TH-F	30 minutes
4th	M-T-TH-F	45 minutes
5th	M-T-TH-F	45 minutes
Middle School	M-T-TH-F	1 hour 15 minutes

The number of assessments given to students daily will be monitored in the elementary program according to development level. Middle school students may only have two mastery grade assessments per day. Mastery grade assessments may not be assigned on Thursdays, except for Math.

STANDARDS FOR WORK

All students should use proper grammar, neatness and spelling, along with thoughtful content. Teachers should keep these standards in mind and will be expected to hold students accountable to producing work that represents their best. Understanding this may mean that students may be asked to resubmit any work that does not meet these standards.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM

All students commit to honor truth and maintain academic integrity. Any misrepresentation of work via copying or allowing another to copy, cheating on tests, quizzes, or assignments, use of prohibited sources, or any form of dishonesty such as misrepresenting oneself or one's circumstances for an unfair advantage will be disciplined accordingly.

GCA INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All GCA generated tests, handouts, reviews, etc. shared in GCA course work are the sole intellectual property of GCA and may not be shared, copied, photographed, or replicated by any means for any reason without the sole and expressed permission of the course teacher. Any student caught sharing GCA intellectual property for any reason will be disciplined accordingly.

FIELD TRIPS

Students will participate in field trips throughout the school year. The teachers and staff make every effort to ensure that all trips away from school are educationally relevant, interesting to students, and safe. Full participation by students is essential to make these experiences valuable.

Forms

A Field Trip Permission Form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian prior to each trip. This permission form includes a release for emergency medical services. Students will not be allowed to attend if the permission form is not returned or is not complete.

Chaperones

Before any class may leave for a field trip, an appropriate number of chaperones must be confirmed. This number is determined by the school. GCA reserves the right to limit the number of chaperones for each trip.

Chaperones for the field trip must have an approved background check on file with Grace Covenant Academy two days prior to the trip. Chaperones may not bring siblings or younger children on field trips.

Chaperones transporting children besides their own must annually complete a Volunteer Driver's Certificate. GCA may also provide transportation for students.

Chaperones are expected to use discretion in providing supervision to students. They are expected to follow GCA policies and bring any concerns regarding student behavior to the attention of the teacher or GCA staff member.

Field Trip Fees

Any costs incurred by the students associated with the field trips are the responsibility of the parents/guardians. Costs incurred by approved chaperones may be covered by the school.

Special Circumstances

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.

Personal Devices

Students will be asked to leave electronic devices at home. GCA is not liable for the loss of or damage to any devices while on a field trip.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

School supply lists will be provided for each grade level or course. Lists are updated on the school website annually.

RECESS

Recess is scheduled for approximately 30 minutes for All EE-5th grade students. There are always at least two adults with students at 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. In the event of questionable weather, always plan for your children to be outdoors. There will be no outside recess if the temperature and/or heat index is above 100 degrees or if the temperature and/or wind chill is below 32 degrees. Teachers will use caution on other days when the temperature is high or low or the heat index is high.

DISTANCE LEARNING

In extreme circumstances, distance learning will occur to maintain academic progress and avoid major learning gaps. These days will be abbreviated, only include core content, and attendance will be recorded.

SCHOOL HOURS

Grade Level	School Hours	Earliest Drop Off
Early Education (3s & Pre-K)	8:30 AM to 12:30 PM	8:15 AM
Elementary (K – Grade 5)	8:15 AM to 3:00 PM	8:00 AM
Middle School (Grades 6 – 8)	8:15 AM to 3:15 PM	7:45 AM

GCA is not responsible for any students dropped off prior to the allowed times. Middle school students will be offered an Advisory period beginning at 7:45 a.m. (except Wednesdays). The number of instructional hours will always meet or exceed NC state standards.

ATTENDANCE

Law mandates school attendance but punctuality and dependability are learned qualities. Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in the classroom. Parents are asked to notify the office in the case of absences or tardiness. Parents should also remain in communication with the teacher concerning academic work.

Parents must enter the school office to sign the student in to the building if they arrive after the start of school (8:15 AM). When appropriate, please provide a note from the doctor's office, etc. **Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule appointments outside of school hours.**

Absences (K-8)

If a student exceeds 18 absences (10% of school days) in the school year, the administration reserves the right to retain the student or require credit recovery in their current grade for the coming year. If a certain subject is missed consistently, credit recovery could be required for that subject alone. The possibility of retention or dismissal is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A half-day absence will be recorded when students arrive after 9:15 a.m. or depart before 2:00 p.m.

Tardiness

When a student arrives late for school or leaves early it disrupts the quality of instruction for all students. A student is considered tardy if they arrive after the start of the school day.

Three tardies will constitute a half absence to be counted toward the absence limit.

Middle school students are expected to be on time for each class period.

Perfect Attendance

K-8 students who have maintained a perfect attendance record with no full absences for the entire school year will be recognized at the end of the year.

MISSED SCHOOL & MAKE-UP WORK

Early Education parents can coordinate missed schoolwork with their child's teacher. For elementary students, make-up work will be sent home by each classroom teacher. Middle school students are responsible for communicating with teachers concerning missed work. Middle school students can check Ren Web, Google classroom, and communicate with teachers by email. Students have the number of days absent plus one additional day to complete missed work, unless otherwise noted by the teacher. If a student returns on the day a major project or assessment is due, and knew about it prior to the absence, they will still be responsible for the project or assessment upon their return to school.

LATE HOMEWORK & INCOMPLETE WORK

Late homework and late classroom assignments will result in a 5-point deduction for each day late after the assignment due date appears on RenWeb. Students will have 7 calendar days to turn in late homework or assignments for partial credit.

STUDENT SERVICES

Grace Covenant Academy embraces the God given individuality of each student. We recognize we are each uniquely made with a variety of strengths and weaknesses, according to God's perfect plan. Student Services offers support to students, families, and teachers from EE-Grade 8. When students experience academic challenges, we work together as a team to identify the root cause and implement strategies for student success. Student Services also provides connections to reputable community support services when needed. If you have specific questions, please contact Julie Black, Director of Student Services at jblack@gracecovenant.org.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made: your works are wonderful; I know that full well. – Psalm 139:14

TECHNOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Technology is a powerful resource that we must strive to use wisely in pursuit of our mission. The following realities about technology will affect what impact it has on learning at GCA:

- (1) It is useful. Technology helps us accomplish otherwise difficult tasks.

- (2) It extends the classroom. Technology can be used to create learning environments and opportunities that would not otherwise be possible.
- (3) It is everywhere. All GCA students must learn to utilize technology with wisdom and skill.
- (4) It has potential for good or evil. Developmentally appropriate restrictions will be placed on technology use. Simultaneously, GCA students will be equipped with the necessary skills to avoid danger while using technology. GCA students will neither be sheltered from technology nor given free rein to its use. Instead, they will be guided into proper use with increasing privileges and responsibilities as they mature and prove trustworthy.

Technology at GCA falls into several different categories, including, but not limited to, computers, Chromebooks, tablets, smart boards, projectors, printers, scanners, document cameras, Microsoft software, Google Workspace software, learning management software, online applications, internet access, and monitoring and filtering software.

INTERNET USE

The internet is used to support education and academic research and to achieve the Expected Student Outcomes of GCA. Students are permitted and encouraged to use the internet for academic purposes only, unless approved by GCA faculty and staff. Internet activities that are not permitted include:

1. Searching, viewing, or retrieving materials that are not academic related
2. Browsing or posting to social media
3. Copying or saving copyrighted material or plagiarizing in any way
4. Subscribing to any services or ordering of any goods
5. Sharing the student's home address, phone number or other personal information
6. Playing games or downloading any programs not approved prior by the teacher
7. Any activity that violates a school policy or a local, state, or federal law.

All students in K – Grade 8 classes are required to sign and submit a Technology Contract at the beginning of the school year. Violations to these policies may result in disciplinary action and/or restrictions of technology equipment access privileges.

CHROMEBOOKS

All students in grades 4-8 will be issued a Chromebook and charger annually. Students in grades 3-5 will be issued Chromebooks that remain on campus for classroom use only. Students in grades 6-8 will be issued Chromebooks for on- and off-campus use. Chromebooks are provided by GCA and are GCA owned devices. All Chromebooks must be returned to GCA upon withdrawal or completion of the school year. The Resource Fee helps cover the costs of the Chromebooks. The GCA Technology Acceptable Use Agreement provides more detail concerning GCA Chromebooks and their usage. This form will be provided when necessary and must be signed and returned before students have access to Chromebook.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE

Student in grades 6-8 assigned a Chromebook are also assigned a Google Workspace account. This account gives students access to the Chromebook, Google Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Slides, etc., and many other Google applications and services. The Google Workspace for Education Notice to Parents and Guardians provides more detail concerning the Google Workspace accounts their usage. This form will be provided when necessary and must be signed and returned before students have access to Google Workspace.

MONITORING

GCA reserves the right to monitor and review any material on any device at any time for the school to determine any inappropriate use of technology resources. Faculty and staff are trained to monitor on campus use and parents are encouraged to monitor their student's use of technology as well. GCA utilizes GoGuardian to monitor technology use associated with Google Workspace and Chromebooks. The staff will make a reasonable attempt to supervise student use of technology equipment, in a way that is appropriate to the students' age, circumstances of use, and classroom objectives.

SECURITY

GCA will implement security procedures on Internet access to protect against unacceptable use. Technology users are responsible for the security of their files and passwords. Sharing of any usernames or passwords to anyone, except for parents or guardians, is not permissible and may result in the loss of privileges. Technology users will be held accountable for any activity that occurs during their login session to technology equipment. Any security problems should be reported immediately to the school or administration.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Personal electronic devices, including mobile phones, smart watches, etc., that can access the internet or be used for communication must be powered down and in lockers and cannot be used during school hours (8:00 a.m. – after PM car line) as well as during Extended Care times. Middle school students are allowed to have personal electronic devices during after school clubs and intramurals as permitted by the supervising adult. Violations of this policy will result in confiscation of the 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.

CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

BEHAVIOR

Students will conduct themselves consistently with the school's Statement of Faith, the Expectations of a Warrior, and each classroom's individual set of rules. Faculty and staff will address the heart issue behind the behavior and attitude with the goal of building Christ-like character in the student. Both negative consequences and positive reinforcements will be used to ensure good conduct. The following is a plan for how school leadership will handle discipline as the need arises.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

The following discipline plan is implemented once classroom policy is exhausted.

Level 1 Issue: Student does not meet the Expectations of a Warrior

Possible Consequences: Sent to an administrator's office with any of the following results:
Verbal warning and redirection, parent communication

Level 2 Issue: Student continues to not meet the Expectations of a Warrior

Possible Consequences: Sent to an administrator's office with any of the following results: loss of privilege, parent communication, fix-it plan, individualized lunch, walk and talk, remove student from situation, teacher-student conference, demerit (MS only), etc.

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

Possible Consequences: Sent to an administrator's office with any of the following results:
demerit (MS only), parent conference, fix-it plan, detention, half-day in-school suspension (ISS)

Level 4 Issue: Repeated Level 3 offense OR illegal behavior, fighting, or other severe offenses or forms of aggression such as bullying

Possible Consequences: Sent to the Head of School's office with any of the following results:
demerit (MS only), in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), expulsion

Grace Covenant Academy reserves the right to dismiss a student for the day who is not responding to authority and discipline. Parents/guardians will be asked to pick up their student within one hour. GCA does not administer corporal punishment.

No financial reimbursements will be made for days of suspension or removal. Students serving out-of-school suspension will be considered absent. Any work missed while on suspension will be graded using the late work policy.

The administration has the authority to expel or withdraw any student at any time indicating the student's or family's incompatibility with the purposes and standards of Grace Covenant Academy.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

GCA recognizes that genuine feelings of affection may exist between two students. As our Christian character denotes, students shall refrain from all Public Displays of Affection (PDA) while at GCA or while attending and/or participating in a school-related activity.

PDA includes any physical contact that may make others in proximity uncomfortable or serve as a distraction. Examples of inappropriate PDA include but are not limited to holding hands, kissing, failure to maintain personal space between self and another student, fondling or cuddling, inappropriate touching, rubbing, or massaging, caressing, stroking, or petting, as well as excessive hugging. Inappropriate PDA will not be tolerated. Students involved in such incidents will be subject to a Level 4 disciplinary action.

WEAPONS

Weapons of any kind found in a student's possession that could cause harm to anyone will result in immediate suspension or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the circumstance, the police may become involved.

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Biblical Illustration of Relationships "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12, NIV)

Rationale Grace Covenant Academy believes that all people are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and therefore deserve respect. GCA is committed to promoting a school environment free of bullying. Bullying is never acceptable, but GCA realizes it may occur. We have zero tolerance for such conduct and consistent with this policy a true violation will result in appropriate disciplinary action. We seek to implement a clear approach for dealing with bullying to protect our students and to help everyone involved to learn how to relate in a way that is in line with biblical standards.

Bullying is a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that

- has the effect or will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Cyberbullying is bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. This includes

- bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately-owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; or
- cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Approach to Bullying

- Students, faculty, staff, and parents should follow the steps of the Grievance Policy when there is a suspicion or report of such activity. This usually begins with a conversation between the parent and teacher.
- The Leadership reserves the right to use any disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, in such cases. This includes amending consequences listed in the parent/student handbook when behavior is proven to be “systematic and chronic.”
- Wrongful or untrue claims of bullying, harassment, threats, or assault are strictly prohibited. GCA reserves the right to use any disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, for such an act.
- We partner with parents to approach all interactions in a way that instills confidence in our methods. Our strategy relies heavily upon the student and family’s recommendation as to the best course of action. Families should feel confident that the Leadership will handle situations in ways that not only make things better, but that avoid making them worse.
- Students and parents are encouraged to come in and speak with the Leadership to relay what is happening.

SCHOOL-HOME CONNECTION

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We believe that parents play a vital role in the education of their children, and students are much more likely to reach their full potential when parents are involved. 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 ACTION TEAM

The Parent Action Team (PAT) is a volunteer-based group whose purpose is to enrich the school community by supporting and partnering with GCA staff. The PAT works under the leadership of GCA administration and commits to honoring the mission and vision of GCA while building community through parent/staff relationships and supporting school wide events. The PAT consists of teams such as event teams, staff appreciation teams, room parent teams, prayer teams, classroom care teams, and others.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

A mandatory parent/teacher conference occurs after the first quarter for K-8 students. A mandatory parent/teacher conference occurs for early education students in January. Parent/teacher conferences could also be requested by the parents or required by GCA throughout the school year.

COMMUNICATION

GCA desires greatly to keep an open line of communication between parents and staff. Parents can expect communication from the school regarding your child, special events, and other school information in a variety of ways.

E-Mail

E-mail is the primary means of school communication and will be used for all regular information, such as the Weekly Warrior, notes from the Head of School, etc. Please do not click on “unsubscribe” for any emails or you will be opted-out of receiving important communications from GCA.

Because GCA staff are busy working with students throughout the day, immediate responses should not be expected from teachers. However, parents should receive a response within 24 hours during the workweek.

School Website

The school website (www.gracecovenantacademy.org) provides information about the school, including a calendar of school events. Students’ grades, attendance and conduct records can be accessed on ParentsWeb.

Social Media

GCA utilizes both Facebook (*Grace Covenant Academy*) and Instagram (*@gracecovenantacademy*) to communicate with families and share the activities of the school. This is where families can see recaps of past events, get a heads-up on activities, or find out about school closings. Parents/guardians that wish to opt out of having their student’s pictured on social media accounts must choose that option on the signature page of the Parent Student Handbook.

Phone/Text Alerts

Phone calls and text alerts will be used only for essential announcements or emergency situations. All parents should accept calls/texts from this system so as to not miss any urgent notifications.

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.

Written Communication

In the Early Education and Elementary programs, information about your child’s progress, special events, and after school activities, along with classroom notes may be sent home in written form in your child’s backpack.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We recognize the connections that happen between parents through social media can be valuable, and therefore do not either encourage or discourage the use of social media to connect with others. However, all GCA students and parents are expected to behave in an honorable and respectful way regarding their communications about the programs, staff, or students of GCA. Parents who are found to be using social media to communicate negatively about GCA or its constituents in any way will be considered for dismissal from GCA.

ATHLETICS

MISSION

Glorify God...Disciple Students...Pursue Excellence!

GCA athletic teams are grounded in the mission to glorify God through discipling Student Athletes in a competitive atmosphere with the Bible as the foundation and Jesus Christ as our focus. This mission is at the core of what drives our programs, coaches, and players to pursue athletics in a way that is distinctive and brings honor to Jesus Christ.

Athletic Department theme verse – Hebrews 12:1 “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

ELIGIBILITY

- Students in grades 6-8 are eligible to participate (5th grade participation is possible and is based on the need to field an adequate number of participants. The Athletic Director will make the decision each season/sport.)
- Prefer each participant have an athletic physical. Form available from GCA or standard form from Physician can be used.
- Students must maintain a passing grade in all subjects to participate. Should a student be failing a subject or struggling in a specific subject, a two-week period will be implemented that suspends them from play and is an opportunity to improve the grade for reinstatement.

ATHLETIC FEES

An athletic fee will be charged per sport in addition to school tuition (fees are used to cover uniforms, officiating costs, coach stipends, supplies, etc.). The Athletic Fee will vary depending on sport.

WEDNESDAYS

Athletic events (games, practices, etc.) will not occur on Wednesdays. This is to encourage and allow students to attend midweek church services.

SPORTS OFFERED

Fall sports begin mid-August and end mid-October. Practices and games will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

- Boys Soccer
- Girls Volleyball
- Co-ed Cross Country

Winter sports being late October and end mid-February. Practice and games will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Girls Cheerleading
- Coed Swimming

Spring Sports begin early March and end mid-May. Practice and games will on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

- Girls Soccer
- Boys Flag Football
- Boys Baseball

Additional sports will be considered depending on student interest, field/court availability, and coach support.

ATHLETIC APPAREL

- The school will issue uniforms, as necessary. Student athletes are responsible to maintain and return uniforms.
- Additional gear may be required depending on the sport.
- All students must wear appropriate practice apparel and gear (Typically, will be the GCA PE uniform or other apparel dictated by coach or AD.)
- Participation is required on a regular basis. Absence from school due to illness is excused.

DRESS CODE

The GCA dress code is established to encourage biblical Christian standards in our school and for our students. GCA, through its dress code, seeks to encourage its students to think and act in a God-honoring manner.

All students (EE – Grade 8) will wear GCA uniforms Monday – Thursday and at all school-sponsored, special events. Fridays and other specially announced days are casual days.

All attire must comply to the following guidelines:

Uniform Days

1. Only shirts from the vendor selected by GCA are to be purchased (find links on GCA website).
2. Tops must completely cover the midriff even when arms are raised.
3. All garments must be modest, neat, and clean.
4. Jeans, or any other denim article of clothing, should be free from rips and tears, either above or below the knee.
5. Camouflage and athletic pants of any color are not uniform attire.
6. Pants are to be worn at the waist.
7. Skirts and skorts are appropriate for girls. Skirt, skort, and short length must be no more than 5 inches above the knee.
8. All layered clothing (shirts and leggings) should be red, white, or navy blue (gray is also permitted in MS); however, the outer garment must be uniform attire (shirt, sweatshirt, jumper, or jacket) while inside the building.
9. Hats, hoods, bandanas, etc. are not permitted to be worn indoors during school hours, except on appropriate school spirit days.
10. GCA spirit wear is not considered uniform and can only be worn on casual days.

Casual Days

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

2. 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.
3. Athletic shorts, no shorter than 5" above the knee, are permitted on Fridays and Casual Days.
4. Graphic printed shirts should be honorable and be representative of the character expected of GCA students.
5. Jeans, or any other denim article of clothing, should be free from rips and tears, either above or below the knee.

Early Education (3s – PreK)

In addition to the above policy, students may wear any combination of the following:

Girls

Girls may wear solid navy, khaki, or blue denim pants (leggings are acceptable), 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). Plaid items identified on Lands' End as GCA approved are appropriate for girls.

Boys

Boys may wear solid navy, khaki or blue denim pants or shorts.

Shoes

Students should wear comfortable shoes for running. Sandals may be worn but must have a heel strap.

Elementary & Middle School (K – Grade 8)

In addition to the above policy, students may wear any combination of the following:

Girls

Girls may wear 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-8 girls. Leggings in red, navy blue and white may be worn as a layering item under skirts and dresses. Plaid items identified on Lands' End as GCA approved are appropriate for girls.

Boys

Boys may wear solid navy, khaki or blue denim pants or shorts.

Shoes

Comfortable shoes are encouraged. Sandals may be worn. Students wearing sandals in K-5 must wear sandals with a heel strap.

The administration will have the final decision concerning any questionable appearance presented by a student at any time. Parents will always be notified if any student arrives at school and is not found to be in compliance with the GCA dress code. Students will be given one of the following choices:

1. Wait in the school office until clothes that are in alignment with GCA dress code can be brought to school by a parent or guardian. Any missed class time will have to be made up.
2. Change into gym clothes (middle school only).
3. Select clothes from the emergency school uniform bin. Students will wear these for the day, then return clean within 2 days.

Dressing for Weather

Parents should ensure the student is dressed appropriately for the weather, especially students who have regularly scheduled outdoor recess, physical education, or extracurricular activities.

Compliance

The first time a student is found out of dress code a letter will be sent home clarifying dress code expectations. This letter will need to be returned with a signature from the parent/guardian. The administration will have the final decision concerning any questionable appearance presented by a student at any time. Parents will always be notified if any student arrives at school and is not found to be following the GCA dress code. ON further offenses students will be given one of the following choices:

1. Wait in the school office until clothes that are in alignment with GCA dress code can be brought to school by a parent or guardian. Any missed class time will have to be made up.
2. Change into gym clothes (middle school only).
3. Select clothes from the emergency school uniform bin. Students will wear these for the day, then return clean within 2 days.

ENROLLMENT & TUITION

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

GCA provides an excellent educational learning environment by hiring caring, committed Christians who are spiritually and academically qualified to provide an education with a Christian perspective, along with a passion for students. GCA recognizes that it cannot meet the needs of all students and is not equipped to meet certain special needs of students, so we do 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.

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 anyone who does not meeting the following:

1. The student and parents must want to be a part of the GCA community and abide by the standards set forth in this handbook.
2. Students and parents agree with and support the values and biblical truths taught at GCA.

3. After reading this handbook and all forms for enrollment, the parents must agree to abide by and support the educational philosophy, biblical doctrines, practices, standards, policies, rules, regulations, etc. of the Academy.
4. All GCA PreK, Elementary and Middle School students must successfully complete the academic testing and assessment as required by GCA.
5. All students must be able to consistently and independently use the restroom (see Potty Training Policy).
6. Prior school records must document successful completion of requirements for each preceding grade/school year.
7. 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.
8. GCA is a religious institution providing an education in a distinctly 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).
9. 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 student successfully completing the GCA entrance assessment and observations of the student.
10. 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 it is deemed necessary by GCA administration. GCA administration and parents will set mutually agreed upon terms before the child can begin school.

Students are considered enrolled when the online enrollment packet is submitted, all applicable fees are paid in full, and all steps of the enrollment process are completed.

PROTECTED ENROLLMENT

Current GCA families receive priority enrollment for the following year. Annually, families will be given the month of January to re-enroll their children into appropriate classes for the following year. After January 31, Open Enrollment begins and any new applying families may begin to fill any available seats in our classes.

TUITION & ENROLLMENT FEES

Tuition and fees are established annually and updated prior to January 1. Information regarding tuition and fees are made available to our current GCA families prior to January 1 and can be located on the school website or through our admissions office.

TUITION DISCOUNTS

GCA always offers discounts for our families, including multi-sibling, ministry, and GCC church partner. Please visit our website for complete details.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

We offer the following payment options for our families. Each plan offers the option to pay either the 5th or 20th of each month payment is due. This selection is made at the time of enrollment. Additional fees may be charged to make payments.

Annual

Semi-Annual

Monthly (10-Month or 12-Month)

MISSED TUITION PAYMENTS

FACTS will charge a 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. 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, replacement of textbook or other school materials, GCA lunch option fee, extended care fees 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.

FINANCIAL PENALTY

Withdrawal Date before April 1

Non-refundable enrollment fee

Withdrawal Date after April 1

Non-refundable enrollment + 10% annual tuition

Withdrawal Date on or after Day 1

Non-refundable enrollment + 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 40 miles from the school. In case of relocation, the financial penalty may be waived; however, the enrollment 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

GCA does provide financial assistance for families in need through our Warrior Scholarship program.

Applications can be found on our website (www.gracecovenantacademy.org) under the Admissions tab and are accepted through the last day of February. All families applying for financial assistance must complete the online application to determine the need to be considered for a Warrior Scholarship. All scholarships given to families are a part of our Warrior Scholarship fund and not from any outside sources. Scholarship awards are limited to a maximum of 50% tuition, with priority given to K-8th grade students.

Grace Covenant Academy offers financial assistance 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. Families who have completed the application will be interviewed by members of the Financial Aid Committee. Scholarship recipients and their families are expected to adhere to school and classroom rules. The administration reserves the right to suspend remaining awards should a student fail to follow stated guidelines and expectations.

Grace Covenant Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Grace Covenant Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

HEALTH & SAFETY

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 their 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 faculty and staff are all certified in First Aid and CPR. GCA is only equipped to administer basic first aid (band aids, ice, etc.) except in the case of an emergency. When a student becomes ill or sustains an injury, the student will be taken to the school office, where an assessment of the situation will be completed. If it is necessary for the student to go home, a parent or emergency contact will be called. 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 safest learning environment possible. Every effort will be made to protect the student's identity if they are diagnosed with a communicable disease. The administration reserves the right to contact a parent and send a child home based on the child's symptoms. Please see our complete list of communicable diseases

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

Chicken Pox

Keep students home until all lesions are crusted over (about 4-6 days after rash appears).

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Keep students home; may return 24 hours after medication has begun.

COVID

Symptoms of COVID include but are not limited to the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, stomach pain, vomiting or diarrhea, and loss of taste and smell. If your child exhibits any of these symptoms they should stay home until cleared by a health professional or are symptom free for three days. Please see the separate COVID policy for current information.

Fever

Students who have experienced fever within the last 24 hours must be kept at home. A fever is considered a body temperature of 100.4 degrees or more.

Fifth Disease

Students may return as physician directs or when fever has subsided.

Head Lice

Keep students 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 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 the outbreak. This includes but is not limited to head checks, quarantining book bags, removing carpets, etc.

Hepatitis A & B

Keep students home until a physician's note is turned in which designates a return date.

Influenza

Students should remain home until symptoms are gone.

Impetigo

Students may return 24 hours after treatment is begun and no drainage present.

Measles/Mumps

Students are to remain home until the date noted on the physician's note.

Mononucleosis

Students should be kept home as the physician directs.

Pin Worms

Students should be kept home and may return 24 hours after medication has begun.

Ringworm

Students should be kept home until treatment has begun and a note from physician or parent clears the student to return to school.

Scabies

Students should remain at home until student and household contacts have been treated, and note from physician should be provided, indicating a return date.

Strep Throat

Students 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:

1. Written request by physician and parents for prescription medications; or/and a written request by parent/guardian for all non-prescription medications.
2. All medications that belong to the student must be in an adult's possession while the student is at school.
3. Any prescribed medication that needs to be administered during the day must be in the original container from the pharmacy.
4. 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 form.

SELF-MEDICATION (Middle School Only)

Learning to care for one's health and wellbeing is an important developmental milestone for all students. Parents should be informed that students who are approved to self-carry medications while at school and during school sponsored activities are independent in the management of their medication with no oversight from school staff. For a student to self-carry a medication, the following requirements must be met annually:

1. The student's parent/guardian must submit a Self-Medication of Over-the-Counter Medications form each year to the school office for any middle school student wishing to self-administer any over-the-counter medication.
2. The form must state that a student's need for over-the-counter medication is required during school hours. The parent/guardian and student commit to communicate to school staff when he/she is having trouble or adverse reactions. The student will also agree to keep the medication secure.

ANAPHYLAXIS & INHALERS

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.

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:

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

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.

If an EpiPen is used, 911 will be called and the child could be transported to the nearest emergency room.

CARRYING AN EPIPEN & PRESCRIPTION INHALER

For any GCA students to carry an EpiPen or Inhaler throughout the day, the following requirements must be met:

1. 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).
2. The parent/guardian has not requested that school personnel administer the student's inhaler.
3. The EpiPen / Inhaler is properly labeled for that student.
4. The school administration has assessed the student's knowledge and skills to safely possess and use (inhaler only) their EpiPen / Inhaler in a school setting and has entered a plan to implement safe possession and use of the EpiPen / inhaler into the student's permanent file.

PERSONAL HYGIENE & TOILETING

All students enrolled at GCA must be potty-trained and completely independent in their toileting practice before attending school. We do not have the facilities or supplies required to regularly change children in the classrooms. This means that GCA staff members may assist only when necessary. It is our obligation as a school to provide privacy and safety for all staff and students.

Students who are enrolled at GCA must:

No longer wear diapers (disposable or cloth) or disposable underwear (pull-ups)

Be able to tell the teacher when they need to go to the restroom

Be able to attend to their own hygiene

While we realize that accidents may happen, they are defined as unusual incidents and not ongoing occurrences in the classroom. Recognizing that some students may have medical issues requiring personal toileting assistance, GCA is not equipped to engage in a hands-on manner with individual students. Any students requiring special assistance in this area must communicate with the school office prior to enrollment, which could impact enrollment decisions and/or placement.

POTTY TRAINING

If your student is not completely potty-trained as described above by the first day of school, families may choose one of the following options:

1. Withdraw your student from school and place their name at the top of our wait list. Fees will not be refunded. If your student is placed in a class at a later date, families will not need to pay additional fees. Families will cease paying tuition but not be reimbursed for completed days of school.
2. Continue to pay tuition to hold your student's spot until potty-training has been completed.

TOILETING ACCIDENTS

If a toileting accident occurs, the parent will be called. The parent must respond by coming to school if there is no change of clothing available or if the student is unable to clean up, redress themselves independently, and return to class.

If regular toileting accidents happen and there are not any other medical concerns, parents will have the opportunity to work with GCA staff to develop a plan that will help the student in their independence. This could include but not be limited to keeping the child at home for 1 week to retrain toileting expectations. Regular is defined as 3 or more accidents in a week, primarily after the first 2-3 weeks of school. This process may be repeated up to 2 times before discussion begins regarding enrollment of class placement. In this circumstance, the school reserves the right to proceed with one of the following options:

1. Withdraw the student from the classroom for the remainder of the school year. Families will cease paying tuition but not be reimbursed for completed days of school or fees.
2. Put student on a customized plan, which could end in re-engagement in the classroom or withdrawal. Parents will continue to pay tuition to hold their child's spot, whether or not the student remains in class.

SAFETY & EMERGENCIES

GCA students and staff practice tornado, fire, and lockdown drills to prepare in the event of an emergency. Instructions for evacuation of the building are posted in each classroom. In the event of an actual emergency, families will be notified when appropriate.

Fire Emergency Plan

Students are given instructions and the opportunity to practice how and where to exit the buildings. An emergency evacuation route is in each room throughout the building. Fire drills are held monthly on different days and at various times of the day. This plan could also be used to evacuate the building for non-fire related emergencies.

Tornado Emergency Plan

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

Lockdown Emergency Plan

Lockdown drills are conducted throughout the year. During a lockdown drill, students and staff will remain in their safe position until an administrator or authorities have determined that the threat has passed.

DUKE EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Because of the location of GCA to the Duke Power Plant, we are required to be prepared for an Duke Power Emergency Evacuation. In case of an emergency at Duke Power Plant which requires a school evacuation, students will be taken by GCA faculty or staff members to Northwest Cabarrus High School located at 5140 NW Cabarrus Dr, Concord, NC 28027. For specific evacuation plans, see the Duke Emergency Evacuation plan.

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 school office.

GENERAL INFORMATION

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

All school policies and regulations have been designed to assist the administration, church council, advisory council, faculty, staff, students, parents, and all other constituents in working together to achieve the mission of GCA. We recognize that there will be extenuating circumstances to policy in this handbook.

SCHOOL BRAND & LOGOS

Approval must be obtained through the school office prior to use of any logo. Anyone interested in creating a design using the GCA brand must contact the school office for approval. Written approval must be obtained prior to the use of the name and logos in any form.

RELEASE OF RECORDS

Grace Covenant Academy will only release student records to adults listed in the student file. Any pertinent restraining orders or custody papers must be presented to the school office for the school to release any student information to a non-custodial adult.

LOCKERS & DESKS

Student lockers and desks are the property of GCA and are, at all times, under the ownership of the school. School personnel may perform general inspections of lockers and desks at any time without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Personal backpacks, lunchboxes, purses, etc. may be searched with reasonable cause and with student participation. Reasonable cause is defined but not limited to suspicion of drugs or other illegal substances, theft, or other items not allowed on property.

Students in grades 5-8 will be issued lockers by the school. Students must keep lockers 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 consistent with the beliefs and values of GCA. Only non-glue stickers or magnetic items may be used on the inside. Only combination locks (no keys) are allowed for 5th grade students. Middle school students will have their locks issued to them by GCA. Locker numbers and combinations will be kept on record. Students are required to keep the lockers locked when not in immediate use. GCA is not liable or responsible for any items stored in the lockers. No student should ever enter another student's locker.

CRAFTS

GCA is a no sand/glitter zone.

STUDENT DROP-OFF OR PICK-UP

When students need to be dropped off or picked up outside of car line, the following procedures must be followed. All students must be checked in or out through the school office. They may not be dropped off or picked up at the playground or at any other location on the school campus. Students will not be released directly to parents/guardians without being checked out through the school office. Exterior classroom doors will not be used for student pick up or drop off. 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 a designated parking spot and not in the car line, along the building, or under the portico.

CAR LINE

GCA operates a morning and afternoon car line for EE-5th grade students. Our goals during drop-off and pick-up are expediency and safety. After the first week of school, to foster independence, we ask that all students utilize car line in for both morning and afternoon pickup. Middle school parents/guardians park in the parking lot and drop-off/pick-up their students.

To keep all students and staff safe, please follow these simple rules:

1. Car lines are **CELL PHONE FREE ZONES**. GCA faculty and staff are trained to ask drivers to not use their electronic devices in car line.
2. Do not pull out and/or drive around car lines — no passing will be allowed in car line.
3. Excessive speed is never excusable on a school campus.

Note: If you have a change in your after school pick up plan, please notify the school office at academy@gracecovenant.org in advance, and 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 p.m. 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 3:20 p.m. all K-5 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. To minimize class disruptions, students may not be signed out between 2:45-3:00 p.m. without prior approval. Parents must communicate with the school office when the student will be picked up before the conclusion of the school day. 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 and between 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 have restricted access to a student due to divorce, separation, or any other reason 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.

EXTENDED CARE

Morning extended care is available to all EE- Grade 5 students. Afternoon extended care is available to students in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Morning care is offered from 7:15-8:00 a.m. and by reservation only. Afternoon extended care is offered from 3:15-5:45 p.m. Daily, weekly and monthly rates are available for students who participate in Extended Care. More information regarding extended care and the costs associated with it can be found on the GCA website or by speaking with the Extended Care Coordinator.

LUNCH & SNACK PROGRAM

Lunches and snacks are the responsibility of the parent/guardian and student. Healthy and nutritious meals and snacks are encouraged.

Student lunches are not refrigerated and cannot be heated. 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 and invoiced for the cost. Students are not permitted to order lunch to be delivered by outside sources, such as DoorDash, etc. These deliveries will be turned away.

Students in Kindergarten – Grade 8 have the option to participate in the hot lunch program offered by the school. If a hot lunch is ordered and a student is absent during the lunch hour, the meal will be held in the office for pick up until 3:15 or given to a sibling when appropriate.

Teachers may ask students to have up to 10 minutes of “quiet time” at the beginning of the lunch period.

PETS

Pets are not allowed on campus, except when prior permission is granted by GCA.

WEATHER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSINGS

GCA does not follow the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System schedules for inclement weather closings and re-openings. Please check the following sources for this information: WSOC Channel 9, the school website, social media, text alert and/or email.

PARTIES & SPECIAL DELIVERIES

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

CLASS CELEBRATIONS (EE - 5th)

Birthdays

Parents are encouraged to participate in celebrating student birthdays in any of the following ways:

- Join their student during lunch on their birthday.
- Sharing of store-bought refreshments for all students when approved by the teacher.
- Paint the birthday rock (after 3 p.m. the day before).

Birthday or party invitations for celebrations held off campus cannot be distributed at school.

Holidays and Class Parties

The celebration of holidays will be consistent with the beliefs and values of GCA. Class parties are planned by the room parent(s) in cooperation with the classroom teacher and should adhere to the following guidelines:

Halloween

As a Christian school, we do not celebrate Halloween. It is our policy that no ghosts, witches, vampires, 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.

Christmas

We will have Christmas celebrations the last day before Christmas break. While we respect the decision of each family to celebrate Christmas as they feel best, we will avoid references to Santa Claus, Elf on the Shelf, reindeer and other cultural issues that may distract from Jesus Christ. Students will be discouraged from discussing such issues as families have differing opinions about such items.

Valentine's Day

Cards will be exchanged as a whole class and parties will be held on February 14 or the day closest to the actual date.

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.

OFFICE HOURS

The school office is open during the following times:

School Year Hours	7:45 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday - Friday
Summer Hours	As published

TOYS OR OTHER PERSONAL BELONGINGS

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) drones, or video games may be brought to school.

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

We welcome the opportunity for volunteers to assist at GCA. Our priority is always to protect the learning environment. Volunteers can contact the office or their child's teacher to learn about volunteer opportunities. All volunteers, whether parents or otherwise, must complete a volunteer application and have an approved background check on file 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 name tag. Visitors and guests should contact the teacher/school office prior to arrival. To minimize disruptions, we ask parents to show consideration to teachers, students, and their instructional 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 is an appropriate time for visitors.

GRIEVANCES POLICY

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

STEP 1: Pray

We know that much can be handled simply by praying. The Lord longs to hear, respond to our prayers, and give us wisdom to face our challenges.

STEP 2: Fact Check

Many times, it is easy to jump to conclusions before we have all the facts. Take the time to make sure that your facts are accurate and double back with your child's classroom teacher or any other adult that may be directly involved.

STEP 3: Request Meeting

If issues continue to be unresolved, request a meeting with your child’s teacher and their immediate supervisor.

STEP 4: Request 2nd Meeting

If issues continue to be unresolved, request a meeting with the classroom teacher, direct supervisor, and the Grace Covenant Academy Head of School.

STEP 5: Request 3rd Meeting

If issues continue to be unresolved, request a meeting with classroom teacher, direct supervisor, the Grace Covenant Academy Head of School, and the GCC Administrator, GCC Lead Pastor, or Advisory Council, through the Head of School.

STEP 6: Request Church Council

If issues continue to be unresolved, request a meeting for this issue to come before The Head of School and the Church Council. Any decision made by the Church Council is final.

We celebrate when we can come to consensus and agreement. However, there are times when an agreement cannot be reached. In this case, families are allowed to withdraw their students. Tuition refunds will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

POLICIES & REGULATIONS

All school policies and regulations have been designed to assist the administration, church council, advisory council, faculty, staff, students, parents, and all other constituents in working together to achieve the mission of GCA. We recognize that there will be extenuating circumstances to policy in this handbook.

NOTICE OF DISCLAIMER

This handbook is in no way contractually binding on Grace Covenant Academy or its employees. The handbook is subject to change without notice from the school’s governing body.

GRACE COVENANT ACADEMY PARENTAL STATEMENT OF COOPERATION

Grace Covenant Academy is founded on the biblical principle that ultimately parents, not the school, are responsible before God to train up their children. The faculty and staff of GCA desire to come alongside the parents and help them in fulfilling their God-given responsibility. Parents must understand that for their child to thrive in our program, we need their full support. If, at any time, parents are unable to provide their full support and trust they should withdraw their student(s) or the administration may choose to withdraw the student(s).

I have read the GCA Parent/Student Handbook. I agree to abide by all the governing policies of Grace Covenant Academy.

Student’s Name (Printed)

