

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



HANDBOOK

8/15/22

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY'S PRIMARY IDENTITY AND GOALS

1. GCA's Education is Christ-centered and Classical

a. **Christ-centered:** In all its levels, programs, and classroom practices, GCA seeks to...

- Teach all subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures at the center (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- Teach all subjects as expressions of Christ's creation with Christ being presented as preeminent over all (Colossians 1:15-18).
- Provide a clear model of the biblical Christian life through the lives of our staff and board (Matthew 22:37-40).
- Encourage every student to begin and develop his relationship with God, the Father, through Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 19:13-15).

b. **Classical:** GCA seeks to...

- Emphasize grammar, logic, and rhetoric in all subjects (definitions below).
- Encourage each student to develop a love for learning and to live up to his academic potential.
- Provide an orderly atmosphere conducive to the attainment of the above goals.
- Definitions:

Grammar: The fundamental rules of each subject.

Logic: The ordered relationship of particulars in each subject.

Rhetoric: How the grammar and logic of each subject may be clearly expressed.

B. GCA's Genesis

Grace Christian Academy (GCA) began in the hearts of several parents of Grace Reformed Baptist Church (GRBC) in the early part of 1998. These parents shared a common desire and commitment to establish a Christian day school governed in accordance with the purposes and principles set forth below. After completing a preliminary survey of interest, with prayerful consideration, GCA opened in September 1999. The school began with grades K-8.

C. Statement of Faith

[The statement of faith adopted by GCA is the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. A copy of the Confession may be obtained from the GCA office or accessed on the Internet]

D. GCA's Mission Statement and Vision

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE OUR STUDENTS WITH A RIGOROUS AND THOROUGH CHRIST-CENTERED AND CLASSICAL EDUCATION THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO ENGAGE THEIR CULTURE FROM A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW IN THE BATTLE FOR IDEAS.

GCA aims to graduate young men and women who think clearly and listen carefully with discernment and understanding; who reason persuasively and articulate precisely; who are capable of evaluating their entire range of experiences in the light of the Scriptures; and who do so with eagerness in joyful submission to God. GCA desires them to recognize cultural influences as distinct from biblical precepts, and to be unmoved towards evil by the latter. GCA aims to prepare them for all situations to possess both the information and the wisdom to know how to use it. GCA desires students to be socially graceful and spiritually gracious; equipped with and understanding the tools of learning; desiring to grow in understanding, yet fully realizing the limitations and foolishness of the wisdom of this world. GCA desires they have a heart for the lost and the courage to seek to dissuade those who are stumbling towards destruction; that they distinguish real religion from religion in form only; and that they possess the former, knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ. GCA desires them to possess all of these characteristics with humility and gratitude to God.

GCA likewise aims to cultivate these same qualities in the staff and to see them well paid so that they are able to make a career at the Academy. GCA desires them to be professional and diligent in their work, gifted in teaching, and loving their students and the subjects they teach. GCA desires they clearly understand classical education, how it works in their classrooms, and how their work fits into the whole; that they possess a lifelong hunger to learn and grow; and that they have opportunity to be refreshed and renewed. GCA desires to see them coach and nurture new staff and to serve as academic mentors to students. The Academy's goal is to see them mature in Christ, growing in the knowledge of God with their own children walking with the Lord.

GCA aims to cultivate in the parents a sense of responsibility for the school and to educate them concerning the goals of our classical and Christ-centered approach. GCA desires them to grow with the school, involved in and excited about the journey. GCA aims to help them to follow biblical principles in addressing concerns, to be inclined to hearing both sides of a story before rendering a verdict, and to embrace the Scripture's injunctions to encourage and stir up one another to love and good works.

Finally, in GCA's relationship with the community, the Academy aims to be above reproach in business dealings and to be supportive of the local business community. GCA further seeks to exemplify the unity of the body of Christ, to develop greater fellowship and understanding with the churches represented in the school, and to bring honor to the Lord in all endeavors.

E. GCA's Educational Philosophy

Although most Christian schools would agree on certain fundamentals, it is imperative that parents scrutinize the foundational beliefs of any school in which they may enroll their child(ren). Therefore, below are the most important philosophical elements that we at GCA believe distinguish our approach to education from other schools:

- We believe that the Bible clearly instructs parents, not the Church or State, to "bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." The Church's commission is essentially to spread the Gospel and train believers (Matt.28:18-20). The State has been directed to enforce God's laws and protect the innocent (Romans 13). The Church trains parents and the State protects families. The Family raises and educates children (Eph. 6:1-4). Therefore, under the delegation of the Family, we seek to teach and discipline in a manner consistent with the Bible and a godly home environment.
- We believe that God's character is revealed not only in His Word, but also in every facet of the creation. Therefore, we teach that all knowledge is interrelated (integrated) and can instruct us about God Himself.
- God wants us to love Him with our minds, as well as with our hearts, souls, and strength (Matt. 22:37). Therefore, we seek to individually challenge children at all levels and teach them how to learn, by using the centuries-old, proven classical method (see following explanation), incorporating instruction in Latin.
- We desire to help parents teach their children that all they do should be done "heartily, as unto the Lord" (Col. 3:23). Therefore, we seek to encourage quality academic work and to maintain high standards of conduct. This necessarily includes biblical discipline principles.
- Above all, parents can be confident that their child(ren), at every stage of development in school, will be loved with Christ's love at GCA.

F. What We Mean by Classical

In the 1940's the British author, Dorothy Sayers, wrote an essay entitled "The Lost Tools of Learning." In her writing, she called for a return to the application of the seven liberal arts of ancient education, the first three being the "Trivium" - grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Miss Sayers also compared the three stages of children's development to the Trivium. Specifically, she matched what she called the "Poll-parrot" stage with grammar, "Pert" with logic, and "Poetic" with rhetoric (see the following chart). At GCA, the founding board members were intrigued with this idea of applying a classical education in a Christian context. Doug Wilson, a founding board member of the Logos School, explained the classical method further in his book, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*. GCA has been committed to implementing this form of education since the school's inception.

An excerpt from Doug Wilson's book, "Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning:"

"The structure of our curriculum is traditional with a strong emphasis on "the basics." We understand the basics to be subjects such as mathematics, history, and language studies. Not only are these subjects covered, they are covered in a particular way. For example, in history class, the students will not only read their text, they will also read from primary sources. Grammar, logic, and rhetoric will be emphasized in all subjects. By grammar, we mean the fundamental rules of each subject (again, we do not limit grammar to language studies), as well as the basic data that exhibit those rules. In English, a singular noun does not take a plural verb. In logic, A does not equal not A. In history, time is linear, not cyclical. Each subject has its own grammar, which we require the students to learn. This enables the student to learn the subject from the inside out.

The logic of each subject refers to the ordered relationship of that subject's particulars (grammar). What is the relationship between the Reformation and the colonization of America? What is the relationship between the subject and the object of a sentence? As the students learn the underlying rules or principles of a subject (grammar) along with how the particulars of that subject relate to one another (logic), they are learning to think. They are not simply memorizing fragmented pieces of knowledge.

The last emphasis is rhetoric. We want our students to be able to express clearly everything they learn. An essay in history must be written as clearly as if it were an English paper. An oral presentation in science should be as coherent as possible. It is not enough that the history or science be correct. It must also be expressed well."

The following material is drawn from the essay “The Lost Tools of Learning” by Dorothy Sayers. It illustrates the applications of the Trivium (Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric) we use.

| <i>Beginning Grammar (Pre-Polly)</i> | <i>GRAMMAR (Poll-Parrot)</i> | <i>LOGIC (Pert)</i> | <i>RHETORIC (Poetic)</i> |
|---|---|---|--|
| Grades K-2 | Grades 3-6 | Grades 7-9 | Grades 10-12 |
| Approx. ages 4-8 | Approx. ages 9-11 | Approx. ages 12-14 | Approx. ages 15-18 |
| <i>Student Characteristics:</i> | <i>Student Characteristics:</i> | <i>Student Characteristics:</i> | <i>Student Characteristics:</i> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obviously excited about learning 2. Enjoys games, stories, songs, projects 3. Short attention span 4. Wants to touch, taste, feel, smell, see 5. Imaginative, creative | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excited about new, interesting facts 2. Likes to explain, figure out, talk 3. Wants to relate own experiences to topic, or just to tell a story 4. Likes collections, organizing items 5. Likes chants, clever, repetitious word sounds (e.g. Dr. Seuss) 6. Easily memorizes 7. Can assimilate another language well | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Still excitable, but needs challenges 2. Judges, critiques, debates, critical 3. Likes to organize items, others 4. Shows off knowledge 5. Wants to know "behind the scenes" facts 6. Curious about Why? for most things 7. Thinks, acts as though more knowledgeable than adults | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerned with present events, especially in own life 2. Interested in justice, fairness 3. Moving toward special interests, topics 4. Can take on responsibility, independent work 5. Can do synthesis 6. Desires to express feelings, own ideas 7. Generally idealistic |
| <i>Teaching Methods:</i> | <i>Teaching Methods:</i> | <i>Teaching Methods:</i> | <i>Teaching Methods:</i> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guide discovering 2. Explore, find things 3. Use lots of tactile items to illustrate point 4. Sing, play games, chant, recite, color, draw, paint, build 5. Use body Movements 6. Short, creative projects 7. Show and Tell, drama, hear/read/tell stories 8. Field trips | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lots of hands-on work, projects 2. Field trips, drama 3. Make collections, displays, models 4. Integrate subjects through above means 5. Categorize, classify 6. Recitations, memorizations, catechisms 7. Drills, games 8. Oral/written presentations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time lines, charts, maps (visual materials) 2. Debates, persuasive reports 3. Drama, reenactments, role-playing 4. Evaluate, critique (with guidelines) 5. Formal logic 6. Research projects 7. Oral/written presentations 8. Guest speakers, trips | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drama, oral presentations 2. Guide research in major areas with goal of synthesis of ideas 3. Many papers, speeches, debates 4. Give responsibilities, e.g. working with younger students, organize activities 5. In-depth field trips, even overnight 6. World view discussion/written papers |

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM

A. ADMISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Grace Christian Academy is to educate and train children of Bible believing churches in a classical and Christ-centered environment. The Academy recognizes that the education of children is primarily the responsibility of parents. Therefore, it is imperative that parents of students attending GCA agree with the mission, goals, and objectives of GCA as well as with the methodology and practices of GCA. GCA believes that the Holy Scriptures are the ultimate guide and standard for all of life and godliness. GCA also believes that salvation by grace alone in Jesus Christ is the beginning of the path to living a godly life. Therefore, it is necessary for at least one parent of a GCA student to profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and be a member in good standing of an evangelical Christian church. However, the GCA board may waive this requirement, upon the recommendation of the headmaster, when, upon interviewing the parents of a prospective student, the headmaster believes there are exceptional circumstances that would warrant such action by the board. Such an exception can be made when it is in keeping with extending Christian grace and when such an exception would not interfere with the Christian environment being established at GCA.

B. ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Every student must be fully vaccinated (COVID not included) to attend Grace Christian Academy.

- Schedule a visit to the Academy. It is always helpful to observe firsthand the environment of Grace Christian Academy.
- During your visit, Speak with the Headmaster concerning the educational philosophy and methodology of a classical and Christ-centered school. After the visit, an online application link will be emailed to you.
- Complete and submit the online application with a non-refundable fee of \$75 payable through either credit card or AHC transfer. A separate online application and fee must be submitted for each child.
- Once the online application is received, you will be contacted to schedule a date for the entrance exam for your child. Every student is tested to ensure they are placed in the proper grade level.
- Upon completion of the testing process for grades Kindergarten -6th grades, both parents and the prospective student will be interviewed by the grammar school principal. The Administration may also contact the student's pastor for a reference. For 7th-12th grades, an email or phone call made by the headmaster will inform you of the child's results and further instructions concerning enrollment.
- After the interview and reviewing all other required information, the Administration will decide whether or not to admit the student.

- Upon being offered enrollment, the family will receive an invitation to complete an online enrollment packet. Once the enrollment packet along with a non-refundable \$200 enrollment fee is received, the packet will be reviewed. If approved, a letter of acceptance will be sent out with the enrollment decision.
- As required by New York State Law, all new students must have a physical examination prior to admission. In addition, the parents must provide a record of immunization showing the student is current with all the state required inoculations. (COVID vaccinations are not currently required).
- The first day of school is the Wednesday following Labor Day.
- Parents will receive an email at the beginning of the summer detailing supplies needed for school as well as a reading list and any required summer projects.

C. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDENT:

- A child must have reached the age of five years by September first of the fall in which he/she would be entering kindergarten.
- A child entering first grade must have reached the age of six years by September first of the fall in which he/she would enter GCA.
- If a child has successfully completed the previous school year and his schoolwork and behavior compare favorably to the comparable grade at GCA, the child will likely be placed in the grade for which he/she is applying. However, if through the administration of GCA's entrance tests or other evidence, it is determined that the child may not be adequately prepared for the next sequential grade level, it may be necessary that he repeat the previous grade.

D. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PARENTS:

The parents enrolling a student will agree to cooperate with all the written policies of GCA. This is most important in the area of discipline (see Discipline Guidelines and School Rules) and schoolwork standards, as well as in maintaining active communication with the respective teachers(s) and administration. In addition, the parents must read the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. Signing and submitting the application and enrollment packets will be your affirmation of consent and cooperation on these matters.

E. GRADE REPORTING

Progress reports are posted on RenWeb at each mid-quarter. Report cards are discussed with parents at parent/teacher conferences at the close of the first quarter. Report cards are posted on RenWeb at the end of each quarter. Teachers are required to notify parents before the end of the grading period if a student is in danger of receiving a failing grade for the quarter or the semester.

F. GRADING GUIDELINES FOR REPORT CARDS

All academic grading in GCA uses a criterion-referenced base for evaluation. The students' work will be evaluated against an objective standard in each class. The following percentages, and grades, are used school-wide:

| <u>Percentage</u> | <u>Grade (Grades 3-12)</u> | <u>Grade (Grades K-2)</u> |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 100-97 | A+ | E+ |
| 96-94 | A | E |
| 93-90 | A- | E- |
| 89-87 | B+ | S+ |
| 86-84 | B | S |
| 83-80 | B- | S- |
| 79-77 | C+ | N+ |
| 76-74 | C | N |
| 73-70 | C- | N- |
| 69-1 | F | U |

Quarterly grades for kindergarten through grade 2 will be reported as "E" (Excels), "S" (Satisfactory), "N" (Needs Work) or "U" (Unsatisfactory).

G. HONORS AND AWARDS

GCA maintains a system of formal honors and awards for the following reasons:

- To increase the academic motivation of all the students by demonstrating that good work and good behavior are rewarded.
- To recognize and show appreciation to students qualified to be listed on the honor rolls.
- To draw public attention to academic quality and outstanding behavior of the students at GCA.

1. Honor Rolls

Students earning placement on one of the Honor Rolls will be recognized at Chapel following each quarter and at the Awards Night following the fourth quarter. Students in grades Three and higher will be eligible for Honor Roll.

- **Headmaster's Honor Roll** requires an overall grade average of 94% or above.
- **Honor Roll** requires an overall grade average of 88% to 93%.

Please note that a course's contribution to the student's GPA will be proportional to the amount of times the course meets during the week. For example, a course that meets one time each week will not have the same degree of influence as a course that meets five times each week.

To be eligible to be placed on the Honor Roll, students must have successfully completed their Scripture memory assignments during the current quarter.

In addition, to qualify for Honor Roll, a student must have no subject grade below 75% (except for AP courses in the upper grades due to their level of difficulty).

2. Awards

- **Perfect Attendance:** This award is presented at the Awards Night in June to any student who has not missed any days during the school year. Credit for a full day is not given unless the student was present for at least 50% of that day.
- **Scripture Mastery:** This award is presented to students who earned A's or E's in Scripture Memory for each of the four quarters of the school year and who were able to recite the entire year's Scripture memory verses at one time at the end of the year. This award is presented at the Awards Night in June.

H. LEARNING DISABILITIES POLICY

This policy applies to all students in GCA.

Definitions:

1. **Severe Learning Disability:** Any condition in a potential student which would require a separate classroom, program, and staff in order to provide the educational services desired by the parents *e.g.* Down's syndrome, deaf/mute, visually impaired, *etc.*
 2. **Learning Disability:** Any condition in a potential student or a student already enrolled at GCA which does not require a separate classroom, program, and staff in order to provide the educational services desired by the parents *e.g.* Hyperactivity, Attention Deficit Disorder, dyslexia, *etc.* For the purposes of this policy, it is not important whether or not the condition was accurately diagnosed and is a genuine learning disability.
- Children with a severe learning disability will not be admitted to GCA due to the lack of adequate staff, funding, and facilities.
 - Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability will be required to meet the same academic standards as the other children at their grade level.
 - Children who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability will be given as much individual instruction and encouragement as their classmates. Teaching will not be modified but testing modifications will follow the recommendations of the IEP.
 - If necessary, parents shall be responsible to arrange for additional assistance, such as tutors.
 - District assistance is permitted so long as the district personnel effectively coordinate their tutorial time with GCA's administration. Parents must support and help to coordinate such efforts.

I. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Eph. 6:4

As a support and extension of the family unit, Grace Christian Academy considers the family to be of primary importance to a child. God, through His Word, the Bible, indicates that the family is the most important human institution since He compares it to the relationship believers have with Christ and the Father. Therefore, GCA is continually seeking ways to actively involve the parents, siblings, and grandparents of our students in the programs of the school.

Below are just a few of the more common ways to accomplish this.

1. Involvement:

- Volunteer your time to assist in the classroom or in the performance of clerical duties.
- Act as chaperone on field trips as needed.
- Join and become an active member of the GPA (Grace Parents' Association).
- Be a lunch monitor on one or more days.
- Offer to serve as a story-reader or guest artist or offer other unique talents.
- With permission and arrangements with the teacher, present your vocation to the class or invite them to your place of business.
- Offer to share your experiences, trips, and/or vacations as they may relate to an area of study in a particular class.
- Volunteer your help in the preparations for the many tasks related to our fund-raising efforts.
- Attend all Parent-Teacher Conferences that are formally conducted. Informal conferences may be held anytime at the parent's request.
- Closely monitor and encourage your child's progress by reading all teacher notes, emails and student papers sent home.
- Closely monitor GCA's Parent's Web for announcements, schedule of events, school closings and other important information.
- During any school visit, parents must sign in at the Academy office before proceeding to any classroom.

2. Responsibilities:

- All GCA families are expected to be faithful in their attendance at their home churches.
- Parents are expected to make a conscientious effort to schedule vacations, doctor appointments, etc. during times when school is not in session. Missing school when it can be avoided demeans the value of education, interferes with classroom dynamics deemed necessary to maximize academic effectiveness, and places the absent student at a disadvantage in learning the material.

J. LATIN AT GCA

Latin is a vital part of classical education; it lays the groundwork for understanding the development of virtually every aspect of western civilization through the close study of ancient language, literature, history, art and architecture. Furthermore, the study of Latin greatly facilitates the learning of “Romance” languages, such as French, Spanish, and Italian, and contributes to a richer understanding and use of English vocabulary and grammar. Statistics point to the study of Latin to explain the success of high achieving students in general; in particular, it has been shown to aid students on the verbal portion of the S.A.T. and to catch the eyes of college admissions officers.

1. Lower-School Latin Program

- **Kindergarten, First, Second Grade:** Introduction (paradigm chants)
- **Third Grade (1st Year):** Vocabulary acquisition; paradigm chants
- **Fourth Grade (2nd Year):** Vocabulary; introductory grammar; basic verbs; simple sentences; paradigm chants
- **Fifth Grade (3rd Year):** Vocabulary; introductory grammar; basic translation practice; common phrases; paradigm chants
- **Sixth Grade (4th Year):** Vocabulary; grammar; translation work (New Testament/Vulgate and other sources); paradigm chants; classical culture and history; myths and stories

2. Upper-School Latin Program

- **Nota bene:** Students at GCA are required to take a three-year sequence of high-school level Latin. Qualified students will be encouraged to continue to a fourth year of Advanced Placement Latin.
- **Seventh Grade (Latin I):** This introductory course aims to provide students with an elementary comprehension of the written Latin language and an introduction to the history and culture of the Ancient Romans. Students will learn Latin vocabulary along with its English derivatives, basic sentence structure, and elementary grammar. Using the well-established *Cambridge Latin* series, the students begin to read large passages of Latin even during the early months of the course. In the first year, students will also commit to memory the noun and verb paradigms which provide a basis for further study of the language.

- **8th Grade (Latin II):** This course completes the study of the basic grammar and vocabulary necessary for competent comprehension of the Latin language. It also focuses on the history of the fall of the Roman Republic and its important figures. More challenging and lengthy Latin passages introduce new grammar while reviewing the basic forms of Latin I.
- **9th Grade (Latin III):** This course covers advanced Latin grammar and vocabulary while continuing the study of the history and culture of the Roman Empire. With the completion of Latin grammar, careful translation of selected Roman authors provides students with an authentic survey in Roman literature, philosophy, history, oratory, and political thought. In addition, the course will encompass a study of the rhetorical techniques and poetic figures employed by ancient writers. Students also begin to engage in the practice of Latin composition, modeling their writing on Roman authors, such as Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Livy, Horace, and Catullus.
- **10th Grade (AP Latin):** AP Latin guides advanced students through reading Latin poetry and prose with historical and literary sensitivity. Students develop linguistic skills by engaging in multiple activities, including translating poetry and prose from the required reading list (selections from Caesar and Vergil) precisely and literally; reading passages of poetry and prose with comprehension; and analyzing literary texts in clear, coherent written arguments, supported by textual examples. AP Latin is roughly equivalent to an upper-intermediate college or university course and may satisfy a college language requirement.

K. HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDELINES

1. PHILOSOPHY:

GCA may assign a limited amount of homework to most of its students at any given time. Below are the primary reasons or causes for homework:

- Students often need some amount of extra practice in specific new concepts, skills, or facts. In certain subjects (e.g. math or languages), there is not enough time in a school day to complete as much practice as may be necessary for mastery. Therefore, after reasonable in-class time is spent on the material, the teacher may assign homework to allow for the necessary practice.
- Repeated, short periods of practice or study of new information are often a better way to learn than one long period of study.
- Since GCA recognizes that parental involvement is critical to a child's education, homework can be used as an opportunity for parents to actively assist their child in his studies. This will also keep the parents informed as to the current topics of study in the class.
- Homework may also be assigned to students who, having been given adequate time to complete an assignment in class, did not use the time wisely. The homework, in this situation, serves a disciplinary, as well as a practical purpose.

2. GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNING HOMEWORK:

Since homework, by its nature, takes time at home, it is not to be assigned due to the teacher's poor planning or in place of an assignment which could have been completed in school. The necessity for doing homework will vary from grade to grade and even from student to student. It is not the desire of GCA that homework occupies hours each evening, thereby preventing the family from the exercise of family devotions and fellowship. Therefore, GCA will endeavor to limit homework assignments to no more than one hour daily for the Grammar School. Obviously, the courses of study in the schools of Logic and Rhetoric will necessitate more time for homework. Regardless, it must be recognized that students work at different paces. Parents are encouraged to assist their children in doing assignments in an efficient manner, thereby controlling the time necessary to complete assignments. It is strongly recommended that students have a quiet place free from distractions in which to work.

III. DISCIPLINE

A. PRESUPPOSITIONS:

- Parents who enroll their children in GCA are united by a desire to provide their children an education in which God is given His rightful place as Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- In order to effectively conduct classes, maintain safety, teach children their responsibilities for self-control, and encourage in them a desire to serve God and their fellow man, certain parameters for behavior must be implemented and enforced.
- GCA believes that God’s Word supports and recommends the use of corrective discipline, such as the use of the rod and reproof to unruly children, and that a consistent, prayerful application of it will be a benefit to the child. The Academy further believes that the use of the rod is the responsibility of the parents and not the administrators or faculty.
- Since GCA’s standards for behavior are Biblical, they should not vary greatly with what parents expect of children in the home.
- As teachers and adults entrusted with your children, the Academy realizes that discipline is a grave responsibility. As such, faculty and administration will pray regularly for all students, particularly those who are struggling with sin. To be effective, this also requires prayer support from the parents.
- GCA also realizes that, as part of the fallen creation, man is prone to sin and injustice. If a situation arises in which you believe that discipline has been dispensed unfairly, please follow the “Grievance Policy” guidelines found in this handbook.
- GCA always strives to make discipline age appropriate.
- Biblical discipline is always restorative in nature and is bathed in the love of Christ. The goal of biblical discipline is not merely to change outward behavior, but to reach the heart of the child.

If your child is the subject of discipline at GCA, please consider the following:

- Give the staff the benefit of the doubt when the event is reported to you by the student.
- Realize that your child’s reporting may be emotionally biased and may not include all of the pertinent information.
- Realize that the Academy has reasons for all rules and that they are enforced without partiality.

- Support the administration and call the Academy with any concerns or for further clarification.

B. BASIC SCHOOL RULES

All students should be aware of and are expected to adhere to the following list of school rules:

- Students are expected to cooperate with basic Christian standards of behavior and conversation.
- There should be no talking back or arguing with teachers or staff. Prompt and cheerful obedience is expected. Requests from the teacher should not have to be repeated.
- Guns or knives (including pocket knives) or any other weapons are not allowed on the school grounds or buses. This includes toy or imitation weapons unless being used for dramatic purposes under the supervision of a faculty member.
- Students are not to use iPods, or any other personal electronic devices during school hours. These devices must be stored in the student's locker or backpack immediately upon entering school property. Failure to comply may result in the confiscation of the device which will only be returned directly to the parent. Students may not use school tape players, CD players, and/or other electronic devices without expressed permission from a faculty member.
- Cell phones must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack or locker along with headphones or earbuds as soon as the student enters school property and may be confiscated by school authorities and returned only to the student's parent. A student may not use a cell phone during school hours unless authorized by a faculty member.
- Laptops are permitted in the upper school with permission of the classroom teacher.
- Laser pointers are not permitted on school property unless the student is given permission by a faculty member to use the device during an academic presentation.
- Students will be held responsible for damage done to school property. Actual replacement or repair costs will be assessed. Hardback textbooks must be covered with a book cover.
- Public displays of affection (i.e., holding hands, kissing, etc.) in the context of boy/girl relationships are not permitted at school or school activities.
- Students are not to eat or drink in the classrooms and hallways, except during organized class activities.

- Students may not chew gum at school.
- Students may not write on the dry erase boards or chalkboards without permission of the teacher.
- Students may not use school pianos or keyboards without permission of a faculty member.
- Students are not to bring skateboards, toys, dolls, or any other items to school without first obtaining permission from the faculty or administration.
- Students who ride a bus to school will follow all directions given by the driver or assistant while riding the bus. All GCA students are expected to uphold GCA standards of behavior while on the bus. Any misconduct on a bus will be reported to the Headmaster for appropriate disciplinary action.
- Students are not permitted to utilize the kitchen facilities or the gymnasium before, during or after school without the express permission of a faculty member.

C. STUDENT ETIQUETTE WHILE AT SCHOOL

The students will be expected to show consideration for their teachers, administrators, and classmates by complying with these standards. These are the “house rules.” The students will:

- Stand when responding to a teacher or administrator in class.
- Be seated and quiet when directed to do so.
- Not walk across desk seats or dash across the room to arrive at their desks.
- Not throw paper from their desks to the trash.
- Not eat or drink in class except during organized class activities.
- Not disturb anything on the teacher’s desk (including reference books) without permission.
- Not sit at the teacher’s desk or open drawers in the desk when the teacher is not in the room.
- Not prop their feet up on desks or sit on table tops.

- Not throw pencils, pens, white out, etc. across the room to another student.
- Not write on desks, walls, textbooks, posters, etc.
- Pick up any trash around their desks before leaving the classroom.
- Not adjust blinds or open or close windows without permission from the teacher.
- Not rearrange desks without permission from the teacher.
- Not pass notes or ask others to pass notes.
- Not talk while the teacher is talking or interrupt other students during class discussion.
- Not place or receive any phone calls without permission from the faculty or staff.
- Not run in the hallways or up and down stairs.

D. STUDENT ETIQUETTE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

- GCA students represent GCA, the Christian community, and Christ Himself wherever they may be. While it is understood that not all GCA students are necessarily Christian, GCA still reserves the right to discipline any GCA student engaged in behavior that could undermine the school's credibility or reputation.
- This includes texting and participation in all forms of social media. Postings that grossly contradict GCA's standards of behavior or are inappropriate and cause offense to other parties may warrant a disciplinary response.

E. LUNCHTIME/RECESS GUIDELINES

ALL SCHOOL RULES STILL APPLY.

- The lunchroom supervisor is the authority in the lunchroom, just as the teacher is in the classroom.
- Students must either bring their own lunches or purchase from Boonli, our lunch ordering program. Refrigerators or microwave ovens are NOT available to students. If a hot lunch item is brought to school, an insulated container must be used. Insulated containers must also be used if a food item is to be kept cool.

- No student may enter the kitchen unless accompanied by a faculty member or lunchroom supervisor. Students may not place items in or remove items from a refrigerator or freezer, nor may they remove anything from a cabinet in the kitchen.
- To encourage good manners, we require that all students be seated properly at the lunch tables while eating and talk quietly with those at the same table.
- Students are expected to leave the lunchroom clean when they are finished. All tables must be cleared of refuse and all chairs must be pushed in. Garbage on the floor should also be picked up and thrown in the trash receptacle.
- Students may eat in the lunchroom or outside with a faculty member if permission to go outside has been granted by the Lunchroom Supervisor. Students may not eat in any classroom unless given permission to do so by the appropriate teacher.
- Weather permitting, recess will be outdoors. Students should dress appropriately for the weather.
- Students must follow the instructions of the playground supervisor. Students may not exclude children from participation. There must be no inappropriate physical contact, e.g. pushing, tackling, hitting, etc. A “Keep your hands to yourself” policy will be observed. Failure to follow guidelines will result in a revocation of playground privileges.
- In times of exceptionally cold or inclement weather, recess will be held in the Gymnasium. Behavior suitable for indoors will be required. The instructions of the lunchroom supervisor must be followed.
- Students in grades 9 to 12 may leave the school campus for lunch if they have a signed parental permission form on file in the school office. Students who receive a detention will not be allowed to leave the campus for one week. Students on Academic Probation are not permitted to leave the campus for lunch. Leaving the campus for lunch is a privilege and not a right and therefore may be revoked by the Headmaster at any time.
- All GCA rules and etiquette apply while students are off campus for lunch. Violations of any of these principles will result in the revocation of off-campus lunch privileges.

F. ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction and Philosophy

There can be little doubt that a direct relationship exists between students’ attendance and potential for achievement. Single class periods can contribute significantly to the curricular objectives set forth for students; those who are habitually late or absent from class will miss necessary work.

Attendance at every scheduled class is therefore encouraged. Of course, we recognize that there will be instances when students are unable to attend for legitimate reasons. The intent of this policy is to make provision for legitimate student absences, while simultaneously ensuring that students' ability to succeed is not hampered by lack of attendance.

- We believe that it is the responsibility of students to attend all scheduled classes and the responsibility of the parents to ensure their child's attendance for every scheduled school day, and to make all required notifications to their teachers.
- It is the responsibility of the school staff to notify a parent/guardian of a child's absence if and when the school has not been notified of the child's absence.
- We believe that it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to support and encourage their students in attending all classes, as well as keep the school staff informed of any absences from class.
- It is the responsibility of the school staff to keep parents/guardians informed of their students' attendance, maintain accurate records, and ensure that students are present sufficiently to allow success.

2. Minimum Attendance Requirements (Grammar School)

In our effort to ensure that students' performance in school is not limited by absence from class, the following minimum attendance requirements are established:

- To receive credit for completing a grade, students must not only earn passing academic scores, but be present in class for at least 90% of the scheduled time.
- In a full-year course, students may not miss more than 17 days of class. Students who accrue **18** or more absences during the school year will be required to repeat it in its entirety the following year.

3. Minimum Attendance Requirements (Upper School)

In our effort to ensure that students' performance in school is not limited by absence from class, the following minimum attendance requirements are established:

- To receive credit for a course, students must not only earn passing grades, but be present in class for 90% of the scheduled time.
- In a full-year course, students may not miss more than 17 days of class.
- In a half-year course, or one that meets every other day, students may not miss more than 8 days of class.

Students who accrue **18** or more absences in a full-year course, or **9** or more absences in a half-year course, will be denied credit for that course, and be required to repeat it in its entirety the following year if and only if GCA's academic schedule accommodates this action. Math and Latin are often the only courses that permit this action. GCA will not be able to accommodate the repetition of other courses and will not be able to have a child repeat a grade in which they passed other courses. Thus, it is likely that the student will not be able to return the following year.

Note that minimum attendance requirements apply independently to each course for which credit is offered, and that absences are counted independently of the student's overall attendance at school on a given day. For example, a student arriving late to school during second period will be marked *absent* first period; if the student accrues 18 such absences, he will be denied credit for his first period class, irrespective of his attendance in other classes.

Students who are denied credit because of excessive absence will be required to audit the course, and complete all course work, for the remainder of the school year. Any student matriculating at GCA after the start of school will have his minimum attendance requirements prorated based upon his date of matriculation.

4. Appeals of Minimum Attendance Violations

Any student denied passage (grammar school) or credit (upper school) due to excess absence will have the opportunity to appeal his denial. An appeal must be made in writing by the student's parent or guardian and be submitted to the headmaster within five days of being notified of the student's denial of passage or credit. At that time, a small appeals committee will be selected by the headmaster to review the student's case. The committee will consist of the Headmaster, the student's teachers, and any other staff deemed appropriate to review the appeal. Upon review, the denial of passage or credit will either be sustained or reversed. If reversed, the student will again be qualified to continue with their current grade or to earn credit for the course(s) in question, contingent upon any future attendance stipulations set by the committee. Appeals will be decided based upon the following elements:

- Ratio of excused to unexcused absences
- Student's past efforts to make up any work missed in class
- Teachers' evaluation of the student's ability to meet the course objectives
- Any evidence (explanations, doctors' statements, etc.) submitted by parents/guardians

5. Excused, Unexcused, and Illegal Absences

Any and all absences from school (grammar) or class (upper school) will be counted towards students' minimum attendance requirements, **whether excused, unexcused, or illegal**. The effect of absences on a student's ability to succeed is the same, regardless of the reason for absence. However, we recognize that some absences may be inevitable; it is our desire to ensure that students are not penalized for or disadvantaged by unavoidable absence. Therefore, a distinction will be made between *excused* and *unexcused* absences.

An **EXCUSED ABSENCE** is a failure to attend school (or a scheduled class) that is **unavoidable** or **unplanned**. Examples include medical emergencies, student illness, family emergencies, etc. While we encourage parents to schedule student medical appointments for times when school is not in session, we recognize that appointments during school may sometimes be the only option. Student medical appointments will be counted as excused absences if a doctor's note is provided.

Extensions will be given to students for all work missed during an excused absence, and all reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure the students' ability to catch up. Extensions will generally not exceed the duration of the absence. Full credit will be given for work made up within the period of the extension. Accommodations may be arranged between the teacher and student, or between the teacher and parent/guardian, dependent on grade level and at the teacher's discretion. Students are expected to make up all missed work; however, teachers *may*, at their sole discretion, excuse students from some work subsequent to an extended absence. Students are responsible for consulting teachers and peers to obtain all missed assignments, materials, and notes.

An **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE** is a failure to attend school (or a scheduled class) that is **avoidable** or **planned**. Examples include oversleeping, insufficient sleep, family vacation or travel, recreational events, etc. Parents are expected to schedule foreseeable events during the vacation time allotted in the school calendar.

Generally, no extensions will be given for assignments or assessments missed due to an unexcused absence. Students will usually be expected to complete the work nonetheless and may incur grade penalties set by the teacher for late submission of work. Teachers may, at their sole discretion, elect to extend deadlines or accommodate the make-up of tests and assessments. Such accommodations can by no means be expected. Parents and students are encouraged to inform teachers *as far in advance as possible* of any planned absences. Early notice is certainly required if any accommodations are to be made.

The classification of an absence as *excused* or *unexcused* will be made by the students' classroom (lower school) or homeroom (upper school) teachers, in accordance with the criteria delineated above.

An **ILLEGAL ABSENCE**, or cut, is a failure to attend school (or a scheduled class) that occurs without parent/guardian permission or knowledge. No extensions or accommodations will be made for cuts, and all illegal absences will be referred for discipline. Generally, students arriving more than 10 minutes late to class without a valid pass will be given an illegal absence.

In all cases, it is the responsibility of the student to find out what class work was missed, and to make it up. Communication with the student's teacher is paramount. Students are encouraged to exchange phone numbers with other students in their classes to facilitate inquiries about missed class work, or to obtain missed notes, etc.

6. Daily Dismissal Protocol

All students are required to attend dismissal in the sanctuary at the end of each day. The school day officially does not end until 3:00 and students are expected to remain until we end the day in prayer, song and official dismissal. Failure to attend dismissal could warrant disciplinary action.

7. Lateness to School and Early Dismissal

Students are expected to be at school and ready to begin class at the scheduled start of the school day (8:00 am). In keeping with this expectation, students should arrive to school five to ten minutes early to facilitate locker visits and any other needed preparation. Parents must contact the bus company or district transportation office if a student's bus is consistently late.

All students being dropped off by a parent/guardian after 8:00 am must be brought to the office to be signed in and receive a pass to class. Frequent lateness will result in disciplinary action and consultation with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Students arriving to school after homeroom will not be permitted to enter class without a pass from the office.

If a student must leave school prior to dismissal, a note signed by a designated parent/guardian must be sent in with the student in the morning and given to the classroom teacher (lower school) or homeroom teacher (upper school). The note must indicate the purpose of the early dismissal, the time at which the student will be picked up, and who will be coming. **THE ONLY WAY THAT ANY PERSON OTHER THAN THE OFFICIAL PARENT/GUARDIAN MAY SIGN A GCA STUDENT OUT IS FOR THE CENTRAL OFFICE TO RECEIVE AUTHORIZATION BY PHONE OR IN PERSON FROM AN OFFICIAL PARENT/GUARDIAN. THIS PERSON WILL THEN BE REQUIRED TO SHOW OFFICIAL ID BEFORE SIGNING THE CHILD OUT.**

8. Notes and Notification

Parents/guardians are required to submit signed notes to the school in certain circumstances. All students must bring a parental note to school upon returning from any absence; lower school students must bring a note to the classroom teacher, while upper school students will deliver notes to their homeroom teacher. Notes must indicate the dates of and reason for any absence. Confidential medical information will not be required by the school, except where necessary to ensure the student's welfare. Notes must be submitted even after returning from **unexcused** absences. A note must be submitted on the morning of any day that a student is to be dismissed early. In addition, students must bring a note to the office when arriving late to school.

Parents must phone the school office on the morning of a student's absence, whenever possible. If a call is made before normal office hours, a message can be left on the voice messaging system.

A signed note from a physician, on letterhead or script, will be required for extended illness-related absences of three consecutive days or five days during a marking period. In addition, a physician's note should be submitted if a student requires any medical accommodations (e.g. excusal from P.E.).

In the case of extended absence, parents or students should contact teachers directly **during** the absence. Some teachers may request that contact be made even during short-term absences.

9. Conclusion

The primary considerations in the above policy are as follows: first, that students be present in their classes for optimum achievement; and second, that parents and teachers may be assured that students' whereabouts during the school day are accounted for at all times. Further, we seek to ensure that GCA remains in compliance with the standards expected of us by New York State. We appreciate your cooperation in these matters as we endeavor to glorify God in our care for your students.

G. DRESS CODE POLICY

1. Reasons for a uniform policy:

- The use of uniforms helps create a distraction free environment for learning.
- The neat appearance created by a uniform code enhances a ready-to-learn atmosphere and the respectable image we wish to be held by our students.
- A uniform code instills school spirit and a sense of belonging, while providing enough choice to allow for individual expression. The student is part of a group identity that strives for excellence and the code establishes a tradition.
- The uniform code saves parent's time as most all uniform items, including accessories, can be purchased at the same source. This may save parents not only time, but energy as well. In addition, time may be saved each morning as the "what to wear issue" is eliminated.
- The uniform code should save parents money. The uniform code de-emphasizes the social impact of dress and helps focus the students on character and academic issues. The selected clothes were chosen with price and durability in mind for an overall good value for the money. Growth features in some garments may also cut down on total wardrobe expenditures.

The uniform code addresses security. On field trips, students in uniform aid the teachers in keeping track of everyone. On the playground or in the school, teachers and staff can clearly identify students from outsiders.

Students attending GCA are expected to comply with the following guidelines for student attire:

2. General Appearance Guidelines

GCA is a workplace for students and faculty. Whether in uniform or not, students should dress in a way to demonstrate their respect for their teachers and school. Our dress code is designed to help our students learn to not draw attention to their own appearances. In the world, there is great competition to wear the latest styles and fashions. That attitude is not consistent with Biblical teaching (1 Peter 3:3,4) or the policies of GCA. We encourage our students to wear clothing that is neat and clean. They should be an example to others in their appearance. However, vanity runs counter to

the Biblical worldview taught at GCA. Modesty is a key guideline whether in uniform or not. The following general guidelines must be followed unless permission is given for special activities requiring costume accommodations:

- **Dress neatly:** All shirts tucked in, shoes tied, no holes/tears in clothes, clothing appropriately sized for the wearer. Shoes must be black uniform shoes with black soles, not black sneakers. Top buttons and collar buttons must be buttoned, blazers must be worn between classes and should be with the student throughout the day (they may be removed during class); blazer sleeves should not be rolled up.
- **Be clean:** Recently washed, hair groomed.
- **Be modest:** Girls' skirts should be no more than one inch above the middle of the knee. Blouses and shirts should not be too tight or of stretchy, clingy fabric. Outlandish or distracting clothing or appearance will not be allowed. Only plain white tee shirts and undergarments are to be worn underneath blouses and shirts. Pants should be worn at the waistline. These standards apply to uniform and no-uniform/field trip days.
- **Hair and Accessories:** Students will keep their hair neat, clean, well groomed (combed), and in traditional styles and colors. Boys should be clean-shaven with no facial hair. Boys' hair is to be kept in short lengths with the back length no longer than the top of the shirt collar and cut above the ears, top length should not be messy; all hair styles must be neat, trimmed and tame; if cornrows are worn the braids must not be half in and half out; bangs should be trimmed and out of the eyes; hair is not to be bleached or highlighted. Girls' hair may be tastefully and conservatively highlighted. Girls may wear barrettes, scrunchies, and hair bows that are moderate in size and match the uniform colors (red, white, or navy). Hats are not acceptable in the classroom or school buildings for either boys or girls unless given permission for a special activity.
- **Jewelry:** Boys may not wear earrings. Girls may wear small earrings avoiding those that dangle low for obvious safety reasons. Please limit the number worn to two pairs and these are to be worn only in the earlobes. Watches and rings are fine for boys and girls, keeping in mind moderation and good taste. Gold and silver tasteful necklaces and bracelets may be worn if they are petite in nature.
- **Makeup:** Makeup is permissible for grades 7 and up. It must not be of bold or striking colors. It should complement the uniform and not draw attention to the person.
- **Nails:** Nails must be neatly trimmed and of a reasonable length (i.e. they cannot interfere with school activities such as writing and participating in Physical Education programs). Nail polish may be worn but must be neutral or clear.
- **Tattoos:** Tattoos are not permitted for GCA students.

These dress requirements apply to all school events, programs, and banquets unless special exemptions or requirements have been communicated by GCA. Before any special event, the Headmaster will notify students if the regular school uniform is to be worn.

3. Uniform Policy

All uniform items must be purchased from approved vendors. An approved vendor list is available at the Academy office. The items and vendors have been selected in order to keep parental expenses to a minimum yet teach our children the discipline of a uniform policy and to encourage neatness in personal appearance.

The uniform policy will be vigorously enforced, so parents are strongly encouraged to purchase the uniform items listed. Neatness will be emphasized throughout the day. For example, boys must always tuck in their shirts, button top and collar buttons, and not roll up blazer sleeves. This should help in students' respect for school and learning.

| | GIRLS | BOYS |
|---|---|--|
| Every Day Uniform | White or lt. blue* long or short sleeve Peter Pan collar blouse | White, lt. blue or red long or short sleeve Polo shirt |
| | Navy V-Neck pleated jumper | Navy uniform pants |
| | Navy/Red Plaid V-Neck Pleated jumper* | |
| Chapel Uniform | White long or short sleeve Peter Pan collar blouse | White long or short sleeve Oxford shirt |
| | Navy V-Neck jumper | Navy uniform pants |
| | Red cross tie | Red tie |
| Every Day & Chapel Uniform Accessories | Navy, black or white socks: ankle or knee highs or tights. Black leggings are permitted with black socks. | Black or navy dress socks |
| | Navy or black uniform shoes (no sneakers or high heels) | Black belt |
| | Solid/plaid navy, red, or white hair accessories. | Black uniform shoes (no sneakers or hiking boots) |
| Every Day & Chapel Warm Layer | Navy crew neck Cardigan sweater | Navy V-Neck Cardigan sweater or Vest |
| *Optional Uniform Items. | | |

a.

Ki

b. Seventh through Twelfth Grade

| | GIRLS | BOYS |
|---|--|--|
| Every Day Uniform | White or lt. blue*long or short sleeve Oxford shirt | White or lt. blue* long or short sleeve Oxford shirt |
| | Grey Kick Pleat skirt | Khaki uniform pants* |
| | Grey Wrap Around skirt | Grey uniform pants* |
| | Navy/red/white Kick Pleat Plaid skirt* | Flannel Grey pants |
| | Navy or navy/red plaid* cross tie | Red/navy striped uniform tie |
| | Navy GCA blazer w/ crest | Navy GCA blazer w/ crest |
| Chapel Uniform | White long or short sleeve Oxford shirt | White long or short sleeve Oxford shirt |
| | Grey Wrap Around skirt | Flannel Grey pants |
| | Plaid cross tie | Red/navy striped uniform tie |
| | Navy GCA blazer w/ crest | Navy GCA blazer w/ crest |
| Every Day & Chapel Uniform Accessories | Navy, black or white socks ankle or knee highs or tights. Black leggings are permitted with black socks. | Black or navy dress socks |
| | Navy or black uniform shoes (no sneakers/high heels 2 ½ " max) | Black belt |
| | Solid/plaid navy, red, or white hair accessories. | Black uniform shoes (no sneakers or hiking boots) |
| Every Day & Chapel Warm Layer | Navy or red V-Neck sweater* | Navy or red V-Neck sweater* |
| *Optional Uniform Items. | | |

c. Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade PE Uniform

| K-6th Grade | 7-12th Grade |
|--|---|
| Navy GCA t-shirt | Navy GCA t-shirt |
| Navy GCA track jacket OR | Navy GCA track jacket OR |
| Navy GCA crew neck sweatshirt | Navy GCA zippered or pullover hooded sweatshirt |
| Navy GCA gym shorts OR | Navy GCA gym shorts OR |
| Navy GCA sweat pants OR | Navy GCA sweat pants OR |
| Navy GCA track pants | Navy GCA track pants |
| White Athletic Socks | |
| Sneakers – Must be simple, free from cartoon characters, lights, wheels, decorations. For extra warmth a solid white or navy long sleeve shirt may be worn under tee shirt. | |

6. No Uniform Days

On occasion, the Headmaster may declare a “no uniform” day. Discretion must be used by students on these days. Attire must be modest and appropriate. Unless otherwise notified, *e.g.* a special dress day, the following general guidelines will apply on “no uniform” days:

- Girls may wear pants.
- Jeans are acceptable for all students (must be neat, not ripped, tattered or tight).
- No yoga pants, sweats, leggings, jeggings or similar tight pants.
- Short skirts and low-cut dresses are not permitted.
- In warm weather, all students may wear modest shorts (fingertip length).
- T-shirts are acceptable (printed shirts must be discreet, *e.g.* no rock groups, crude humor, or inappropriate sayings or pictures).
- Sandals and flip-flops are not permitted for both reasons of modesty and safety.
- Sneakers are acceptable.

7. Enforcement of Uniform Policy

The headmaster will determine if there is a violation of the uniform policy or general guidelines for “no uniform” days. Students not complying will be required to correct their appearance as quickly as possible. Cheerful, consistent compliance is expected. Grumbling and challenging attitudes will be subject to disciplinary action. In situations of extremely inappropriate dress, parents will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate clothing to school. In all matters concerning the uniform policy, the decision of the headmaster is final.

H. ACADEMIC PROBATION

If an upper-school student fails a class for the quarter, the student will be placed on academic probation. Students placed on academic probation will not be allowed to participate in after-school activities (exceptions may be made for school musicals). If they are high school students, they will not be allowed off-campus for lunch.

1. Process

The probation status is subject to review at the end of four weeks, or sooner, upon student request AND the teacher’s discretion. In order to be placed on normal academic status, a student must turn in all missing assignments to whichever teachers they are owed, and the student must demonstrate appreciable improvement in his/her grades such that there is reasonable expectation the student will pass for that marking period. This level of improvement will be determined by and is at the discretion of the teacher(s) whose class(es) the student is failing.

If a student satisfactorily meets the above requirements, his/her normal academic status may be restored; the student may then resume after-school activities and off-campus lunch privileges, pursuant to the school retaining a written copy of parental permission.

If a student fails to meet these requirements, or, subsequent to meeting these requirements, once again fails to meet academic expectations in that same class such that he/she must again be

placed on probation within the same school year, then the student immediately becomes liable for expulsion.

2. Exceptions

An exception to expulsion will exist if the teacher under whom the student received his/her probationary status appeals the expulsion (i.e., the teacher recognizes extenuating circumstances).

Enrollment in an Advanced Placement class almost always constitutes an extenuating circumstance. In the case of quarterly failure of an AP course, the probationary process will be considered as merely one of various options for academic improvement. The choice in application will be reserved for the teacher's discretion.

3. Probation Committee

The Probation committee may be composed of, but is not limited to, the following: The Headmaster, Guidance counselor, student's Omnibus/homeroom teacher, and another faculty member of the Headmaster's choice. In addition, any teacher for whom the student is failing a class may be consulted on a temporary advisory basis.

As in all disciplinary matters, at any point throughout the probation process, the Headmaster's decision is final.

I. EXECUTION OF DISCIPLINE POLICY

The kind and amount of discipline (correction) will be determined by the teachers, and if necessary, the administrators. The discipline will be administered in the light of the student's offense and attitude. All discipline will be based on biblical principles, e.g. restitution, apologies (public and private), swift, meaningful punishment, restoration of fellowship, no lingering attitudes, etc. The vast majority of disciplinary problems are to be dealt with at the classroom level. Love and forgiveness will be an integral part of the discipline of a student.

1. Office Visits:

a. Immediate: There are five basic behaviors that will **automatically** necessitate discipline from the principal or headmaster (versus the teacher). Those behaviors are:

- **Severe Disrespect** shown to *any* staff member. The staff member will be the judge of whether or not severe disrespect has been shown.
- **Dishonesty** in any situation while at school, including lying, cheating, and stealing.
- **Rebellion**, *i.e.* outright disobedience in response to instructions.
- **Fighting**, *i.e.* striking in anger with the intention to harm the other student(s).
- **Obscene, vulgar, or profane language**, including taking the name of the Lord in vain.

b. Demerit:

A violation of any of the school rules or etiquette may result in the student receiving a demerit. Students who have accumulated three or more demerit marks in any given day will be required to serve detention at a time designated by the school staff. Detention will be served during lunchtime.

- If a student receives 5 demerit marks during a calendar week, he/she will serve a detention at lunchtime.
- If a student receives more than 5 demerit marks in one day, discipline will be determined by the administration on a case by case basis.
- A student serving detention may be given an assignment to be completed during the detention period. The faculty will determine when such an assignment is deemed appropriate.
- When a student receives a demerit and/or a detention, a Behavior Report is sent home via RenWeb. Parents should acknowledge receipt of the report via return e-mail.

2. The Process

If, for any of the above reasons, or other reasons, a student receives discipline from the Headmaster, the following accounting will be observed. Within either *semester* of the school year:

- The first *two* times a student is sent to the Headmaster for discipline the student's parents will be contacted and given the details of the visit. The parents' assistance and support in averting further problems will be sought.
- The *third* office visit will be followed by a scheduled conference with the student's parents.
- Should the student require a *fourth* office visit, a **two-day suspension** will be imposed on the student.
- If a *fifth* office visit is required, the student may be **expelled** from the school.

3. Expulsion

The GCA School Board realizes that expelling a student is a very serious matter and should always be carefully dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Forgiveness and restitution are fundamental to the total discipline policy. However, should a student and his or her parents not be able to eliminate behavioral problems before a fifth office visit, the student may be expelled. When appropriate, the Headmaster will contact the family's Pastor.

4. Serious Misconduct

Should a student commit an act with such serious consequences that the Headmaster deems it necessary, the office-visit process may be bypassed and **suspension** or **expulsion** imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct could include: acts endangering the lives of other students or staff members, gross violence/vandalism to the school or church facilities, or violations of civil law. In addition, students may be subject to school discipline for serious misconduct which occurs after school hours.

5. Parental Misconduct

In the event that serious misconduct on the part of the parent(s), (*e.g.* physical or sexual abuse or church discipline resulting in, but not limited to excommunication), is brought to the attention of the Headmaster, he shall seek the counsel and guidance of the elders of GRBC and the student's family's Pastor, if not members of GRBC. In the event of such circumstances, the course of discipline shall be at the discretion of the Headmaster, GCA Board, and the elders of GRBC. The action may or may not include the removal of the student from GCA.

6. Readmission

Should the expelled student desire to be readmitted to GCA at a later date, the Headmaster and the GCA school board will make a decision based on the student's attitude and circumstances at the time of re-application.

J. GRIEVANCE POLICY

The objective of this policy is to establish biblical guidelines for the resolution of disputes and grievances in the operation of GCA. These guidelines are to be followed whenever there is a dispute or grievance concerning any aspect of GCA's operations between any two parties connected in a direct way to the school. This includes students, parents, staff, volunteers, administration, and the board.

1. Students/Parents to Teachers:

- All concerns about the classroom must first be presented to the teacher by the parents or, if the student is mature enough, by the student himself or herself. If the student presents the concern, a respectful demeanor is required at all times.
- If the problem is not resolved, the parents or student may bring the concern to the Headmaster. If the student brings the concern, he or she must have the parents' permission to do so.
- If the problem is still not resolved, the parents should bring the concern to the GCA School Board.
- Any problem not resolved after bringing the matter to the GCA School Board will be referred to the elders of GRBC for final decision. The student's family's Pastor may be consulted.

2. Parents to Headmaster:

- If parents have a grievance or dispute about the general operation of the school (apart from the operation of the classrooms), they should bring their concerns to the Headmaster.
- If the situation is not resolved, they should present their concerns to the GCA School Board.
- Any problem not resolved after bringing the matter to the GCA School Board will be referred to the elders of GRBC for final decision.
- This procedure applies to board members who are acting in their capacity as parents and not as representatives of the board.

IV. OTHER INFORMATION

A. STUDENT HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

1. All students attending GCA must have on record with the school office, a current immunization record before entering school in the fall. Standard immunization record forms may be obtained from the family doctor and a copy given to school office.
2. All new students must receive a physical examination by his or her physician prior to enrollment. The examination must be completed during the three-month period prior to the start of school. In addition, returning students must have a physical examination prior to entering grades 1 and 3.
3. Before the school will issue any medication to a student, we must receive written parental permission. No prescription or non-prescription medicines will be dispensed without written parental permission each time. Instructions must be very specific, including time and dosage (not based on the appearance of symptoms). For liquid medicines, a medicine spoon must be included. Medicine must be sent in for each occurrence.
4. Other forms necessary for student health records that can be obtained from the school office are:
 - a. Health History: Describes the basic health/illness history of each student.
 - b. Emergency Form: Lists the emergency contact names and phones numbers of people who may need notification in the event of a medical emergency. Includes signed waiver in order to facilitate necessary surgical action.

B. FOOD ALLERGY GUIDELINES

Grace Christian Academy is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for students. GCA understands the increasing prevalence of life-threatening allergies among school populations. Recognizing that the risk of accidental exposure to allergens can be reduced in the school setting, the Academy is committed to working in cooperation with parents, students, and physicians, to minimize risks and provide a

safe educational environment for all students. However, due to the limitations of finances, facilities and staff, GCA may not be able to admit all students with severe allergies. The Headmaster will have the final decision in all these matters.

1. Responsibility of the Parent/Guardian of an Anaphylactic Student

Each parent/guardian of their child with a Life-Threatening Allergy shall have the following expectations:

- a. Teach your child to:
 - Recognize the first symptoms of a food allergic/anaphylactic reaction.
 - Communicate with school staff as soon as he/she feels a reaction is starting.
 - Carry his/her own epinephrine auto-injector when appropriate.
 - Not share snacks, lunches, drinks or utensils.
 - Understand the importance of hand washing before and after eating.
 - Report teasing and/or bullying that may relate to the child's allergy.
 - Take responsibility for his/her own safety.
- b. As children get older, teach them to:
 - Carefully read label and evaluate ingredient safety information.
 - Administer his/her own epinephrine auto-injector and be able to train others in its use.
 - Develop awareness of his/her environment, including allergy-controlled zones and to practice age appropriate behavior regarding health and safety.
- c. Inform the school office of your child's allergies prior to the opening of school (or as soon as possible after diagnosis).
- d. Work with the school team collaboratively to develop a health plan for accommodations in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and during school sponsored activities.
- e. Complete and submit all required medication forms.
- f. Provide the school with current cell phone, pager, etc. and maintain updated emergency contact numbers and medical information.
- g. Provide Epinephrine on field trips.
- h. To chaperone your student's field trips if possible and if requested.
- i. Provide safe snacks for your student's classroom so there is always something your child can choose from during an unplanned special event.
- j. Encourage your child to wash hands before and after handling food.

- k. Inform the school of any changes in the child's Life-threatening Food Allergy status.
- l. Provide the school with the physician's statement if the student no longer has food allergies.

2. Responsibility of the Academy

- a. The Academy faculty and staff will meet with parents to hear their needs and concerns.
- b. The Academy will ensure that the faculty has been educated concerning life-threatening allergies which will include the following topics:
 - A description of severe allergies and a discussion of the most common foods causing allergic reactions.
 - The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.
 - The correct use of Epinephrine.
 - Specific steps to follow in the event of an emergency.
- c. The Academy will provide a safe environment in the lunchroom for those students with life threatening allergies.
- d. The Academy will provide a safe environment in the classroom for those students with life threatening allergies.

C. FIRE AND INTRUDER DRILLS

Twelve fire drills are conducted during the school year and monitored for efficiency according to New York State Education Law. When the fire bell sounds, students are to leave the building immediately in an orderly and quiet manner. Students are not to stop to get an item from the classroom before they exit. Students should listen to staff instructions and walk quickly to the designated areas and wait quietly for the signal to re-enter the building. Re-entry must also be orderly and quiet.

Intruder drills will vary depending on the hypothetical situation. Students are to follow the instruction of the teacher as it will vary for each drill and are to respond quickly, quietly and compliantly.

D. SCHOOL SPONSORED EVENTS POLICY

This policy seeks to ensure that school-sponsored programs meet the same standards for quality and content established in the educational programs at GCA. It also seeks to ensure that the same standards for student conduct established at the school are maintained at all events sponsored by GCA. Finally, this policy is designed to limit the liability assumed by GCA for school-sponsored events.

1. School-sponsored events are:

Events which are organized by a GCA staff member acting in his or her official capacity as a teacher, administrator, etc. or 2) events which are published on the GCA monthly calendar or 3) events which receive financial support from GCA (including fund-raising opportunities provided through GCA).

- School-sponsored events should be consistent with the goals of GCA.
- School-sponsored events require the attendance of a staff member from GCA.
- Class time is not to be used for planning school-sponsored activities.
- Attendance at school-sponsored activities is generally limited to students who are currently enrolled at GCA. Exceptions may be granted by an administrator.
- Timely information about school-sponsored activities must be provided to the parents. All written communication must be submitted to an administrator prior to being sent to all parents.
- Parents must sign a written waiver releasing GCA from any liability for all events taking place off campus. This statement should also authorize medical treatment to be given to the student in case of injury.
- Only school-sponsored events will be placed on the monthly school calendar.
- An administrator must approve all proposed activities, determine the number of chaperones required, and approve a date for the event.
- Only school-sponsored activities will receive support from GCA, e.g. no charge for copier and/or telephone use, bulletin announcements to publicize the event, use of supplies, etc.

2. School Events

Certain events that occur after school hours are considered school events and are part of the overall program at the Academy. Attendance at these programs is mandatory. These events include but are not limited to parents' nights, orientation programs, holiday programs, open house programs, awards ceremonies, and occasional programs to promote the Academy.

3. Academic Field Trips

Periodically, teachers will plan field trips to supplement and compliment the course curriculum. Field trips are usually trips to museums, historic sites, or other places of interest.

- Since these trips are part of the course, attendance on these field trips is mandatory for all class members.
- All school rules apply during field trips including dress codes.
- The use of electronic devices is prohibited on field trips.

E. FINANCIAL POLICY

1. Tuition

- GCA is committed to fiscal responsibility and accountability. Our annual budget is based upon projected enrollment. Since tuition is the primary source of income for the operation of the school, it is essential that tuition be paid on a dependable schedule by all school families, for us to meet the expenses to which we are committed. The following guidelines should be observed:
- Once a student enrolls, the parent must set up a tuition payment plan. The parent should log onto the account they created at www.factsmgt.com when paying the application and enrollment fees. The parent must set up a tuition payment plan by 1) choosing either a one time or 10-month payment plan 2) providing the financial institution information. All monthly tuition installments will be automatically withdrawn on the 15th of the month or the following weekday if the 15th falls on a weekend. If a payment is returned, a \$30 FACTS returned payment fee will be assessed
- Families who withdraw after August 15th through December 15th will be obligated to pay the tuition amount for the remainder of the month of withdrawal. Families who withdraw after December 15th are responsible for the entire yearly tuition.
- Throughout the year, charges outside of tuition will be billed to an Incidental Billing Account. This account must also have a financial institution assigned with preferences whether to automatically withdraw or make a manual payment. These charges may include but are not limited to field trips, After School Enrichment Program, special events, etc.
- A student may not be enrolled for a new school year if there is an outstanding balance unless an arrangement for payment has been accepted by the GCA Board.

2. Automatic Reenrollment

In order to make this process more **convenient** for parents, Grace Christian Academy **will automatically re-enroll students for the following school year and each subsequent year thereafter.**

What is re-enrollment? Re-enrollment is an annual data collection process that schools use to update enrollment records of the current student body. This information is used as the school makes plans for the following school year. Basically, the simple question is: “Are you coming back to this school next year?” For planning purposes, the leadership of the school needs to know how many students we will have in each grade on the first day of school.

Why Continuous Enrollment? When students are continuously enrolled, from their initial enrollment into the school until they graduate from Grace Christian Academy, the continuous enrollment system lets us maximize our resources to provide a GCA education to our families at the highest level of excellence.

When will I be notified of Re-enrollment? A communication reminder from the Admission Office informing the families that might be thinking about leaving GCA to notify us prior to the March deadline. This means that those families who are intending to return the following year will have the convenience of not having to go through the re-enrollment process every year. Families who sign their New Student Financial Agreement at enrollment will never have to worry about signing this agreement again for the duration of the student’s enrollment at the school.

What is the penalty if I break the agreement? Families that are re-enrolled but break their initial enrollment agreement after March 1st are responsible for 100% of the re-enrollment fee. Families who choose to opt-out of the contract after the school year has begun will be obligated to pay the tuition for the remainder of the month of withdrawal. Tuition pre-paid will be refunded via check within 30 days. Families who choose to withdraw after December 15th, will be obligated to pay the entire tuition school year’s tuition amount. However, if we do not re-admit your child or if there is some unforeseen circumstance that our School Board approves, there may be no financial penalty.

What will the Continuous Enrollment Agreement look like?

- I hereby opt into continuous enrollment. This means that my GCA student will return to GCA every year unless I notify the school otherwise.
- I understand that I have until March 1st every year to notify the Front Office of any changes in my plans of enrollment for my child/ren.
- If I breach this agreement by dis-enrolling after the designated date, I understand that I will be legally obligated to paying specified fees and tuition amounts.
- GCA recognizes that major life changes and unique circumstances do occur. For any unique circumstances (such as the following), families dis-enrolling after the announced deadline will be exempt from the tuition penalty.
- Moving/relocation
- Dis-enrollment at the request of GCA.
- Other circumstance as approved by the School Board.

What will the re-enrollment season look like?

- March 1st, 20XX: Opt-out and Withdrawal forms due
- March 2nd, 20XX: \$210 re-enrollment fee per student will be billed to FACTS
- March 31, 20XX: \$210 re-enrollment fee per student will be withdrawn by FACTS.
- August 15, 20XX: Monthly Tuition Charges for the new academic year will begin on FACTS

IF YOUR STUDENT IS RETURNING:

• **YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO ANYTHING.** FACTS Payment Registration and Re-enrollment will be completed for you automatically.

• **Automatic debit for the non-refundable \$210 re-enrollment fee per student will occur on March 31st of the current year and for tuition starting August 15 for the following year.**

Your FACTS payment plan will use your prior year selections. The annual payment plan enrollment fee of \$50 per family will be charged by FACTS for monthly installment plans. You will receive confirmation of your new payment schedule from FACTS early summer.

NEW SIBLINGS:

• **CONTACT THE OFFICE.** Current families planning to enroll a new sibling should complete a new student application as soon as possible. Spaces are limited in some grades. Tuition for new siblings will be added separately at the time of their acceptance and enrollment.

IF YOU ARE WITHDRAWING OR YOU DO NOT WANT TO RE-ENROLL A STUDENT:

• **YOU MUST OPT-OUT or WITHDRAW** (effective end of the school year) **BY March 1st of the current year.** Families who opt-out or withdraw after March 1st will be responsible for payment of 100% of the re-enrollment fee. Families who opt-out or withdraw after school has resumed through December 15th, will be obligated to pay the tuition amount for the remainder of the month of withdrawal. Families who withdraw after December 15th are responsible for the entire yearly tuition.

F. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY

1. School hours:

- School hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM for all grades.
- Students should begin arriving no sooner than 7:30 AM.

2. Arrival Procedures:

- All students are to be dropped off by the main entrance to the school at the rear of the building.
- Buses will drive into the parking lots and stop in front of the main entrance for students to exit the bus.
- Parents who drive their children to school will enter the parking lot and stop by the main entrance allowing only enough time for their students to exit the vehicle and enter the school building.
- Parents with younger children who need more time should park their vehicle in the perimeter of the parking lot and escort their children to the door.
- No vehicles should be parked in the center of the parking lot during arrival time as it impedes bus traffic.

3. Dismissal Procedures:

- The dismissal process begins at 2:55 p.m. Students who ride buses will be dismissed first, followed by students who are picked up by parents or their representatives.
- The GCA office must be informed of normal pick up arrangements, i.e. who will pick up a student and if this will vary on different days of the week. If there is a variation to normal pick up, the parent must send written notice to school with the student. The notice must include the name of the person who will pick up the student. If the person is not known to GCA personnel, proof of identification will be required. We cannot modify dismissal procedures based on verbal notice from a student.

- If a student normally rides a bus, written instructions from the parent must be sent to school if other pick up arrangements are to be followed for a particular day. Parental instructions must include the name of the person picking up. If the person is not known to GCA personnel, proof of identification will be required.
- Except for emergency circumstances, authorization for a modification to normal dismissal procedures cannot be made by telephone.
- Parents picking up students should park in the parking lot and await the dismissal of the students as outlined above. Vehicles should be parked in marked stalls to keep the area clear for vehicles entering and exiting the parking lot.
- All drivers should exercise great care when driving in the parking lot during dismissal since many students and families will be walking to their vehicles at this time.

G. BUS POLICY

Students must ride their assigned buses. If there is to be a deviation, e.g. student being picked up by a parent or another individual, a written note must be sent to school with the student, as stated above in the Dismissal Policy. All GCA rules apply while students are on the bus; therefore, students may be disciplined by the administration of GCA for violations.

H. STUDENT VEHICLE POLICY

Students who have a valid New York State Driver's License may drive their vehicle to and from school. They are expected to drive responsibly in the parking lot. They should park in the perimeter parking stalls and observe special care for students, family and faculty walking through the parking lot. Students with off-campus lunch privileges are not permitted to use their vehicles at lunch time. They must remain parked in place until dismissal time. Students should not give another student a ride in their vehicle without written permission from both families, signed by both sets of parents and submitted to the central office.

I. INCLEMENT WEATHER – SCHOOL CLOSING

Grace Christian Academy will close during inclement weather for a variety of factors. Since faculty members and students come from many different school districts, the primary factor is their safe travel to and from school. Frequently some school districts close while others remain open. This may cause a problem with bus transportation for some students.

- The headmaster will make a determination by 6:00 AM whenever possible.
- If the school is closed, it will be broadcast on News 12. News 12 only lists schools in the county where you reside. Therefore, if you reside in Suffolk County, you must use the News 12 website or the GCA Parents Web for accurate information. A school-wide email and parent alert will also be sent out.
- School closures will also be listed on the News 12 website, *News12.com*.

- The closing information will also be posted on GCA's Family Portal main page. Follow instructions in this manual for access to the portal.

J. LOST AND FOUND

Parents and students are encouraged to put names on all uniform items with an indelible marker. Lost items will be placed in the Lost and Found Bin which is kept in the lunchroom. Students who have lost items should check this bin for those items. Valuable items (e.g., jewelry, cell phones, etc.) will be kept in the school office. Uniform items with no names written on them which remain in the bin over sixty days will be turned over to our uniform exchange.

K. FACTS Family Portal

Grace Christian Academy has adopted a web-based administrative program to aid in record reporting and keeping. All academic records, attendance records, behavior and disciplinary incidents as well as medical and other important records are kept on this program. The Family Portal is an excellent tool for parents to keep informed of school activities as well as the progress of their children academically. Parents of GCA students must supply the Academy with an email address which will give them access to the program from their home computers. Upon enrollment, parents will be given instructions for gaining access to the Family Portal. Parents are encouraged to check the Family Portal daily for homework assignments and student grades as well as important announcements of interest to the entire school community. The Family Portal is the primary method that the Academy will utilize to keep parents informed.

L. STAFF AND STUDENT TRANSPORT

GCA Staff are not permitted to transport any GCA student that is not their own at any time without written consent from the student's official parent/guardian. Even with written permission, this practice is highly discouraged and should only be considered when absolutely necessary and no alternative is available.