

# Family Handbook

2024-2025 School Year



Elementary/Middle School

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High School

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# FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION, STATEMENTS & POLICIES

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Grace Christian School is to assist Christian parents by providing a sound academic education in a Christ-centered environment designed to prepare our young people to know God and to live in obedience to His will for their lives.

## VISION

To see successive generations of Grace Christian School students living their lives in Christ for the glory of God.

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following, though not an exhaustive statement of faith, contains key elements of the belief system to which the school subscribes:

- We believe in the infinite, personal God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.
- We believe the Bible to be the infallible, authoritative basis for our understanding of doctrine and truth.
- We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory to judge the living and the dead.
- We believe that regeneration by the Holy Spirit in response to an individual's acceptance of the gospel message is absolutely necessary for the salvation of lost and sinful men.
- We believe salvation is by grace through faith alone.
- We believe the Christian life is possible only by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit enabling man to live a godly, sanctified life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—the saved to a resurrection of life and the lost to a resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the unity of believers through the sharing of common life in Christ Jesus.
- We believe God offers redemption to all who confess and forsake their sin (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11).
- We believe that God creates each human as uniquely male or female, and that each person is made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27).
- We believe marriage is the union of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-9). We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur between only a man and woman who are covenanted together in this unique union of marriage (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).
- We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual or transgender conduct, bestiality, incest, polygamy, as well as orientation or identity with these behaviors) is sinful and outside of God's will (Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10).
- We believe that all human life is precious as created in God's image. We believe this extends to the fetus, the aged, the physically and mentally challenged, and every other stage of human life from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and cherish all human life (Psalm 139).
- We believe that, while we cannot condone, endorse or in any way participate in the expression of beliefs or lifestyles that are at odds with this statement of faith, all persons must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity (Mark 12:28-31). In this context, we do not believe that disagreement with another's beliefs is to be equated with intolerance or a form of "hate speech." While God sets clear ethical standards through His infallible word—the Bible—for which we are to stand without compromise, He loves all men and women, even those who reject His moral imperatives.

- We believe that in order to preserve the ministry values and integrity of Grace Christian School’s mission, and in order to maintain our fundamental convictions as based on the Scripture, it is imperative that all parents who enroll their children and all persons employed by Grace Christian School in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, must agree to and abide by this Statement of Faith, including specific beliefs regarding marriage, gender, and sexuality (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

## **GCS CORE VALUES**

Grace Christian School is committed to providing a quality education within a learning environment that emphasizes four core values:

- Spiritual - Our highest priority, in all grades, is that of encouraging faith in Jesus Christ and imparting the knowledge and critical thinking skills so vital in preparing our young people to be able to stand for Christ as salt and light in our humanistic culture. We do not recognize the so-called divide between the “sacred and secular.” Therefore, we seek to integrate learning into the “wholistic” context that all of life is to be lived “as unto the Lord.”
- Academic - As a fundamental value of our Christian faith, we believe our students should be given a solid grounding in a core curriculum of language arts, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences. We believe those students who are best prepared for higher education and various vocational callings are those who have this fundamental and thorough grounding in these core academic areas.
- Character - While we emphasize the development of intellectual capacity and academic skills, we believe a higher goal of Christian education is the cultivation of Christ-like character. The school formulates all policies with the goal of teaching godly respect and honor for staff and fellow students, healthy self-control, personal integrity, and an overall appreciation for the need to live with others in Christian love by preferring others above self.
- Covenant Community - In the context of rapidly increasing cultural pressures that are aggressively coming to bear against our Christian faith and values, we emphasize the priority of Christian community among parents, school, staff, and the larger Christian community, as vital in achieving our essential mission as a school.
- Whole Student - In addition to the above core values, Grace Christian School is dedicated to the emotional, social, and physical development of its students in a Christ-centered environment.

## **STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

Grace Christian School operates on the belief that all meaningful learning takes place in the context of God’s existence as the infinite, personal God who has revealed Himself through the person of Jesus Christ. Proverbs 1:7 indicates that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” All learning must be integrated from this starting point and is meaningful only in the context of man’s acknowledgement of God’s existence. Learning which takes place outside of this context is what the Apostle Paul calls “empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Paul further exhorts believers in Christ “to see to it that no one takes you captive” through such philosophy (Col. 2:8). It is the primary mission of Grace Christian School to give its students a Christ-centered orientation in all areas of their learning experience from the time they enter school in kindergarten through their graduation as seniors from high school. Assisting Christian parents in founding their children in the Christian belief and value system is a primary distinctive of Grace Christian School.

# **GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PARENT-SCHOOL COVENANT**

It is important that parents who wish to enroll their children at Grace Christian School understand and are committed to the following values that make the school distinctive in its philosophy of education. Your signature on this enrollment contract represents your acceptance of the following understandings and terms for the enrollment of your child(ren) at Grace Christian School for the current school year and should be considered a contractual agreement.

GCS fully recognizes the rights of individuals who have become “legal guardians” of children to be equivalent to parents. All references to “parent(s)” in this handbook are therefore applicable to “legal guardians.”

## **The Purpose of Christian Education**

While we emphasize the development of intellectual capacity and academic skills, we believe the higher goal of Christian education is the cultivation of Christ-like character. The development of Christian character is the bedrock that makes the individual who he or she will ultimately become and largely determines the quality of his or her life, both in terms of personal fulfillment as well as serving the will of God. An education that neglects this priority of Christian character development is fundamentally flawed. In this context, the mission of Grace Christian School is “to assist Christian parents by providing a sound academic education in a Christ-centered environment designed to prepare our young people to know God and to live in obedience to His will for their lives.”

## **The Role of the Parents**

We believe the Bible establishes the parents as the primary educators of their children. Furthermore, we believe the Bible places special responsibility on the father to be the initiator and leader in instructing his family in the Christian faith and personal values which flow from it. Parents must be the primary teachers of their children in such basic skills and character qualities as listening attentively, giving prompt obedience to authority, showing respect for others, maintaining personal integrity, exercising appropriate self-control, and completing all assigned work in a timely and quality manner. While the school can do much in working with the parents to help develop these qualities, they are considered primarily in the realm of parental responsibility, and they must be reasonably present in the children if the home/school partnership is to be successful.

## **The Role of Grace Christian School**

We view the role of Grace Christian School as assisting parents by providing an educational program that will reinforce the Christian emphasis of the home as well as providing a formal academic and vocational education from the preschool through secondary school levels. This is a Biblically rooted partnership, in that the Hebrew words for parents (*horim*) and for teachers (*morim*) both pertain to the task of teaching and instruction. Thus, Christian school teachers are seen as coming alongside the parents and working to accomplish the common goals of Christian education.

## **The Vital Role of the Home, Church, School Community**

We believe the Bible emphasizes the importance of community in almost every aspect of Christian practice. Nowhere is this any more important than in the education and training of children, where parents are in need of the support of the larger Christian community consisting of the local church, school, and other like-minded parents. It is therefore expected that parents who enroll their children at Grace Christian School will be active members of a local church (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:19-22). Furthermore, it is expected that parents will attend parent meetings called by the school and participate in other school activities and efforts that affect and enhance the general school community.



### **The Principle of Discipline Practiced by Grace Christian School**

We believe the Bible establishes that all men and women are personally accountable for their actions and attitudes, and that training our children in responsible self-government is at the heart of Christian education. School policies and practices are designed, as consistently as possible, to provide this kind of reality training for students. By reality training, we mean that the child should be allowed to experience the benefits and rewards resulting from his or her responsible choices as well as the negative consequences resulting from inappropriate decisions. While it is important that parents and teachers provide an environment that is characterized by kindness, love, compassion, and grace, it is equally important that the child be allowed to experience the real consequences of his decisions. The ultimate responsibility for the discipline of the child lies with the parents; the authority of the school is based on, and only as effective as, the authority of the parent in the life of the child. Parents who are unable or unwilling to work on providing this fundamental level of discipline for their child will be asked to withdraw from the school.

### **The Worldview Nature of Christian Education**

We do not believe it is enough to merely fill our students' minds with the content knowledge of our Christian faith by memorizing Scriptures, learning Bible stories, and becoming well-versed in Christian doctrines. In addition to the mastery of such content, we believe a worldview education that helps them understand the reasonable basis for their faith and that also helps them understand the mindset of the larger culture is essential to preparing them to live as effective Christians in this secular culture. To this end, our goal is to work with the parents and local church in producing students who are well-founded in understanding the reasons why Christianity represents the exclusive truth in the midst of a world filled with many conflicting religions and philosophies.

### **The Principle of Commitment and Trust Between Parents and School**

It is expected that there will be a level of relationship between the parents and school based on the 1 Corinthians 13 model of love which ensures straightforward communication when dealing with difficulties and which avoids gossip or involving others not directly involved in a particular matter.

We understand and agree that should any misunderstanding or dissatisfaction arise regarding any of the teaching, philosophy or practices of the school, we will go to the proper authorities with our concerns rather than discussing them with others (Matt. 18:15-17). Furthermore, we understand our need to not take our child's "side" too quickly until we have thoroughly investigated and talked with the teacher or other school staff involved in the matter. In most cases, the teacher or school principal should be contacted first, and then, if necessary, the head of school. While the head of school is vested with final authority by the Board of Trustees for deciding such matters, parents may request that the process in which the administration and the head of school handled their concern be reviewed by the Board of Trustees Process Review Committee. After hearing the parents' concerns in a timely manner, this committee will share its recommendations with the head of school, who will then make a final determination concerning the matter.

Should the parents have issue with the school after following the above referenced Matthew 18 principle, and should the parents feel constrained to pursue the issue further, they and the school agree to be bound by the following mediation and binding arbitration agreement in an attempt to resolve issues and bring reconciliation.

### **Mediation and Binding Arbitration Agreement**

The parties to this commitment are Christians and believe that the Bible commands them to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian community in conformity with the biblical injunctions of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-24, and Matthew 18:15-20. Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising out of, or related to, this agreement or to any aspect of the

parent/school relationship, including claims under federal, state, and local statutory or common law, the law of contract, and law of tort shall be settled by biblically-based mediation.

If resolution of the dispute and reconciliation do not result from mediation, the matter shall then be submitted to an independent and objective arbitrator for binding arbitration. The parties agree for the mediation and arbitration process to be conducted in accordance with the “Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation” located in the Guidelines for Christian Conciliation, ICC Peace, LLC, located here: [ICC Guidelines](#). Consistent with these “Rules,” each party to the agreement shall agree to the selection of the arbitrator. The parties agree that if there is an impasse in the selection of the arbitrator, the Institute for Christian Conciliation, 301-N West El Norte Parkway #29, Escondido, CA, 92026, shall be asked to provide the name of a qualified person who will serve in that capacity. Consistent with the “Rules,” the arbitrator shall issue a written opinion within a reasonable time.

The parties to this contract agree that these methods shall be the *sole remedy* for any controversy or claim arising out of the parent/school relationship or this agreement and *expressly waive* their right to file a lawsuit against one another in any civil court for such disputes, except to enforce a legally binding arbitration decision. The parties to this agreement have had an opportunity to consult legal counsel before signing this agreement.

### **Commitment to Prayer**

We understand our need to support this school, those responsible for it, and the students through regular prayer, realizing that this ministry is an undertaking of faith and can be successful only to the degree that it is blessed by God. We will be committed to praying regularly to this end. (Luke 18:1; Luke 11:5-10)

### **The Authority of the Bible as God’s Word**

We understand that it is the position of the school that the Bible is God’s authoritative communication to man and that the Biblical imperative is that our children’s education should be based on the Christian worldview and permeated throughout with the Word of God. (Col. 2:8; 3:16; John 8:31-32; 2 Tim. 3:16)

### **Commitment to Financial Support**

In order for the school to meet its financial obligations, we understand our responsibility to pay tuition/fees on time each month. If for any reason we encounter difficulty in making our payments, we will take the initiative to contact the business office or finance committee chairman in order to discuss alternative payment arrangements. We also understand and agree with the school’s expectation that all parents will participate in the school’s two (2) annual fundraisers in order to help cover expenses not funded by tuition. (2 Cor. 9:7-10)

### **Parental Involvement with Students in Entertainment Choices**

We acknowledge the profound impact of popular culture on our Christian young people, especially in the forms of music, television, movies, videos, video games, the Internet, and similar media. We understand and agree that our role as parents is to aggressively intervene in and guide our children with their entertainment choices, seeking to teach them to make godly decisions when it comes to these issues. (Phil. 4:8; Psalm 101:3)

### **Additional Understandings**

We understand that Grace Christian School admits students of any race, color, national, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administering its educational policies, admission policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs. (Prov. 28:21; Gal. 3:28; Rom. 15:7)

We understand that if for any reason the Head of School determines that we are not in compliance with the spirit of this commitment, we may be asked to withdraw our child from enrollment in the school, and we will comply. In addition, we understand that Grace Christian School's Biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to be Christ-like in a Biblical context. On occasion, the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home may be counter to the Biblical lifestyle the school teaches. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, sexual immorality, homosexual orientation, or inability to support the moral and faith principles of the school. (1 Thes. 4:3-5; 2 Tim. 3:16) In such cases, the school reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to refuse admission of an applicant or to discontinue enrollment of a student.

## **EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Grace Christian School implements curriculum and designs programs that support and encourage numerous expected outcomes for student learning at all levels, demonstrating that the school values the development of the whole child. These outcomes are the result of a growth process that takes place over the span of the students' years of education and throughout life. It is the vision of Grace Christian School educators that a maturing GCS student:

### **Spiritual and Biblical Worldview Development**

- commits to a personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ, seeking to love, understand, and obey His Word.
- evaluates and interprets their world through the lens of Scripture, seeking to glorify God in every activity of life.
- understands that there is no sacred/secular divide and that all work done as unto the Lord is an act of worship.
- articulates and defends their Christian faith and worldview while having a basic understanding of opposing worldviews.

### **Social and Emotional Development**

- prefers, honors, and respects others as created in the image of God and knows that personal value and worth is established by God's love.
- personally responds to carrying out the Great Commission locally and around the world in a compassionate and culturally sensitive manner.
- understands and appreciates literature, the arts, and cultures of other people, dispelling ungodly prejudice and promoting ethnic unity.

### **Academic / Intellectual Development**

- is well prepared in all academic disciplines, and skilled in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- understands God's creation order in the universe, acquires an appreciation for the physical and biological sciences, and demonstrates proficiency in applying the scientific method.
- gains an understanding of history, geography, government, and economics in light of the sovereignty of God and the influence of the past upon the present and future.
- values intellectual inquiry and commits to lifelong learning.

### **Skills Development**

- is a critical thinker and possesses the skills to question, solve problems, and make wise decisions.
- participates in discussions across the academic disciplines, and demonstrates skill in effective communication and expressing ideas clearly.
- demonstrates proficiency in study skills, note-taking, test-taking, research skills, and use of information resources.
- is well prepared in technology skills and committed to using technology in an ethically responsible manner.

## **Character Development**

- cultivates the qualities of moral character and personal integrity, as well as exhibiting exemplary character in the areas of diligence, punctuality, responsibility, respect (for people and property), kindness, self-control, and manners.
- treats their body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and makes wise decisions about lifelong nutrition, fitness, purity, and lifestyle choices.
- values balanced participation in sports, extra-curricular, and co-curricular activities as beneficial to overall development and interpersonal health.
- appreciates the natural environment and practices responsible stewardship of God’s creation.
- commits to wise financial stewardship.

## **SCHOOL HISTORY AND FACILITIES**

Grace Christian School was founded in 1980 based on the conviction that children from Christian families should receive an education rooted in the Christian worldview. We began with seven students meeting in a parent’s home to currently having six buildings on three campuses serving over 200 households. These families come from a three-county radius and represent over sixty churches. Grace Christian School is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and COGNIA.

Our first graduating class consisted of five students in 1992. Since then, over 500 graduates have gone on to public or Christian colleges, entered the workforce or military, become homemakers, or gone to mission fields.

GCS teachers and staff are professing Christians who acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior. They are the “living” curricula whose example and personal faith have far more impact on the students than the formal, written curricula. In this context, it is the goal of the school that each student will be pointed clearly to life’s highest priority: a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The elementary and middle school meets in the Statler Complex (once owned by the Statler Brothers country music group) at 511 Thornrose Avenue. The high school campus is located in the former Staunton Public Library at 19 South Market Street. The GCS Activities Center, located at 1218 Middlebrook Avenue, provides our students with a home for physical education classes, indoor sporting events, school programs, and other special events. GCS has purchased the former Beverly Manor Elementary School which is now called the Cedar Green (CG) campus. Soccer games are played at the CG field, and basketball and volleyball practices use the CG gym. GCS will consolidate the ES/MS and HS campuses to CG as the facilities are updated.

## **COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SAFETY**

The elementary/middle and high school campuses have telephone intercom systems set up in all offices and classrooms. The campuses have electronic keys (FOBs) and outside buzzer (visual and auditory) identification systems at the main entrances to help ensure building security. The outside entrances at the campuses are kept locked at all times. In addition, an alarm system has been installed in each classroom and hallway that, when activated, sets off an alarm and sends an emergency summons to the local police and fire department. A camera system is installed in common areas throughout the campuses both inside and outside the buildings. The web-based school management software program (the Family Portal) also provides a Parent Alert text feature to enable fast and efficient communications to parents in case of an emergency.

## **GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCT**

All communities are governed by rules and general guidelines. These help ensure the orderly function of the community. We strongly adhere to the policy of treating others with civility and respect and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, and bullying. In a school environment, these guidelines also help students learn to exercise appropriate deference to God-ordained authority. Students and parents should carefully familiarize

themselves with the following rules and guidelines, which have been designed for their benefit as well as that of the larger school community.

GCS students, parents, employees, and volunteers are expected to abide by the following guidelines for conduct:

### **Love One Another**

*And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matt.22:37-39)*

When one loves God with all his heart, he will do nothing to deliberately sin against Him. When one loves his fellow man as he himself wants to be loved, he will do nothing to deliberately hurt or injure another person, including his fellow students.

### **Honor and Respect**

*Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. (Romans 13:1)*

*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (Romans 12:10 ESV)*

The qualities of honor and respect are essential aspects of how individual humans relate to God. No man can properly relate to God without deferring in humility to Him. These qualities are developed only as they are practiced within human relationships. In particular, the student learns honor and respect as he is trained in these qualities by his parents and other human authorities. In the context of our culture, which increasingly rejects the notion of honoring and respecting authority, learning to be respectful and giving honor where it is due is an essential lesson to be learned by GCS students. School staff are serving the students by working hard to provide them with godly training and an education to prepare them for adulthood. We should respect them as God's servants by practicing appropriate manners and deference toward them.

### **Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation**

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.... (Philippians 2:3-7 ESV)*

It is essential that Grace Christian School represents a safe and affirming environment that enhances each student's learning experience characterized by preferring one another in Christian love. Therefore, any forms of harassment, intimidation, and bullying are prohibited in all aspects of the school environment, as well any such behavior that may take place outside of school but which may negatively impact school life.

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying includes *any* personal interaction that may be reasonably perceived as threatening, demeaning, mentally or physically abusive, or that which communicates rejection and exclusion in a hurtful, cruel manner (including various forms of gossip or defamation).

When becoming aware of such behavior, school leadership will counsel those so engaged with the goal of instructing them at an age-appropriate level as to the inappropriateness of such attitudes and actions in light of the Biblical standard of Christian love.

If such behavior persists after initially being confronted, the school administration will use its judgment in taking further corrective actions, including possible suspension or, in more extreme cases, expulsion from the school, per the school's student discipline protocols as articulated in Family and Staff Handbooks. (Refer to “Suspensions/Expulsions - All Grades.”)

Because such behaviors represent a great variety of circumstances and interpersonal dynamics, the administration will use its judgment in each case and in context with handbook policies, with how to best deal with the matter.

The “Parent-School Covenant” touches upon various aspects of how our school community is to conduct itself in our interpersonal relations and conflicts in a Biblical manner.

### **Gossip/Defamation**

*Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.* (Proverbs 20:19 ESV)

Speaking about other people in a way that damages their reputation does not reflect the love of Christ to His people. Even when what is said is true, a follower of Christ should be committed to giving good reports about people and speaking about and to them in an encouraging way.

### **Manners**

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.* (Philippians 2:3 ESV)

The practice of good manners is a quality that should distinguish the GCS community. Students are asked to practice good manners toward staff and other adults with whom they come in contact during the school day or at school functions. Adults should be addressed respectfully. Students should defer to adults by holding the doors, allowing them to pass in the hallways. Students should be attentive and ready for class when the bell rings. Students should also practice good manners toward each other by preferring one another above self. In particular, young men are expected to practice traditional manners toward young ladies by holding doors, helping carry burdens, giving up seats, and in similar ways.

### **Honesty and Integrity**

*Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.* (I Peter 3:10 ESV)

God is a God of truth and desires that his children reflect this same virtue. We should be honest in all communication, schoolwork, and relationships. If faced with untruthfulness in others, we should be committed to practicing the Matthew 18 principle of confrontation.

### **Responsibility**

*One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.* (Luke 16:10 ESV)

Learning responsibility and how to faithfully carry out one’s duty is an important lesson in preparation for adulthood. The family should view school assignments, attendance, punctuality, in-class participation and other school-related responsibilities as unto the LORD.

## **Stewardship of Buildings and Property**

*Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.* (I Corinthians 4:2 ESV)

We should view ourselves as God's stewards responsible for the care of facilities, materials, equipment, and technology that He has provided us often through the sacrificial giving of others.

## **APPEALS**

*For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.* (Romans 14:9 ESV)

There will be times when there is disagreement with a school policy or decision. Instead of arguing or complaining about the conflict, carefully pray through the situation, committing it to the sovereignty of God. After prayer, respectfully discuss this matter with the teacher, administrator, staff member, or coach, realizing that if the matter needs to be corrected, your input may help change things for the better. On the other hand, with additional discussion, you may gain a better understanding of the matter. Parents and students must discuss suggestions or grievances with the teacher outside of class at a time that is convenient for the teacher. The final decision will be made by the school leadership.

# **FINANCIAL INFORMATION & POLICIES**

## **FAMILY ACCOUNTS PAYMENT POLICY**

Grace Christian School uses FACTS Tuition Management for all student billing, and each family is required to complete online enrollment with FACTS during the FACTS SIS enrollment process.

There are three tuition payment options available to parents:

- One-month payment plan: A 2% discount is given if full tuition is paid by July. The full amount of the charge will be due if this payment plan is chosen.
- Two-month payment plan: First half of total tuition is paid in June, and the second half is paid in December.
- Twelve-month payment plan: Tuition is paid in monthly installments from June through May.

Incidental charges will be billed separately as they occur, including, but not limited to, athletics, fine arts, child care, retreats, advanced classes, etc.

A *Senior Fee* is paid by families who have students in the 12th grade. The amount is communicated to them prior to beginning the senior year and families can choose to pay this as a lump sum or in installments. Payment of the Senior Fee can not be combined with other tuition and fee payments made within FACTS-SIS, as *Senior Fee* funds are deposited in an independent bank account. Thus, checks should be made payable to the "GCS Senior Fund" and sent into the HS to the attention of the "HS Principal." Finally, "scholarships" are available to senior families, and interested families should approach the HS Principal to discuss this possibility.

Payments are made as an automatic draft from a bank account or credit card. Families are given the choice of five monthly due dates for the tuition draft (1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>). If an automatic draft fails, an insufficient funds fee will be applied to your account. If paying by credit card, your account will be charged a processing fee.

It has always been the policy of the school to work with families in making special payment arrangements when they have extenuating financial circumstances. In such cases, parents should contact our Business Manager to discuss the possibility of making special payment arrangements. A written payment plan will also need to be submitted to the Business Manager.

In the event that a family fails to pay their account and fails to initiate contact with the Business Manager to make special payment arrangements; or if the family fails to follow through with their special payment arrangement plan, the school reserves the right to discontinue the family's enrollment at GCS. Grace Christian School student records, transcripts, and diplomas will be held until the account is paid in full.

All accounts must be paid in full prior to the beginning of each new school year for enrollment to continue.

## **NON-PROFIT STATUS**

GCS is a non-profit organization under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Gifts to the school are fully tax-deductible if IRS guidelines are followed.

## **STUDENT INSURANCE**

All students are covered by a student accident insurance plan. If a student incurs any medical expenses as a result of a school-related accident, a parent should request an insurance claim form from the business office within thirty days of injury.

## **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

Our school offers two tuition discounts for qualifying school families: the Multiple Child Discount and the Pastor Discount.

- **Multiple-Child Discount:** This is an automatically applied discount to families who have two or more students enrolled in grades K-12 (PS/PK students are excluded). This discount cannot be combined with staff and pastor discounts. It may not be available to families receiving a tax-credit scholarship.
- **Pastor Discount:** A discount is available to families who have a parent employed as a full-time pastor. The family must have at least one student enrolled full-time in grades K-12 (PS/PK students are excluded). This discount may not be available, or only partially available, to a family who is eligible for a tax credit scholarship. If the family is awarded a tax credit scholarship, then the Pastor Discount may be applied after the scholarship amount is awarded, to provide for any unmet tuition assistance needed. If you would like to be considered for the pastor discount, please contact our Business Manager at [lsmith@gcswarriors.org](mailto:lsmith@gcswarriors.org).

## **TUITION WORK CREDIT PROGRAM**

A Tuition Work Credit (TWC) program is available for a limited number of families who may need assistance with their tuition. Tuition work credit allows school families to perform cleaning and maintenance services at the school. Tuition work credit duties are performed on a weekly basis throughout the school year, and special projects (i.e. painting, etc.) are assigned over the summer. Tuition work credit is considered taxable income and is reported at the end of each calendar year on an IRS Form W-2.

For more information about the TWC program or to request a TWC application, please contact our Business Manager at [lsmith@gcswarriors.org](mailto:lsmith@gcswarriors.org).



# SCHOOL-WIDE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

## ACHIEVEMENT TESTING

A standardized achievement test and associated school ability test will be given to all students in grades K-11. The tests will be conducted during the months of April or May. Teachers will not assign any test or project due dates on these testing days. Results will be sent to parents during the summer.

## ADMISSIONS

Being admitted into the school and continuing as a GCS student are privileges and not rights, and it is expected that new and returning families and students maintain the standards, guidelines, and expectations communicated during the admissions process and within the *Family Handbook* and other GCS policies.

Grace Christian School seeks to serve families from the larger Christian community who may benefit from the educational program and overall values of the school. It is expected that at least one parent is a professing follower of Jesus Christ and is in regular attendance at a local Christian church. In addition, parents must indicate support for the GCS Statement of Faith.

Grace Christian School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. GCS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of the educational policies, scholarship programs, admission policies, athletics, or other school-administered programs.

More information concerning the application and admissions process is outlined on our website, [www.gcswarriors.org](http://www.gcswarriors.org).

Refer to [Immunizations](#) and [Withdrawing a Student](#)

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance, which is legally required by the state of Virginia, is critical for the success of the student. See each school level section for more details.

### DAILY SCHEDULE FOR ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL

Before-School Care*	7:15 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.
Arrival	7:45 a.m. to 8:10 a.m.
Preschool & Pre-K	8:10 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
Grades K-8	8:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m.
Grades K-8 half day	8:10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
After-School Care*	3:10 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (11:50 a.m. daily for Preschool and Pre-K students, half days from 12:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for K-8 students, except for days when After-School Care is not offered.)
Office Hours	7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. (Summer hours: M-Th, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

\*Additional fees charged for these services.

## DAILY SCHEDULE FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Arrival	7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
Grades 9-12	8:05 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.
Grades 9-12 half day	8:05 a.m. to 12:20 p.m.
Office Hours	7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. (Summer hours: M-Th, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)

Refer to the [ES](#), [MS](#), or [HS](#) policies on attendance.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Grace Christian School is directed by a Board of Trustees. The trustees are charged primarily with the important task of seeing that Grace remains true to its essential mission distinctives. They also ensure that Grace operates according to sound financial practices. Lastly, they focus on strategic issues in planning for the future of Grace as well as evaluating Grace's effectiveness in accomplishing its stated vision. The trustees do not become involved in the day-to-day administrative functions of Grace.

The board is self-perpetuating, in that trustees are nominated and elected by the Trustees, ratified by the Community Fellowship Church Elders, and serve three-year terms which may be renewed upon the consent of the individual trustee and approval of the larger board and CFC Elders.

## CHROMEBOOKS

The [Student Technology & Internet Usage Guidelines and Agreement](#) is outlined in a separate policy. All students and their parents are required to read and sign the Student Computer & Internet Usage Guidelines and Contract prior to the beginning of each school year.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### EMAILING GCS STAFF

Typically, GCS staff members can be reached by the letter of their first name, followed by their last name, @GCSWarriors.org. (i.e. John Doe would be JDoe@GCSWarriors.org).

### PARENT ALERT

A school-wide text will be sent by the school in the instance of important time sensitive information. The number 317-065 can be saved in your phone as "Grace Christian School Text Alert."

### WARRIOR BULLETIN

A school-wide email is sent, when needed, to address certain topics that require additional attention.

### WARRIOR WEEKLY

A school-wide weekly newsletter is emailed on Thursdays during the school year. This electronic publication relays timely, pertinent information and is divided into five sections: All-School, ES/MS, HS, Athletics, and Fine Arts. *Note: Gmail "clips" emails. If you do not see the entire email, click "view entire message" at the bottom of the email.* ([Learn more here.](#)) On occasion, parents/guardians miss this important email because their server sends it to their "Promotions" tab or to "Spam" and not their "Inbox." Learn how to fix that problem [here](#). Please reach out if you are not receiving or able to view the entirety of the *Weekly* so that we can help you remain "in-the-know" concerning all of the wonderful things happening at Grace. [GCS@GCSWarriors.org](mailto:GCS@GCSWarriors.org)

## **WARRIOR CHRONICLE**

An electronic publication of GCS to parents, alumni, staff, and other supporters. If you have an article or update you would like to share with the greater GCS family, email [Advancement@GCSWarriors.org](mailto:Advancement@GCSWarriors.org).

## **CURRICULAR MATERIALS: POLICY FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS**

If a parent or student has a concern about questionable material (ethical, moral, etc.), he/she should bring it to the attention of the respective principal. The following process will be implemented:

1. The Principal will form a committee comprised of faculty members from the related departments and two parents whose family did not initially raise the concern.
2. The concerned person will meet with the committee to present questionable material and voice concerns.
3. The committee will meet with the Principal to critique and discuss specific concerns. The committee will draft a recommendation as to whether the material will be retained or discarded.
4. The Head of School will review the recommendation and make a final decision.

## **DISCIPLINE/CORRECTION OF STUDENTS**

Our discipline policy is designed to guide students in taking responsibility for their emotions, attitudes, and actions. General guidelines for classroom discipline include providing positive support of a student's appropriate behavior, clearly defining expectations and boundaries, and the application of consequences for inappropriate behavior. The primary goal of our disciplinary policies and processes is to guide the student towards reconciliation with God and others as well as instilling principles for improved decision-making.

### **Suspensions/Expulsions**

The school reserves the right to suspend or expel a student if it is determined that the student's ongoing involvement in the school is having a detrimental impact on the school community or if the administration determines there is a serious breach of a school policy. While the Head of School is vested with final authority by the Board of Trustees for deciding such matters, parents may request that the process in which the administration and Head of School handled the suspension or expulsion be reviewed by the Board of Trustees Process Review Committee. After hearing the parents' concerns in a timely manner, this committee will share its recommendations with the Head of School, who will then make a final determination concerning the matter.

Refer to [ES](#), [MS](#), and [HS](#) policies.

## **DISPENSING OF MEDICATIONS**

Trained school personnel will dispense non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications to your child during the school day. These will be limited to the authorized dosages of either acetaminophen or ibuprofen. In the event your child comes to the office with a headache, body aches, or fever, a parent or guardian will be contacted by phone before any medication is administered. In addition, parents must have the dosage information on file in the school office.

If a physician deems it necessary for a child to take prescription medication during school hours, parents must complete a separate form authorizing the school to administer the prescription. The form may be obtained from the school office. In addition, the prescription must be packaged in the original container with the pharmacy's official label and administration details and kept in the school office during school hours.

Parents should provide prior notification of any diagnosed medical condition that necessitates a student to consume food or a beverage other than water at a time other than lunch or breaks. Refer to [Lunches & Snacks](#) within the HS section.

## **ELECTRONIC AND DIGITAL DEVICES**

In order to enhance learning, cultivate interpersonal skills, minimize distractions, and encourage students to be more fully participatory while at school, GCS students are not permitted to use any unauthorized electronic communication device (ECD) at school. Students should avoid bringing electronic or digital devices to school. If brought to school, students must turn off the device(s) and place it/them in designated storage holders upon arrival. These storage holders are made available to students and our monitored by cameras. Violations will result in the school's confiscation of the item(s) and additional consequences. The same guidelines for these items apply to all school-sponsored trips, including sports trips. All students and their parents are required to read and sign the [Student Personal Electronic Communications Device Policy and Agreement](#) prior to the beginning of each school year.

## **ENROLLMENT PRIVILEGE**

It is a privilege to attend GCS. Students who demonstrate an attitude not in compliance with these guidelines for student conduct or the following school policies will have their enrollment status reviewed by the Head of School and, if deemed necessary, dismissed from the school.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Students in each grade will go on various field trips throughout the year which correspond with their class studies. The cost of field trips has been included in each child's tuition. Field Trip Permission Forms were signed as a part of the enrollment packet. Students without a signed permission form will not be permitted to remain in school during the field trip. The teachers will inform parents of upcoming field trips via the Field Trip Notification Form with the trip details. Students may be asked to wear certain attire, depending on the nature of the field trip. This information will also be noted on the information sent to the parents prior to the trip. Refer to school-level dress code for field trips, as students may be kept from attending the field trip if not dressed appropriately. See <https://www.gcswarriors.org/resources/familyhub.cfm> for more information on the dress code.

Parents may be asked to chaperone or occasionally drive on a field trip. Chaperones should make childcare arrangements for younger siblings for maximum supervision. To ensure the students' safety on the trip, seatbelts are required for each student. All parents who drive for school activities must fill out a Volunteer Driver Application Form and be approved. The form will be kept on file in the school office. Refer to the [Volunteer Driver Application Form](#).

## **FUNDRAISING**

As a dynamic part of our covenant community practice, GCS has enjoyed a long history of parent generosity and active involvement in its fundraising activities, which has allowed the school to maintain a relatively low tuition rate and also fund large projects.

Parents, family, friends, and businesses are encouraged to join us in raising needed support for this amazing, local, life-changing ministry!

Grace Christian School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all charitable donations are tax deductible. Federal ID #54-1249847. Online donations can be made at [GCSWarriors.org](http://GCSWarriors.org). Cash or check donation by mail or in person to 19 S. Market Street, Staunton, VA 24401, Attn: Advancement Office. Stocks, bonds, company matching, and gifts-in-kind are also welcome. Reach out to [Advancement@GCSWarriors.org](mailto:Advancement@GCSWarriors.org).

### Ways to support:

- Fall Fundraiser - [PASS IT ON](#), School-wide, service-focused outreach and fundraiser.
- Spring Fundraiser - [GCS AUCTION](#), School-wide community event and fundraiser with a new and exciting school *Bid for Cause* every year.
- Business Supporters - [LEGACY PARTNERS](#) - Find out how your business can advertise with us!
- Tax Credits - [VA EDUCATION TAX-CREDIT PROGRAM](#) - Pay Virginia taxes or know someone who does? Find out how you can redirect your tax dollars to GCS and save money at the same time!
- Shopping Fundraisers - [KROGER CARDS AND BOX TOPS](#)
- General Fundraisers for sports teams, fine arts, clubs, and electives throughout the year (bake sales, hot lunches, or other products and services where students work to earn money for a school-sponsored cause). [Approval form required.](#)

## **IMMUNIZATION/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Immunization Requirements:**

All students must provide documentation showing immunizations are current. Parents of students entering preschool must be up-to-date for their age with the required vaccines or be in the process of receiving the appropriate immunizations based on their age. Requests for faith exemptions will be considered.

### **Physical Requirements:**

In addition, students entering school for the first time must provide:

- **Kindergarten:** a copy of the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form (which may be obtained from the family physician or health department)
- **Grades 1-12:** documentation that a school physical was completed by a qualified licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant within 12 months of entering school.
- Students transferring from another school may simply need to transfer the form.

It is important to submit these documents to the school prior to the beginning of the school year. According to state law, students cannot be admitted to school until the above documentation is on file in the school office.

Please check with your physician/health department to verify that your child's immunizations are up to date, as these requirements may change. Also, the Staunton-Augusta Health Department offers free or discounted immunizations to your children if you prefer utilizing their services rather than your physician's.

## **PARENT REQUESTS FOR A PARTICULAR TEACHER**

Student placement into a class is based on the previous teacher's recommendation and administrative approval. We do not take parent requests for a child to be placed with a particular teacher.

## **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Parents are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children at school activities or on school property unless their child is officially participating under the direct supervision of GCS personnel.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parent-teacher conferences are held after the end of the first quarter for all grades and during the third quarter as necessary. Parents are invited to attend the third-quarter conference, especially if their students' grades are below a "C." Parents who are unable to attend these conferences are asked to contact the teachers to schedule another time that is convenient.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteering has been a long held tradition of our GCS community, and the success enjoyed by our programs and at our events is dependent upon parents investing time and energy as they are gifted to . . . Volunteer opportunities are available throughout the school year for parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends of the school. Some of these opportunities include being a room parent, helping in the classroom, building sets for an upcoming play, or providing food or snacks for staff/faculty. Volunteers should sign in at the appropriate school office before proceeding to their volunteer duties. Those interested in volunteering should email [GCS@GCSWarriors.org](mailto:GCS@GCSWarriors.org).

## **REASONABLE SEARCH**

GCS retains the right to search any personal property of students and visitors, including, but not limited to, personal clothing, electronic devices, lockers, backpacks, and automobiles.

Additionally, if a student is legitimately suspected to be under the influence of a controlled substance, GCS may require the student to submit to a blood and/or urine test within a specified time period. In such instances it will be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to:

- take the student to the drug testing site,
- pay for any GCS requested test(s), and
- sign any waivers/releases required by the drug-testing site to reveal all results of the test(s) to the Principal and to ensure that these results are submitted directly by the testing site to the Principal within the previously specified time period.
- Refusal to fulfill any of these requirements will result in the student automatically being expelled unless the Head of School determines otherwise.

Refer to the School-wide policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#) and the policies at each of the grade-levels. ([ES](#), [MS](#), and [HS](#))

## **SERVICES**

### **AFTER-SCHOOL CARE**

After-school care is provided daily for students in Preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grade until 5:30 p.m. A fee is charged for this service. Please call the ES/MS school office for more information.

### **BEFORE-SCHOOL CARE**

Before-school care is provided daily for students in Preschool-8<sup>th</sup> grade who arrive between 7:15 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. A fee is charged for this service. Please call the ES/MS school office for more information.

### **BUS SERVICE**

Bus service is available to GCS families with K-12 children who live in the Waynesboro and Fishersville areas.

There is a monthly fee for using the bus service. If you are interested in participating in this, email [admissions@gcswarriors.org](mailto:admissions@gcswarriors.org).

### **Conduct of Students on Buses**

Students represent Grace Christian School when traveling on a school bus. The following guidelines should be adhered to by students.

- Students should not stand while the bus is moving.

- Students should remain seated at all times, facing the front of the bus.
- Students may not put their hands, arms, heads, etc., out of the bus windows.
- Students may not talk or yell out of the bus windows.
- Students may not throw any object outside of the window or in the bus.
- Students are to enter and exit from the front of the bus only, unless an emergency warrants exiting through the back of the bus..
- Student cell phones should be turned off and be kept in their backpacks while on the bus.
- Students should remove all trash when exiting the bus.
- Students should keep the aisles clear of book bags and other items.
- Students must obey bus driver instructions at all times.

The school bus is an extension of the classroom and all applicable school rules should be followed. Violations may be referred to the student’s principal.F

**CHALLENGE PROGRAM**

*The mission of the Challenge Program is to challenge the student’s potential in order to create confident and independent exceptional learners while facilitating a growth mindset with teachers/parents in a supportive, Christ-centered environment.*

GCS offers academic assistance and support through the Challenge program to a limited number of students in elementary, middle, and high school. Students may be referred for services by faculty or parents. Services are offered at varying tiers to meet student needs, which may include Search and Teach, Orton-Gillingham, and Discovery Therapy. Students may receive accommodations or modifications as decided by the Challenge Team. In addition to regular tuition, a separate fee is assessed for the Challenge program.

Tutoring is not a part of the Challenge Program, but school personnel can assist in finding tutors when needed. The Challenge Program currently consists of the following tiers of service:

**Challenge Program Tiers**

Challenge Tier	Description of Services	Approximate minutes/week	Sessions/week
Tier 0	Management of accommodations and monitoring of academic progress.	0-15	0-1
Tier 1 Individual	Search & Teach (S&T) or one period of individualized academic instruction or support.	30-40	1
Tier 1 Group	One period of group academic instruction or support.	30-40	1
Tier 2 Individual	Orton-Gillingham (OG) or two periods of individualized academic instruction or support.	60-80	2

Tier 2 Group	Two periods of group academic instruction or support.	60-80	2
Tier 3 Individual	OG or three periods of individualized academic instruction or support.	90-120	3
Tier 3 Group	Three periods of group academic instruction or support.	90-120	3
Tier 4 Individual	OG or four periods of individualized academic instruction or support.	120-160	4
Tier 4 Group	Four periods of group academic instruction or support.	120-160	4
Tier 5 Individual	Discovery Therapy or OG or five periods of individualized academic instruction or support.	150-200	5
Tier 5 Group	Five periods of group academic instruction or support.	150-200	5

*Search & Teach* (Grade K-1): A program designed to detect children vulnerable to learning difficulties and offer educational intervention. A prescriptive approach that builds the neuropsychological skills necessary for progress in reading, writing, and spelling. This program is provided by a trained Search & Teach instructor.

*Orton-Gillingham* (Grades K-6): A direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive approach to teaching literacy to students who have been identified as needing additional support. Students will work with an instructor who has been trained in the *Orton-Gillingham* approach.

*Discovery Therapy* (Grades 6-8): "NILD Educational Therapy® offers weekly 1-on-1 or small group interventions focused on cognitive development. These research-based sessions use dynamic interactive language and diverse materials to enhance thinking and information processing. Tailored to individual student needs, this unique therapy strengthens core academic abilities, independent thought, reasoning, questioning, and self-regulation." (From National Institute for Learning Development) This service is provided by a trained Discovery Therapist.

Accommodations (Grades Pre-K-12): Adjustments made to a student’s educational plan, which enable a student’s learning within their grade-level/course curriculum. Accommodations are determined by the Challenge Team and are outlined in the “Student Academic Profile”.

- Accommodations do not affect the type of grade a student will receive.
- Accommodations do not alter curricular goals or course objectives.
- Accommodations do not change what is being taught, but how it is taught.
- Accommodations are recorded on the “Student’s Academic Profile” and filed in the cumulative folder.



**Modifications** (Grades Pre-K-12): Modifications change the content, goals, and/or objectives for the course or grade level. The Challenge team works together to determine appropriate modifications for each student needing this level of individual instruction. When content, goals, and/or objectives are eliminated or altered for a student, these changes will be outlined in the “Student Academic Profile”.

- To qualify for a modified program/grade, the student must have on file an individual academic assessment or diagnosis demonstrating the need for the modification(s).
- Report cards and transcripts note grades earned within a “modified program.”
- Modifications require administrative, teacher, and parental approval and are approved in a contractual form, known as the “Student Academic Profile”. *Under no circumstances* should a classroom teacher modify a student’s academic program without the knowledge and approval of the Challenge teacher, Challenge administrator, principal, and parents.
- Modifications are indicated only when the student is unable to complete the curricular goals. This approach means that the student will not be expected to learn the same material as their classmates.

If a parent believes their child should be considered for the Challenge program for any reason, they should reach out to their child’s teacher or to the Challenge Director.

## **SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students are expected to take special care of textbooks, library books, or other school property. The student will be charged for any lost or damaged items.

## **SCHOOL PHONE USAGE**

Students must receive explicit permission from school staff before using GCS or personal phones. Refer to [Student Personal Electronic Communication Device Policy & Agreement](#).

## **SNOW DAYS**

For school closings/delays check [WHSV-TV3](#). You will receive a text message on your cell phone via the FACTS SIS Parent Alert System.

In the event that school closes early due to inclement weather, parents will receive a text message on their cell phone via the alert system. The Waynesboro bus route will not run on early closure days for weather.

## **STEWARDSHIP OF FACILITIES**

Students are required to help maintain GCS facilities and participate with the cleaning of the school facility for a short period of time each day.

## **STUDENT ILLNESS**

In the event a student becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to give the appropriate care until the parents are contacted and able to take the student home. Parents are expected to make arrangements to pick up their child when he or she becomes unexpectedly ill while at school. Parents should not send their children to school if they have an oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Children should have a temperature of less

than 100 degrees and be symptom-free without medication for twenty-four hours before returning to school. In all cases, the best interests of not only the individual student, but also the health, safety, and welfare of the larger school community will be considered. Even so, unless documentation from a medical professional can be secured, the absence cannot be waived.

## **STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM: FACTS SIS**

FACTS SIS is an internet-based school management system used at GCS. Teachers are able to share lesson plans, homework and grades, under password protection, on FACTS SIS. Parents should check their student's academic progress and attendance record from any location via the web.

Through the FACTS SIS Family Portal, parents and students have instant access to school and academic information, attendance, homework (grades 4-12), and more.

## **UNCOVERED TOPICS**

Any number of issues may arise which are not covered in the above policies and guidelines. When this is the case, students should ask appropriate questions of the faculty, staff and administration. In all cases, it is the spirit of these policies and guidelines and not merely their technical fulfillment which is important. It is hoped that staff and students will all be motivated by Christian love as they seek to relate together in community in a manner which will glorify the Lord Jesus.

## **VISITORS**

While parents and visitors are welcome at the school, it is generally advisable to check ahead of time with the teacher to make sure that the visit will not interfere with a previously scheduled activity. We request that all visitors check in with the school office and obtain a visitor's pass before entering a classroom. Lunches, homework, books, and other items are to be left in the school office to be delivered to your student. If you wish to talk to your student's teacher, please arrange for a private conference. Please do not detain the teacher while he or she is performing his or her responsibilities to the class.

At the HS, visitors must be over 18, unless accompanied by an adult, or previous permission from the principal has been secured. Students who are currently attending other schools, who are homeschooled, or graduates of other schools are welcome to visit students at school athletic events or socials (if open to the public) but are asked not to visit GCS during school hours. Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the principal.

## **WEAPONS**

Weapons of any kind (firearms, knives, etc.) are strictly prohibited on school property and at all school events. Violation of this prohibition will result in confiscation of the weapon, the infraction being recorded in the student's permanent record, and may result in a suspension, expulsion, or possible legal prosecution.

## **WITHDRAWING A STUDENT**

Once accepted and enrolled, the families of each student who withdraws any time after enrollment and prior to the last day of school will

- (1) Be charged the full tuition rate through the end of the month of withdrawal.
- (2) Be charged an additional withdrawal fee of \$350 unless the GCS Finance Committee approves an exception based on extenuating circumstances.
- (3) Complete an online exit survey submitted to them by the GCS administration.
- (4) Return all GCS property including textbooks, technology, athletic uniforms, etc.

The school reserves the option of withholding school records, transcripts, and diplomas until all balances are paid in full and withdrawal processes are completed.

Please feel free to contact our Business Manager at [ismith@gcswarriors.org](mailto:ismith@gcswarriors.org) with any questions you may have. It is the goal of the school to accommodate our families in a responsible and gracious manner concerning all finance-related issues.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INFORMATION & POLICIES (PS - 6)

### ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

(Please see aerial view of parking [here](#).)

Parents are asked to be punctual in arriving to school with their children and in picking them up at dismissal. The school does not assume responsibility for the students until they have entered the school building.

- If arriving between 7:15 and 7:45 a.m., parents must drop off their
  - K-8th children at the elementary building, as their children will be in the Before-School Care program in the cafeteria.
  - Preschool and Pre-K aged children must be taken to the preschool building for Before-School Care. A fee will be charged to their account.
- If arriving after 7:45 a.m., parents should drop off their children at the main entrance. Students are not allowed to walk across the parking lots unattended. Students should be in their seats and ready for the day by 8:10 a.m.
- A dismissal number will be assigned to each family at the beginning of the year. Parents are asked to display this number on their vehicle's passenger-side visor and have the number visible during dismissal.
- Students in Preschool and Pre-K will be dismissed at 11:50 a.m. During these dismissals, parents of a PS or PK student should park outside the barriers and walk to the building to get their child.
- Students in grades K-8 will be dismissed at 3:10 p.m. The gates to the playground will be taken down by 3:00 p.m. Parents are asked to drive through the parking lot and move forward to the barrier. Your child will be called to the dismissal area to meet you. Parents are asked to access the school for dismissal via Guilford Avenue or Lancaster Avenue. (Please avoid using Norfolk Avenue.) Please avoid parking in the parking lot between the buses and the Middle School. At 3:25 p.m., remaining students will be taken to the After-School Care program. A fee will be charged. See the Resource page on our website for a map.
- The school is responsible for releasing children only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents. The school office should be notified if a child is to be picked up by someone other than those designated in FACTS SIS. Students will not be dismissed to such a person unless the parents have given prior notification. In the event that staff members are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a student, they should immediately locate or contact the principal or his/her designees before releasing the student.
- Parents and/or carpool drivers are to be fully responsible for their children and the children in their carpool once they have been dismissed from the building. The school cannot be responsible for the students once they are dismissed.

Parents are expected to pick up their children before 3:25. After that time, their children will be sent to after-school care which will result in a charge. After-school care ends at 5:30 p.m. Failure to pick up students on time in the afternoon will result in a one dollar per minute charge.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Before continuing to read about the below policies, please also refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Attendance](#). Attendance is critical for learning to take place. If your student will be absent, please notify the school office by 8:30 am that day. In those instances when your student is ill or needs to miss school due to other important family related reasons, your student's absence will be "waived", or excused, if the cases qualify under the below types of waived absences recognized by the *Virginia State Board of Education*.

### **Absences**

- Students must attend school for a minimum of 162 school days during each academic year (which is typically 180 days) in order to meet graduation/promotion requirements.
- Students in grades K-8 may not be promoted to the next grade if they are absent for 18 or more school days.
- Students and parents should keep close track of all absences and tardies through the Family Portal and notify the school of any discrepancies to the attendance record.
- Parent/Administration meetings will be held when students' absences exceed 15.
- All student attendance and tardy records will be included in the student's cumulative folder.

### **Waived Absences**

Such designation may be assigned if the parent(s) has/have followed the above-described communication protocol, the proper documentation (see below) has been received by GCS, and the absence is related to a/an:

- Religious observance or event \*
- Legal obligation, \*
- Medical appointment, injury, or illness, \*
- Military obligation, \*
- Funeral,
- GCS event, or
- GCS suspension

*\* A hard copy of official documentation from an institution or an individual not related to the student must be submitted.*

### **Early/Special Dismissal**

If parents need to take their children out of class for a doctor's appointment, trip, etc., a note should be sent to the teacher or the office called. The child will be ready to leave at the designated time in the school office. The parent must come to the office and sign his/her child out. Parents are asked to not go directly to the classroom to pick up their child. If leaving early becomes excessive, it may affect the child's performance or class grade. A conference will be scheduled to review the student's academic status in the affected classes.

### **Tardies**

- If a student has ten tardies (Excused or Unexcused) to class upon arrival at school during the year, the parents will be contacted by the teacher.
- If a student has fifteen tardies during the year, a notification letter will be sent to the parents.
- If a student has eighteen tardies during the year, a conference will be held with the administration, teacher, and parents. During this conference, a review of the student's academic progress will be conducted and any academic concerns will be addressed.
- If a student has twenty-five tardies during the year, then a conference will be held with the

administration and parents. Prior to the conference, the principal will review the student's academic status in the affected classes. The student may:

- o be required to repeat the subject or
- o be dismissed from school

## **CELL PHONES**

Upper elementary grades (4th - 6th) will provide cell phone pouches for all students. When a student arrives on campus, they should turn off their cell phone and place it in their assigned pouch. If the student does not have a phone or did not bring it to school, they should place a 3x5 card in their pouch that states they did not bring a phone to school. Every pouch should have a phone or a card in it. Random inspections will be made for compliance. Any student who does not have a phone or card in their pouch will receive a warning. Repeated violations will result in discipline as determined by the principal.

## **CHAPELS**

Chapels, prayer groups, and outreach activities are held weekly for students in the elementary school. Local-area pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, and special guests are periodically invited to share with the students. Our chapels frequently include worship music, devotionals, or short skits prepared by our students or teachers. Parents and visitors are welcome to attend.

## **DISCIPLINE**

- Positive reinforcement and a clip system to motivate is utilized with students in Kindergarten thru 2nd grade. In all grades expectations are reviewed at the first of each year by the teacher.
- If the student habitually violates a reasonable and defined class or school standard and the problem is not resolved as a result of lesser forms of correction/discipline, the student will attend a conference with the school principal. In this meeting, the standard being violated will be redefined and a warning issued of the consequences of continued offenses. The parents will be notified as soon as is reasonably possible of the content of this conference and encouraged to reinforce with the student the school's position in the manner in which the parents feel will be most effective.
- In the event the student continues to violate the standard, the teacher will again bring that student to the office for a conference with the principal. If the principal determines that the student has been adequately warned previously, contact will be made as soon as possible with one of the parents and the situation adequately explained. In some cases the parent may be asked to take the child home. The student may not be readmitted to the school until he/she and at least one of the parents has a conference with the principal.
- The principal may require a conference to discuss a strategy with the parents to resolve the problem.

Refer to the School-Wide policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#).

## **DRESS CODE**

The emphasis of the Grace Christian Elementary School dress code is modesty, appropriateness, neatness, and cleanliness. We rely on our partnership with families to reinforce these guidelines and to help our students make wise decisions about their appearance at school. If students arrive dressed inappropriately, they will be instructed to correct the situation. If unable to comply, they will be asked to call a parent to bring clothing to the

school or wear alternative clothing provided by the school. The school administration will serve as the final authority in interpreting and enforcing the dress code. Refer to [PS-6 Grade Dress Code](#).

## **FINE ARTS**

Students in the elementary school will have weekly classes in music and art as a part of their curriculum. In addition to these classes, students in grades 2-6 have the opportunity to participate in after-school art or chorus. Details of these after-school programs can be found in the *Warrior Weekly*. Students in the elementary school may also choose to take private music lessons during the school day. Lessons are offered in a variety of instruments by qualified instructors on a first-come basis. These details are outlined in the summer mailing. Students taking lessons are expected to perform in an annual music recital.

## **GRADING POLICY – Grades 1-6**

Students in grades 1-6 will be graded with letter grades based on the following numeric scale:

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 60-69
- F: 0-59
- I: Incomplete

Grading terms will consist of four nine-week periods for students in grades 1-6. Kindergarten students will receive evaluations each January and May. Parents of Preschool through 6th grade students will have conferences with the teacher in fall and spring.

Grades from the previous week will be posted on the FACTS SIS Family Portal. There will be exceptions for large projects and tests. Parents may access the Family Portal through the link on the school website. Parents are asked to review their child's grades on the Family Portal on a regular basis.

## **HOMEWORK – Grades K-6**

In all grades, the students are given regular homework assignments appropriate to their age. A primary reason for assigning homework is to train the children to become responsible in completing assigned tasks as well as to reinforce through practice the concepts taught in the classroom. We request that parents actively supervise their child's homework and sign their child's homework assignment sheet/planner each night. In order to maintain good communication with parents, any work that the teacher considers unsatisfactory work (assignments, tests, etc.) may be sent home for the parents to sign and return the following day.

Students will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work when they are absent from school.

### **Homework Policy When a Student is Absent Due to Illness:**

- If the child is in Kindergarten through 3rd grade, the student will make up their work when they return to school. However, if a student is absent for an extended amount of time, the teacher will use their discretion and send home what they feel is appropriate.
- If the child is in 4th through 6th grade, parents should refer to the Family Portal for the assignments. Parents can make arrangements to pick up books for the assignments on the Family Portal or ask that they be sent home with a sibling, if they desire. Additional work will be sent home the day they return to school, and the student will have a reasonable amount of time to make up the work. Assistance will be given to make sure the student understands the material. This may include working during recess and

study hall upon their return. If a student is out for an extended number of days and a parent requests work, the teacher will use their discretion and send home what they feel is appropriate.

### **Homework Policy When a Student Knows in Advance He/She Will be Absent:**

- Students will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work when they return to school following a vacation. Students in grades 4-6 may choose to take their books, check their assignments on the Family Portal, and complete any work while on vacation. Any additional work will be given upon their return. If a student has difficulty with the material they will have time upon their return to get assistance. This may include working during study halls or recess.

## **LOCKERS**

Each student in the upper elementary school will be assigned a locker at the beginning of the year. The student will be responsible for maintaining his locker in a neat and orderly manner. Students are not to change lockers unless they have first received permission from the administration.

Students are not to post pictures or slogans, etc. in their lockers which are inconsistent with Biblical values. No stickers are permitted on the interior or exterior of lockers, but magnets may be used. Exterior postings are limited to school messages from the staff and notes, etc. as posted by the sports committee and other school organizations.

Students may not place locks on their individual lockers.

Locker inspections will be conducted on a regular basis.

## **LOST & FOUND**

At the end of the day, all items left on the playground or other common areas will be placed in the Lost & Found area maintained at each school. After a reasonable time, unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

Parents are asked to label (with the child's name) all clothing and personal items (lunch box, backpack, etc.).

## **LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

Students in grades K-6 bring their lunches every day. Microwaves are available for student use. Students may not trade food during the school day. All students in Preschool through sixth grade are encouraged to bring snacks to eat during a morning break. We request that parents send food that is nutritious and healthy. Some suggestions are fresh fruit, raw vegetables, cheese, etc. Please do not send sugary snacks.

Ice cream may be purchased periodically during lunchtime. All proceeds from ice cream sales will benefit a designated mission.

## **PLANNERS**

Students in grades 2-6 will be issued planners. Since daily changes may be made by the teaching staff, students are encouraged to write down assignments on a daily basis and to not rely solely on FACTS SIS (RenWeb)/Family Portal. Parents are asked to check over the homework and sign planners per teacher's instructions.

## **SCHOOL SPORTS**

Our youth sports program is very popular with the elementary school students. We offer soccer and basketball, emphasizing the teaching of fundamentals and having fun. More information, as well as sign-ups, will be sent home in the correspondence envelopes. Soccer for grades K-2 begins in the fall, and soccer for grades 3-5 begins in the fall as well. Both last six weeks. Basketball is also a six-week program beginning in mid-winter. Students in grades 5 and 6 may be eligible for some middle school sports. There is a fee for participation.

## **WEEKLY CORRESPONDENCE ENVELOPES**

Students will be given a specially designated envelope containing correspondence for parents each Monday and at other times as deemed necessary by the teacher or school office. Students are requested to deliver this correspondence to their parents the same day it is distributed, have it signed, and return it the following day. Correspondence envelopes are to be used for school purposes only. Weekly classroom newsletters will be emailed. These classroom newsletters will keep parents informed as to specific class events, prayer requests, needs, and Bible memory work for the particular grade. School communications are generally sent out by email and/or posted on our school website.

Weekly correspondence envelopes will only be used for school-related communication.

## **WEAPONS**

Refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Weapons](#)

# **MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION & POLICIES (7-8)**

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

While this relatively new technology can be a valid tool in academic settings, students should not use AI to complete any academic assignment unless the teacher explicitly permits such. Regardless of intention or percentage of an assignment impacted by the use of AI, if done without explicit permission, this will be considered an infraction of our academic integrity policies.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious offense which we begin teaching our students to avoid in elementary school. By the time a student is in middle school, he/she will be held responsible for their actions.

If a student is found to have willfully plagiarized an assignment or exam, they will be disciplined based on the principal's assessment of culpability.

\*Plagiarism is representing the words and ideas of others as one's own without acknowledging their source. As such, it is considered a form of cheating. Plagiarism is often the result simply of carelessness on the part of the student; nevertheless, it is still a serious offense. Whenever a student uses someone else's idea or a direct quotation, the student should acknowledge this in his or her written or verbal presentation. Teachers will instruct students in how to properly cite sources and how to avoid plagiarism.



## **ATTENDANCE**

Before continuing to read about the below policies, please also refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Attendance](#).

All student attendance and tardy records will be included in the student's cumulative folder.

Parents are asked to be punctual in arriving at school with their children and in picking them up at dismissal. Tardiness in the mornings causes disruptions to the opening class. Teachers will be on duty in their classrooms by 7:55 a.m. Students are asked to take care of class preparations and be seated before the tardy bell sounds at 8:10 a.m. Students not in their seats at that time will be considered tardy. Students will need to get a pass from the office before being admitted to class.

Parents are expected to pick up their children before 3:25 p.m. After that time, your child will be sent to after-school care, which incurs a fee. Your cooperation in being punctual is greatly appreciated.

### **Absences**

Parents should call the school office before 8:30 a.m. if their child is unexpectedly absent for the day (such as with an illness, etc.). This helps the school account for the whereabouts and security of each child.

In the event that the parents do not contact the school by phone, students must present to the teacher or school secretary a note from a parent explaining the reason for the absence upon their return to school. Lack of a parental note or phone call will result in the student's absence being considered unexcused. After 10 absences, the teacher and principal will confer in order to design an appropriate strategy intended to help the student master the missed classwork.

A trend of excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness will be addressed as follows:

- If a student has ten absences during the year, the parents will be contacted by a staff person.
- If a student has fifteen absences during the year, a notification letter will be sent to the parents.
- If a student has eighteen or more absences during the year, a conference will be held with the administration, teacher and parents. During this conference, a review of the student's academic progress will be conducted and any academic concerns will be addressed. Retention or dismissal are always of concern with excessive absences (18 or more).

### **Early/Special Dismissal**

If parents need to take their children out of class for a doctor's appointment, trip, etc., a note should be sent to the teacher or the office called. The child will be ready to leave at the designated time in the school office. The parent must come to the office and sign out his/her child. Parents are asked to not go directly to the classroom to pick up their child. If leaving early becomes excessive, it may affect the child's performance or class credit. A conference will be scheduled to review the student's academic status in the affected classes.

### **Tardies**

- If a student has ten tardies to class (excused/unexcused) during the school year, the parents will be contacted by a staff person.
- If a student has fifteen tardies during the year, a notification letter will be sent to the parents.
- If a student has eighteen tardies during the year, a conference will be held with the administration, teacher, and parents. During this conference, a review of the student's academic progress will be conducted and any academic concerns will be addressed.

- If a student has twenty-five tardies during the year, then a conference will be held with the administration and parents. Prior to the conference, a committee (consisting of the administration and teachers) will review the student's academic status in the affected classes. The student may:
  - be required to repeat the subject or
  - be dismissed from school

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL** (Please see aerial view of parking [here.](#))

The school does not assume responsibility for the students until they have entered the school building.

- If arriving before 7:45 a.m., parents should drop off their children at the elementary building as their children will be in the Before-School Care program in the cafeteria. A fee will be charged to their account.
- If arriving between 7:45 a.m. and 8:00 a.m., parents should drop off their children at the main entrance, and students should report to the school cafeteria. Students should not walk across the parking lots unattended. Students should be in their seats and ready for the day by 8:10 a.m.
- An arrival/dismissal number will be assigned to each family at the beginning of the year. Parents are asked to display this number in their vehicle's passenger-side visor and have the number visible in the car window during dismissal.
- Students in Preschool and Pre-K will be dismissed at 11:50. During these dismissals, parents of a Preschool or Pre-K student should park outside the barriers and walk to the building to get their child.
- Students in grades K-8 will be dismissed at 3:10 p.m. The gates to the playground will be taken down by 3:00 p.m. Parents are asked to drive through the parking lot and move forward to the barrier. Their child will be called to the dismissal area to meet them. Parents are asked to access the school for dismissal via Guilford Avenue or Lancaster Avenue. (Please avoid using Norfolk Avenue.) Please avoid parking in the parking lot between the buses and the Middle School. At 3:25 p.m., remaining students will be taken to the After-School Care program. A fee will be charged.
- The school is responsible for releasing students only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. The school office should be notified if a student is to be picked up by someone unknown to school personnel. Students will not be dismissed to such a person unless the parents have given prior notification. In the event that staff members are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a student, they should immediately locate or contact the principal or his/her designees before releasing the student.
- Parents and/or carpool drivers are to be fully responsible for their children and the children in their carpool once they have been dismissed from the building. The school cannot be responsible for the students once they are dismissed.

## **CELL PHONES**

The middle school will provide cell phone pouches for all students. When a student arrives on campus, they should turn off their cell phone and place it in their assigned pouch. If the student does not have a phone or did not bring it to school, they should place a 3x5 card in their pouch that states they did not bring a phone to school. Every pouch should have a phone or a card in it. Random inspections will be made for compliance. Any student who does not have a phone or card in their pouch will receive a warning. Repeated violations will result in a work detention.

## **CHAPELS**

Chapels will be held periodically throughout the year. Local-area pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, and special guests are invited to share with the students. Parents and visitors are welcome to attend.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Demerit System**

Discipline and structure play an essential role in the development and training of a young Christian's character, self-esteem, and security. In an environment that is distinctively Christian, students are taught to exercise a God-given responsibility to "walk honorably before all men" (Galatians 6:1). Discipline is maintained in a firm and consistent manner, yet tempered with love.

With an emphasis on the development of Christ-like character, disciplinary action may become necessary when unacceptable behavior occurs.

It is the school's desire to be fully supportive of whatever discipline measures are being taken at home, and trust that parents will be equally supportive of the measures taken at school; the school stands in the place of the parents during the school hours.

In the spirit of being a constructive, corrective policy, single demerits will be issued to students for the following behaviors:

- chewing gum in classes
- unexcused class tardiness
- unsatisfactory stewardship performance
- leaving personal belongings in common areas
- failed locker inspections

Teachers will have access to demerit slips in each classroom. Students will be asked to sign the demerit slip. Teacher will give the demerit slip to the office, and it will be recorded on the Family Portal. The consequences for the demerits at the middle school are as follows:

4 demerits = TACT time and noted on the Family Portal

8 demerits = TACT time and noted on the Family Portal

12 demerits = Work detention and noted on the Family Portal

14 demerits = Work detention and noted on the Family Portal

16 demerits= Work detention and noted on the Family Portal

TACT time (Think and Choose Time) will be held during lunch time. Parents may view demerit consequences under the Behavior tab on the Family Portal on the GCS website.

In the same spirit of being a constructive, corrective policy, students will be sent to an administrator for the following behaviors:

- Inappropriate language
- IDA (Inappropriate Display of Affection)
- Computer usage violation
- Direct disobedience
- Failure to be in assigned area
- Fighting

- Leaving the building without permission
- Disrespect
- Excessive talking (with warnings)
- Bringing weapons or dangerous objects to school
- Defacing school property
- Unresolved disciplinary issues

The administration will determine the course of action following any offense. The severity of the misbehavior will help determine the consequences. Students must meet with the teacher and administrator and possibly the parent, have all missed class work completed, and have satisfactory reparation before readmittance to class. A student may be given a work detention (supervised by a parent after school or on weekends), be suspended, or even be expelled from school, depending on the offense.

Refer to School Wide policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#).

## **DRESS CODE**

Please refer to our [MS/HS Dress Code](#).

## **FINE ARTS**

GCS Middle School students are required to take fine arts classes as part of their curriculum. These class options may include Art, Advanced Art, Music Appreciation, Chorus, and Drama. Students participating in chorus and drama will have the opportunity to participate in performances, festivals, and competitions throughout the school year. Numeric grades will be given in these classes at the Middle School level.

Middle School art students may also choose to participate in our after-school art program. These details are found in the *Warrior Weekly*. Students may choose to take private music lessons during the school day. Lessons are offered in a variety of instruments by qualified instructors on a first-come basis. These details are outlined in the summer mailing. Students taking lessons are expected to perform in an annual music recital.

## **GRADING POLICY - Grades 7-8**

Before students in grades seven and eight may advance to a higher grade, they must pass core academic subjects (English and Math, ). Any student who fails a subject for a quarter will need to show proficiency in that subject before passing to the next grade. Requirements are designed by the teacher and approved by the administration.

### **System of Grading**

Letter grades are given as a measure of academic achievement according to the following scale:

A <sup>+</sup> = 98-100	A = 93-97	A <sup>-</sup> = 90-92
B <sup>+</sup> = 87-89	B = 83-86	B <sup>-</sup> = 80-82
C <sup>+</sup> = 77-79	C = 73-76	C <sup>-</sup> = 70-72
D = 60-69		
F = 0-59		

Grading terms will consist of four nine-week periods. Report cards will be available on the Family Portal at the end of each nine-week term (Refer to school calendar).

Some elective classes may be graded as Outstanding/Satisfactory/Needs Improvement.

Grades will be posted on the Family Portal by Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. from the previous week. There will be exceptions for large projects and tests. Parents may access the Family Portal on the school website.

### **Cumulative Tests**

Students in grades 7-8 will not take semester exams but will be given cumulative tests at the end of each nine-week term. Cumulative tests will be weighted more heavily than a regular test. These are announced and parents are sent a schedule in advance.

- **7th grade - (Note: All math and grammar tests are cumulative.)**
  - 1st nine weeks - No cum tests.
  - 2nd nine weeks - vocabulary, science
  - 3rd nine weeks - vocabulary, history, and science
  - 4th nine weeks - vocabulary, literature, history, and science
- **8th grade - (Note: All math and grammar tests are cumulative.)**
  - Each nine weeks - vocabulary, literature, history, and science

### **Homework and Class Assignments**

Homework and special class assignments are a vital part of the learning process and course requirements at Grace. Therefore, significant emphasis is placed on such work being turned in on time and in an appropriate form. The following policy is in effect for all classes:

1. Work determined by the teacher to be of substandard neatness or inappropriate form will be returned to the student to be redone, per teacher specifications. Such work will be considered tardy (Refer to #6 below.).
2. Homework/class assignments not turned in on time will be considered tardy unless an extension has been granted by the teacher as a result of the student taking the initiative to make alternative arrangements or in cases of illness resulting in absences. Adequate time will be given to make up the work. Make-up work will be limited only to that which the teacher feels is necessary for the student to complete in order to master the material. When a student misses class because of an absence or tardy, the student should take the initiative to contact the teacher to make up assignments.
3. Students who miss a test because of morning tardiness but who come to school later in the day will be expected to take the test they missed based on the discretion of the teacher whose class was missed. It is the student's responsibility to make test arrangements directly with the teacher. Students who arrive late to school should turn in any assignments due in the classes that they missed to the teacher or teacher's box when they arrive at school.
4. If a student is absent from school, he/she may check the Family Portal for assignments. All assignments will be posted on the Family Portal after 2:30 p.m. daily. Parents may call the school office to arrange for books to be picked up. The student is responsible for obtaining all homework and class assignments, as well as any missed classroom notes, handouts, or discussion material from the teacher or from another student. All missed work must be turned in within the time period given by the teacher. (If a specific date is not given, each assignment is due as follows: 1 day absent, due the 2<sup>nd</sup> day back; 2 days absent, due the 3<sup>rd</sup> day back; 3 days absent, due the 4<sup>th</sup> day back.)
5. Students who will be away from a class on an athletic trip or other pre-planned, excused basis on the day

an assignment is due are responsible to communicate beforehand with the teacher to determine when the assignment is to be turned in. The student may choose to take his/her books, check assignments on the Family Portal and complete any work during their time away. At the teacher's discretion, additional time may be given. Any additional work will be given upon their return.

6. Students have until Tuesday of the following week to turn in late assignments. Missing and incomplete assignments will earn a "0" if not turned in by this date. Daily grade deductions will apply to the late assignments turned in during the week—5 points per day for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 10 points per day for 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
7. Bible verses are to be recited or written on the due date or the student will receive a zero.

### **Incomplete Assignments**

On the final day of the nine weeks, all assignments are due. If there is an outstanding assignment in a subject, the grade on that assignment will be a zero.

## **LOCKERS**

Each student in the middle school will be assigned a locker at the beginning of the year. The student will be responsible for maintaining his or her locker in a neat and orderly manner. Students are not to change lockers unless first receiving permission from the administration.

Students are not to post pictures or slogans, etc. in their lockers which are inconsistent with Biblical values. No stickers are permitted on the interior or exterior of lockers, but magnets may be used. Exterior postings are limited to school messages from the staff and notes, etc. as posted by the sports committee and other school organizations.

Students may not place locks on their individual lockers.

Locker inspections will be conducted on a regular basis.

## **LOST & FOUND**

At the end of the day, all items left on the playground or other common areas will be placed in the Lost & Found area maintained at each school. After a reasonable time, unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

Parents are asked to label (with the child's name) all clothing and personal items (lunch box, backpack, etc.).

## **LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

Students in grades 7-8 bring their lunches every day. Microwaves are available for student use. All students are encouraged to bring snacks to eat during a morning break (TAB: Take A Break). We request that parents send food which is nutritious and healthy. Some suggestions are fresh fruit, raw vegetables, cheese, etc. Please do not send sugary snacks.

Ice cream may be purchased periodically during lunchtime. All proceeds from the sale of ice cream will benefit a designated cause.

## **PLANNERS**

Students in grades 7-8 will be issued planners. Since daily changes may be made by the teaching staff, students are encouraged to write down assignments on a daily basis and to not rely solely on the Family Portal. Parents are asked to check over the homework.

## **SCHOOL SPORTS**

GCS generally offers the following interscholastic sports programs:

Boys'/Girls' Soccer	Boys' Baseball
Girls' Volleyball	Boys'/Girls' Basketball
Boys' Wrestling	Co-ed Golf
Boys'/Girls' Cross Country	

Interscholastic sports are viewed by the school as an important part of the overall educational program. However, they are also viewed as a privilege for students who are responsible, with the higher priority of their academic class work. Student athletes are expected to maintain reasonable academic performance in order to maintain eligibility for sports participation. A committee consisting of the athletic director, the teacher, and the principal will determine whether or not it is in the best interest of the student to continue athletic participation if the student is earning poor grades. The committee will have the authority to place the student on athletic probation or to suspend the student from sports participation if they feel it appropriate.

Students should refer to the *Parent-Student Athletic Handbook* on the school [website](#) for information on academic eligibility and other sports policies.

## **VISITORS**

While parents and visitors are welcome at the school, it is advisable to check ahead of time with the teacher to make sure that the visit will not interfere with a previously scheduled activity. We request that all visitors check in with the school office and obtain a visitor's pass before entering a classroom. Lunches, homework, books, and other items are to be left in the school office to be delivered to your child. If you wish to talk to your child's teacher, please arrange for a private conference. Please do not detain the teacher from his or her responsibilities to the class.

## **WEAPONS**

Refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Weapons](#)

# HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION & POLICIES (9-12)

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to earn the following *minimum* credits before qualifying for graduation. By meeting additional requirements, students have the opportunity to graduate with honor distinctions in any or all of the following disciplines: English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

<u>Courses</u>	<u>Credits<sup>1</sup></u>
Bible <sup>2</sup>	4
English	4
- English 9 – (1) (regular or honors)	
- English 10 – (1) (regular or honors)	
- English 11 – (1) (regular, honors, or AP)	
- English 12 – (1) (regular, honors, or AP)	
<i>Honors Distinction: at least one year of AP English</i>	
Foreign Language <sup>3</sup>	
- Spanish I – (1)	
- Spanish II – (1)	
- Spanish III – (1) (honors)	
- Latin I - 9th Grade (.4)	
- Latin I - 10th Grade (.6)	
<i>Honors Distinction: Spanish I, II, and III</i>	
Logic	.8
- Logic 9 (.4)	
- Logic 10 (.4)	
Mathematics	3
- Algebra I – (1)	
- Geometry – (1)	
- Bridge to Algebra II – (1)	
- Algebra II – (1)	
- Algebra II/Trig – (1)	
- Pre-Calculus – (1) (honors)	
- Calculus – (1) (honors)	
<i>Honors Distinction: 4 math credits, including at least Precalculus</i>	
Sciences (including labs)	3
- Physical Science – (1)	
- Biology – (1)	
- Environmental Science – (1)	
- Chemistry – (1)	
- Physics – (1) (honors)	
- D.E. Advanced Biology – (1)	
<i>Honors Distinction: 4 science credits—one year of chemistry and one advanced science</i>	



Social Studies	5
- World Geography – (1) (regular or honors)	
- World History – (1) (regular or honors)	
- United States/Virginia History – (1) (regular, honors, or DE)	
- United States/Virginia Govt. – (1) (regular, honors, or DE)	
- Personal Finance - (.6)	
- Economics - (.4)	
<i>Honors Distinction: two years of honors/DE-level social studies</i>	
Guidance	.2
Health and Physical Education	2
Electives	3
Total Minimum Credits	25

Graduates must also have completed at least 20 hours of Christian Service Hours during each year they were enrolled as a GCS HS student. Refer to [Christian Service Hours](#).

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- <sup>1</sup> Credits are based upon the VA Department of Education’s “140 clock hours of instruction” standard.  
<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/parents-students/for-students/graduation/diploma-options/standard-diploma-graduation-requirements>. Last accessed 06/13/24.  
 For each period within a yearlong class, .2 credits are earned.
- <sup>2</sup> For each year a student is enrolled in the GCS HS, a Bible class must be taken. If enrolled for fewer than 4 years, then the “Total Minimum Credits” credits requirement must still be met via other courses.
- <sup>3</sup> While Foreign Language credits are not required for graduation, it is highly recommended that students aspiring to enter college earn at least 2.0 Foreign language credits which are tallied as elective credits.

**DROP/ADD POLICY**

If a student wishes to add an academic course to a class schedule, he/she will need to obtain and complete a "Drop/Add" form from the Guidance Counselor. This form must be filled in and then signed by a parent, the teacher of the course being dropped/added, and the Guidance Counselor. The completed form should be turned in to the Guidance Counselor, at which time the student's name will be removed from or added to the class roster, and textbook(s) will be collected from/distributed to the student. The student is not to be considered officially removed from or enrolled in the class until this procedure is completed and the teacher and student subsequently receive confirmation from the Guidance Counselor.

If a course is dropped prior to the communicated deadline, no record of this course will show on the student's transcript. Any class dropped after the deadline will be noted with a "WP" (withdrawn-passing) for a grade average of 60 or above. No credit will be given for the class. If the grade is below a 60.0, it will be noted as a "WF" (withdrawn-failing), be assigned a 0-GPA value, and averaged into the student's overall GPA.

**EXAMS**

Exams will be administered at the end of each semester in each core class (except Bible). Exams will be calculated as fifteen percent of the semester grade for freshmen and sophomores, and twenty percent for juniors and seniors.

Freshmen and sophomores taking classes along with juniors or seniors will have the higher percentage applied for those exams.

Algebra 2 exam grades, regardless of whether a sophomore takes the class, will be calculated as 20% of the semester grade.

Accommodations for individual students to take their exams before or after this week must be coordinated with the respective teacher(s), Guidance Counselor, and principal.

Students who do not have scheduled exams are not required to be at the school during the scheduled time; however, a study hall will be arranged for those who do come. Parents who prefer for their student to remain home during this time need to communicate that they prefer their HS student to be granted special sign-in/out privileges during the exams.

Second Semester Senior Exams will be administered sooner to accommodate the Senior Trip.

Individual teachers may exempt seniors from the second semester exam if they so choose. In such cases, seniors must meet the exemption criteria as follows:

- Take the average of the third and fourth quarter grades and average with the first semester grade. If the average is an unrounded 93 or above, the student may be exempted.
- Juniors may be exempt from second semester exams in classes which have a combination of juniors and seniors if the teacher is choosing to exempt the seniors. If the teacher approves the general exemption for the second semester, only those with an unrounded average of 93% or higher and are not ineligible due to absences (refer to next point) are eligible for exemption.
- A junior or senior who has more than twelve absences of any type in any class for the year may not be exempted from the exam in that class.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY**

GCS provides various extracurricular experiences in the areas of athletics, fine arts, ministry, service, and fellowship. Students should avail themselves of opportunities that match their interests, but only if doing so will not jeopardize their overall health, church participation, family life, and academic performance.

Students who are unable to maintain passing yearly grades (refer to [Grading Scale](#)) in all classes they are taking will be ruled ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities until officially reinstated.

The HS administration will review all grades every 4.5 weeks to determine if any students have become ineligible. Upon determining that a student has a failing grade, the student, his/her parents/guardians, and the supervisor of any extracurricular department/group/team within which the student is participating will be notified the student will become ineligible on the seventh day after notification was sent unless all grades are at a passing level. On the seventh day the student, if the grade(s) is/are still failing, the student is not permitted to participate or attend any extracurricular activities until the HS administration is able to confirm that all of the students' grades in all classes are passing.

Students who earn a failing fourth-quarter grade in any class may not participate in or attend any extracurricular experiences during the summer, and any student who earns a failing final grade in any class for the year may not

participate in or attend any extracurricular experiences during the summer nor for the first two weeks of the succeeding school year.

Any student who frequently has failing grades for more than one 4.5-week checkup may be ruled ineligible by the HS Principal for lengthier durations, regardless of how quickly the student's grades may improve.

Students who repeatedly, frequently, or egregiously violate GCS expectations for student behavior may also be declared ineligible to participate in or attend extracurricular activities by the HS Principal. Refer to [Behavioral Consequences](#).

When a student misses at least 50% of a school day (four or more periods), he/she is not permitted to attend or participate in any extracurricular activities during that day. An exception to this standard may be applied in instances when a non-medical waived absence is granted. Refer to Waiving of Absences and the Athletic Handbook.

Refer to [HS Athletics](#), [HS Fine Arts](#), and [HS Prefecture](#) and [National Honor Society](#) for additional information about these extracurricular experiences.

### **GRADE POINT AVERAGE (QUALITY POINTS)**

Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated by assigning a number to each letter grade and computing the average.

A <sup>+</sup> = 4.33	A = 4.00	A <sup>-</sup> = 3.67
B <sup>+</sup> = 3.33	B = 3.00	B <sup>-</sup> = 2.67
C <sup>+</sup> = 2.33	C = 2.00	C <sup>-</sup> = 1.67
D <sup>+</sup> = 1.33	D = 1.00	D <sup>-</sup> = 0.67
F = 0.00		

An additional 0.5 point is added to honors courses, and an additional 1.0 point is added for AP and DE courses in calculating GPA and rank. The GPA is used for determining honor roll, class rank, and eligibility for good student driver insurance discounts. In cases of a tie when determining class rank, the numeric grade averages will be used.

### **GRADING SCALE & REPORT CARDS**

Letter grades are given as a measure of academic achievement according to the following scale (numeric grades are not rounded when assigning letter grades):

A+ = 98-100	A = 93-97	A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 0-59		

Grading terms will consist of four nine-week periods ("Quarters"), and these are divided into two "Semesters."

Report cards will be available on the Family Portal at the end of these. (Refer to the School Calendar.)

## **GUIDANCE AND CAREER PROGRAM**

We are pleased to offer a career/guidance program for students in grades 9-12:

- Job Shadowing once a year for grades 9-12
- Career Fairs
- Mentorship program for grades 11 and 12
- Guidance & Calling class for 11th grade students
- Individual career counseling
- Parent-guidance conferences

Please refer to the *GCS Path to Career and Calling* resource for more specific information about the Guidance and Career program. This can be obtained from the Guidance Counselor.

## **HOMEWORK AND CLASS WORK**

Homework and class work, collectively referred to as “assignments,” are a vital part of the learning process and course requirements. Therefore, significant emphasis is placed on such work being turned in on time and in an appropriate form.

### **Appropriate Form**

If an assignment is handwritten, students should use cursive handwriting with blue or black ink.

Assignments determined by the teacher to be of substandard neatness or inappropriate form will be returned to the student to be redone, per teacher specifications, and such will be considered late, unless the student is able to resubmit it before the due date or the teacher grants an extension. Refer to [Make-Up Class/Homework](#).

When the student re-submits an assignment (which must meet the communicated standards) after the due date then the deductions for lateness will be applied. Refer to [Make-Up Class/Homework](#).

### **Submitting Assignments**

Homework must be handed in at a time determined by the teacher to be considered “on time” unless an extension has been granted by the teacher or in cases involving an absence, or a tardy that the administration has deemed to be “excused.” Refer to [Make-Up Class/Homework](#).

When submitted on time, the teacher will enter a “P” for *Pending*.

Students who are away from a class on a GCS-sponsored event or other pre-planned trip on the day an assignment is due are responsible to submit that assignment in advance unless otherwise directed by the teacher so as to avoid deductions for lateness.

If a student was absent (excused/unexcused) from class because s/he was tardy to school, the homework due that day in any classes missed so far must be submitted to the GCS receptionist upon the student’s arrival. The receptionist will then forward the assignment(s) to the respective teacher(s), and no deduction for lateness will be assigned.

If a student was absent for the entire day or was absent due to an early dismissal, the homework must be submitted to the GCS receptionist the first day the student is back to school. The receptionist will then forward the assignment(s) to the respective teacher(s), and no deductions for lateness will be assigned.

If an assignment is not submitted on time the teacher will;

Enter in FACTS SIS an “M” grade code for *Missing*, which is calculated as a zero, and if the assignment is never submitted, the “M” will remain.

Apply the following deductions once the assignment is submitted in its proper form:

One School Day Late = Grade assigned is 90% of the earned grade.

Two School Days Late = Grade assigned is 70% of the earned grade.

Three School Days Late = Grade assigned is 50% of the earned grade, and the teacher will notify the H.S. Principal, who may assign the student an Academic Detention. (Refer to [Academic Detentions](#).)

If an assignment is not turned in on time in a block class, it will be considered to be an additional day late if it is not submitted to the teacher before 3:20 p.m. on the next school day, regardless of whether that blocked class was scheduled on that day.

If the HS Principal determines that a student has a pattern of being tardy or absent from school to postpone the taking of quizzes/tests or submitting projects/major assignments, he/she may assign an Academic Detention (Refer to [Academic Detentions](#).)

### **Make-up Class/Homework**

Make-up work will be limited only to that which the teacher feels is necessary for the student to complete in order to master skills or the material.

When a teacher chooses to revise a due date for missing work, once the due date is communicated to the student, it becomes the date that will be used to determine potential reduction in grades for lateness.

When a student has missed a class, or will miss a class because of an absence, the student should take the initiative to contact the teacher to make up an assignment, and to refer to the *Family Portal* to keep track of assignments and possible revisions of due dates or expectations posted during the absence.

All make-up work upon the student’s return to school from any absence should be turned in to the front desk personnel, who will then forward it to the respective teacher(s).

### **Make-up Tests/Quizzes**

A student who misses taking a test/quiz because he/she arrived at school later in the day must take the test/quiz during study hall or after school or by a revised deadline established by the teacher.

Making-up tests/quizzes may be done during a supervised study hall, after school as supervised by an administrator or designee, or at a different time and manner to be determined by the teacher.

An “A” for *Absent* will be initially entered by the teacher for such tests/quizzes; however, this will be changed to an “M” for *Missing* in FACTS SIS once the deadline for making up the test/quiz expires.

While no grade deductions will be applied for not completing a test or quiz on or before a due date, if it is not completed upon the due date newly established by the teacher, an Academic Detention may be assigned by the HS Principal. (Refer to “Academic Detentions” in the “H.S. Behavioral Policies of this handbook.)

## **Unresolved Missing Assignments**

Students who persist in not submitting assigned academic work may be required to attend [academic detentions](#) or come to school on a Saturday morning or during the summer until all assignments are properly completed and submitted.

## **HONOR ROLL**

A quarterly honor roll is established to recognize and honor those students who achieve a B or better grade average in school courses. To be recognized, students must maintain at least a:

**“B” Honor Roll** - 3.0 GPA and receive no grade less than a C- on his/her quarter grade report.

**“A” Honor Roll** - 3.5 GPA and receive no grade less than a B- on his/her quarter grade report.

**Principal's List** - 4.0 GPA and receive no less than an A- on his/her quarter grade report.

In order to recognize honor roll students, a list is published in the *Warrior Weekly* newsletter. Part-time students (those with fewer than four (4.0) credits in a school year) are not eligible for the honor roll or for cumulative academic awards. Students with one or more **Incomplete** report card grades at the time of report card posting are not eligible for the honor roll for that quarter.

## **HONORS, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, & DUAL ENROLLMENT CLASSES**

**Language Arts** - Honors English 9, Honors English 10, Honors English 11/12, Advanced Placement English Literature and English Language 11/12

**Foreign Language** - Honors Spanish 3; Honors Spanish 4 (beginning in 2025-26)

**Math** - Honors Calculus

**Science** - Honors Physics, Dual Enrollment or Honors Advanced Biology

**Social Studies** - Honors World Geography, Honors World History, Honors U.S. History, Dual Enrollment U.S. History, Honors Government, Dual Enrollment Government

An additional weight of 0.5 quality points is added to honors courses, and an additional 1.0 quality point is added to AP and DE courses in calculating course GPA and class rank.

## **NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Honor Society is an organization that endeavors to create enthusiasm for scholarship, stimulate community service, promote leadership, and develop character in high school students. Students who excel in these four areas may be selected to participate in Grace Christian School’s local chapter. Chapter activities include, but are not limited to, service projects, field trips, book studies, and bi-monthly administrative meetings. NHS members are able to apply for certain college scholarships designed by the national organization.

To be eligible for membership, the successful candidate must be a junior or senior, have and maintain at least a 3.75 GPA, demonstrate leadership within the school and community, complete twenty hours of community service (not associated with CSH) prior to selection, and display Christ-like character, maturity, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, kindness, fairness, and citizenship.

Participating in the HS National Honor Society is viewed to be a privilege to be enjoyed by students whose behavior and academic performance merits participation. (Refer to [Extracurricular Eligibility](#)) Also, the NHS has standards for maintaining membership.

## **PASS/FAIL COURSES**

The following high school courses are designated as Pass/Fail courses:

- Physical Education (Athletics Seasons and/or Personal Workout Hours)
- Guidance and Calling

If a student passes such courses, a “P” will be entered into report cards and transcripts; however, his/her GPA is not impacted.

If a student fails such courses, an “F” will be entered into report cards and transcripts, and his/her GPA will be impacted (the class credit is equal to a zero).

If a student fails a Pass/Fail course and then later retakes the course and passes, both the failed course and the passed course will be included on his/her official transcript.

## **PERMANENT RECORD**

A cumulative record of courses and the GPA will be added to each student's permanent record on a yearly basis. A transcript will be available in case of transfer to another school or to accompany collegiate applications. The GPA is recorded for high school-level courses only.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Students are required to earn 2.0 credits in Physical Education (P.E.) Health. In addition to the required 0.4-credit Health class, in lieu of a Physical Education course taught on campus, students earn the remaining credit by participating in one or more GCS-sponsored athletics seasons and/or\* by completing and logging parent/guardian-verified personal workout hours with activities approved by the administration. Students should complete this credit requirement by the end of their sophomore year unless extenuating circumstances necessitate otherwise. P.E. experiences are designated as Pass/Fail courses, and grades are entered only at the end of the school year as final grades.

### **GCS-Sponsored Athletics**

Earning Credit: Students earn 0.5 credits for participating on a GCS Junior Varsity or Varsity team. Credit decisions for students who complete only part of a season are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by administration.

### **Personal Workout**

Earning Credit: Students earn 0.5 credits per 70 hours of documented pre-approved personal workout experiences. Since Health class is typically taken in the freshman year and, if passed, a student earns 0.4 credits, freshmen choosing to not participate in GCS Athletics are advised to document 84 hours, as this enables them to earn 0.6 creditS, and thus 1.0 creditS in the freshmen year. Students would need to document 140 hours to earn 1.0 P.E. credit during their sophomore year.

Tracking Hours: Students participating in personal workout hours will be enrolled in a P.E. Google Classroom. Through this digital classroom, an administrator communicates with students when needed and students have access to a spreadsheet in which they log their workout hours throughout the semester/year.

Preapproval of Hours: Students must submit a personal workout proposal at the beginning of the school year for consideration via a Google Form posted in Google Classroom and modify the plan, if necessary, in follow up communication from an administrator.

Submission of Hours: After completion of 70 hours, students submit the spreadsheet to the Guidance Counselor through Google Classroom. In addition, a parent must email the Guidance Counselor to certify that the workout hours are accurate.

Submission Deadlines: Students must submit their completed personal workout hours one week before the end of the school year, and parent/guardian

\*Options: 1. One Athletics Season + One semester of Personal Workout, 2. Two Athletics Seasons, 3. Two semesters of Personal Workout

## **PREREQUISITES FOR HONORS, AP, DE, AND MATH HIGH SCHOOL COURSES**

English:

9th Grade English, Honors: Eligibility for Honors English 9 is contingent upon the student maintaining a minimum of an unrounded 90% in 8th Grade English and having English teacher recommendation and principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

10th Grade English, Honors: Student must have an unrounded 90% or above in the previous English class and have English teacher recommendation and principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

11th/12th Grade English, Honors: In addition to meeting the following applicable grade prerequisite the previous year, placement depends upon English teacher recommendation and principal approval:

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 90% final grade in Regular English, minimum

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 86% final grade in Honors English, minimum

Rising 12th graders: Unrounded 82% final grade in AP English, minimum

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

11th/12th Grade English, AP: In addition to meeting the following applicable grade prerequisite the previous year, placement depends upon English teacher recommendation and principal approval, along with demonstration of proficiency on a timed essay administered by the AP English teacher:

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 92% in Regular English, minimum

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 89% in Honors English, minimum

Rising 12th graders: Unrounded 86% in AP English, minimum

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 1.0. In addition, the student will take a College Board AP English exam in May.*

Math:

Geometry: Student must pass Algebra I.

Bridge to Algebra II: Student must pass Algebra I and Geometry.



Algebra II: Student must have an unrounded 80% in Algebra I and pass Geometry. Otherwise, the student must take the Bridge class before advancing to Algebra II. If students do not meet the requirements for Algebra II, they may complete an approved online Algebra I course during the summer before taking Algebra II and receive an 80% or better.

Precalculus: Student must have an unrounded 82% or above in Algebra II to advance to Pre-Calculus. Otherwise, students must complete a summer review packet and have math teacher recommendation and Principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5*

Calculus: Student must have completed Pre-Calculus and have teacher recommendation and Principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

Statistics: Student must have passed Pre-Calculus. This class is offered as a college course or high school course. The college course is completed online under the supervision of the Pre-Calculus teacher. The student is required to come to class to work on the online course.

*If taken as a high school course, the quality points for the course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

*If taken as an online dual-enrollment course, the quality points for the course grade are weighted by 1.0.*

Science:

Chemistry: Student must be concurrently taking or have passed Algebra II or Bridge to Algebra II.

Anatomy & Physiology: Student must have earned an unrounded 80% or above in Biology and Chemistry.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5*

Dual Enrollment Advanced Biology: Student must have earned an unrounded 80% or above in Biology and Chemistry.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

Physics: Student must be concurrently taking or have passed Pre-Calculus.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

Social Studies:

9th Grade World Geography, Honors: Eligibility for Honors World Geography is contingent upon the student maintaining a minimum of an unrounded 90% in 8th Grade History and having World Geography teacher recommendation and Principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

10th Grade World History, Honors: Student must have an unrounded 90% or above in World Geography, as well as World Geography teacher recommendation and Principal approval.

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

11th/12th Grade U.S. History and Government, Honors: In addition to meeting the following applicable grade prerequisite the previous year, placement depends upon Social Studies teacher recommendation and Principal approval:

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 90% final grade in Regular World or U.S. History, minimum

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 86% final grade in Honors World or U.S. History, minimum

Rising 12th graders: Unrounded 82% final grade in DE U.S. History, minimum

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5*

11th/12th Grade U.S. History and Government, Dual Enrollment: In addition to meeting the following applicable grade prerequisite the previous year, placement depends upon Social Studies teacher recommendation and Principal approval. Students may also need to take the Math and English placement tests at Blue Ridge Community College:

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 92% in Regular World or U.S. History, minimum

Rising 11th and 12th graders: Unrounded 89% in Honors World or U.S. History, minimum

Rising 12th graders: Unrounded 86% in DE U.S. History, minimum

*The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 1.0. The student will earn college credit.*

Spanish:

Spanish III: Students must have completed Spanish I and Spanish II and have Spanish teacher recommendation and Principal approval. *The quality points for this course grade are weighted by 0.5.*

\*Please note: Fees for honors, AP, and DE classes will be published during the spring semester.

Significant attendance and behavioral issues may also be factors for denying student placement in honors courses.

## **SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TESTS**

Students considering attending college will be encouraged to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) at the end of their junior year or the beginning of their senior year. All sophomores and juniors will take the PSAT.

Finally, all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors will take the Iowa Tests each April.

Details concerning testing schedules will be made available to students and parents at least one month prior to testing.

## **STUDY HALLS**

When possible, study halls are worked into a student's schedule during the school day as a means of diminishing the academic load a student has after each school day. Students are strongly advised to make the most of such opportunities, and to fully cooperate with the behavioral expectations in study halls so other students can maximize studying and completing homework.

## **TRANSCRIPTS**

Requests for transcripts should be submitted by email to [hsregistrar@gcswarriors.org](mailto:hsregistrar@gcswarriors.org) and will be processed within three to five (3-5) school days of the date they are received, if all payments are up to date.

## **VALEDICTORIAN / SALUTATORIAN**

The senior with the highest overall GPA rank in the senior class by the end of the senior year will be recognized as that year's valedictorian and the senior with the second-highest overall GPA ranked as the salutatorian

To qualify to be valedictorian or salutatorian a student must have attended at least four semesters at GCS and must have a behavioral record that includes no egregious violations of GCS policies.

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian will:

- receive a platter and certificate at the HS Awards Assembly.
- present an address at the Graduation Ceremony.

The HS administration will identify the two seniors with the highest GPA ranks at the end of the third quarter and will notify the student and parents of this possibility so they can begin to prepared for to potentially deliver the aforementioned graduation address(es).

Additional students and parents who have a mathematical possibility of being either will also be notified.

A second check will be done at the midway point of the fourth quarter.

If a determination of who will be Valedictorian and Salutatorian cannot be finalized, then all possible candidates will be asked to submit an address that they will possibly present.

The final check will be done one week prior to the graduation ceremony.

Refer to [Grade Point Average](#) in this document.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

Before continuing to read about the below policies, please also refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Attendance](#).

It is extremely important for students and parents to regularly access the *FACTS Family Portal* to check not only their student's grades, but also his/her attendance record. This is especially true since too many absences from a class can result in the loss of class credits and ultimately jeopardize a student's ability to earn a GCS diploma and too many tardies or absences can result in behavioral consequences being assigned.

(Refer to [Loss of Class Credit & Jeopardizing Receiving a Diploma](#).)

### **ABSENCES**

#### **Criteria for Determining Absences**

A student who misses at least 50% of a class period will be assigned an absence (A) in their attendance record, but if he/she misses less than 50%, a tardy (T) or an early dismissal (ED) code will be entered.

Early dismissals resulting from a GCS sponsored activity will be waived. Refer to [Waived Absences](#) and "Attendance Record.")

When a student leaves a class period between the halfway point and the last 5 minutes of class, the student's attendance will be entered with an "ED" code, which stands for "Early Dismissal."

Refer to [Extracurricular Eligibility](#) to understand how an absence likely will cause a student to be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

#### **Loss of Class Credit & Jeopardizing Receiving a Diploma**

While it is the responsibility of the parent(s) and student to track the student's attendance record, GCS will attempt to partner with the family to work against the undesired consequence of class credit not being awarded and a student possibly earning insufficient total credits required to earn a GCS diploma. The following steps will be taken by GCS:

Interventions	# of periods absent that may trigger intervention.				
	5-periods per week classes	4-periods per week classes	3-periods per week classes	2-periods per week classes	1-periods per week classes
Email Notification sent by HS Principal. <i>A parent sends response email @ receiving email.</i>	10	8	6	n/a	n/a
Letter & Email Notification sent by HS Principal. <i>Student and parents sign copy of letter and student returns it to HS Principal by the next school day.</i>	15	10	8	6	n/a
Loss of credits for that class, and the student may be in jeopardy of not being able to earn a GCS diploma.	21	17	13	9	5

### **Parental Communication**

When proper communication from a parent occurs, then an “AC” code which stands for “absence communicated” will be entered. It is important for students and parents to realize that an “absence communicated” is not the same as it being “waived,” as additional criteria and steps are needed for such designations. Refer to [Waived Absences](#).

When a parent is aware of an absence but forgets to communicate it to the school the “A” code may be changed to an “AU” which stands for “Absence Uncommunicated.” The school will attempt to get in contact with a parent after entering this code; however, if communication between the school and the parent never occurs, the student is legally “truant” and behavioral consequences may be assigned to the student. This is especially likely when a parent is unaware of an absence, or never gave the student permission to be absent.

### **Predetermined Absences**

Unless a GCS event causes an absence, a parent must communicate to the school about predetermined absences via an email sent to [hsattendance@gcswarriors.org](mailto:hsattendance@gcswarriors.org) or a written note sent to the GCS receptionist as soon as possible. This communication should contain the date(s) to be missed and a succinct description of the cause(s) of the absence(s). Such prior notification will enable the student, teachers, and parents to create an action plan to address the missed instructional time and how best to handle missed assignments, quizzes, and tests.

### **Special School Days**

Throughout the school year, special events such as retreats, Great Escapes, DC Trips, Pass It On, Job Shadowing Day, etc. are organized as means to develop the whole student. Participation in these events is expected, but when a student is unable to attend, the normal process of communicating and documenting such absences is needed.

### **Unexpected Absences**

Unexpected absences should be communicated by a parent to the school office via a phone message prior to 7:30 a.m. on the day of the absence. This enables the school to more effectively account for the whereabouts and security of each student. After initially notifying the school, parents should also immediately send an email succinctly describing the cause(s) of the absence to [hsattendance@gcswarriors.org](mailto:hsattendance@gcswarriors.org).

When proper communication occurs, even if after the fact, the attendance code will be entered or changed to “AC.” Refer to [Parental Communication](#).

## **Virtual Participation**

As technology permits and exceptional circumstances warrant, students may be able to join their class(es) virtually via *Google Meet*. Families interested in this occurring should first approach the HS Principal.

If the principal is agreeable to permitting this, he/she will approach the teachers of the student to ascertain whether they also agree. If they do, the attendance code “PV” will be entered.

The HS Principal, when the school has to be closed during a school day or on other appropriate occasions, will announce via broadcast emails that students are expected to participate virtually.

When there is an expectation that a student will participate virtually, but technology prevents such from occurring, parents need to use the above-described communication protocol to inform GCS of such, and then the normal absent codes and processes will apply. Refer to [Parental Communication](#).

## **Waived Absences**

While GCS recognizes that there are many legitimate reasons for parents to determine a student should not attend school, we are able to designate only some of these as “waived,” based upon the guidelines provided by the *Virginia State Board of Education*.

According to the VSBoE, such designation may be assigned if the parent(s) has/have followed the above-described communication protocol, the proper documentation (see below) has been received by GCS, and the absence is related to a/an:

- religious observance or event, \*
- legal obligation, \*
- medical appointment, injury, or chronic illness, \*
- military obligation, \*
- funeral,
- GCS event, or
- GCS suspension.

*\* A hard copy of official documentation from an institution or an individual not related to the student must be submitted to the HS Receptionist, or a digital copy can be sent via email to [hsattendance@gcswarriors.org](mailto:hsattendance@gcswarriors.org).*

Waived absences will be entered into the attendance record as “AW,” and no academic or behavioral consequences will be assigned.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL GUIDELINES**

### **Loving our Neighbors**

Whether dropping off or picking up students, or just visiting the high school, please do not park in front of any garages that border the alleys, since they belong to our neighbors. Also, please be considerate of our neighbors when they are attempting to pull into or leave their properties.

### **Arrival Guidelines**

#### **Times & Doors**

Students may arrive as early as 7:30 a.m. in order to prepare for first-period class beginning at 8:05 a.m. using either the student locker room or front entrance.

The locker room doors will be locked at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving after 8:00 a.m. must use the front door.

Students arriving at or after 8:05 a.m. must also sign in at the receptionist desk and receive a pass from the receptionist before continuing to class.

### **Traffic Flow & Disembarking**

1. Families may disembark their children in front of the school on South Market Street.
2. Families may also access the school from the Coalter Street entrance. Please make sure to adhere to the following guidelines:
3. *Do not stop in the middle of the alley to disembark students.*
  - a. Please pull into a visitor parking space or to the right side of the alley so that other traffic may pass.
  - b. If there is no room in the main alleyway to pull over, please turn to the right (entrance to the back parking lot) and either pull into a parking space or as far forward as possible near the storage building in order to disembark your passengers.
4. After disembarking, please exit onto Market Street by taking a left (one-way street) from either alley.

### **Dismissal Guidelines**

#### **Leaving School Premises**

*Students must not leave the school premises other than at regular dismissal time or for a scheduled school event, except by permission from the school office or when a junior/senior has earned sign-out privileges. A phone call and also an email or signed note from a parent must be presented to the school office for approval previous to the time of special dismissal.*

#### **Sign-Out Privileges for Juniors & Seniors**

As a special privilege, seniors and juniors may leave school following their last scheduled class of the day. Additionally, seniors may leave during their lunch and/or study hall period(s).

The school is not responsible or liable for the seniors or juniors who are signed out.. In order to do so, they must have permission from their parent(s) on file in the school office. This permission is generally handled during enrollment/reenrollment. If a parent does not want to grant such permission at that time but later changes his/her mind, a written, signed note may be sent to the attention of the HS principal.

Seniors who employ a sign out privilege prior to lunch time must sign back in 10 minutes prior to the end of lunch that they can effectively lead their stewardship teams.

The following guidelines apply:

- Students must sign out at the front desk, exit through the front lobby door, and leave school premises.
- Students must not have any late work or outstanding make-up work.
- Students who are returning from this privilege on the same school day must enter through the front lobby door, sign in at the office, and then go directly to the room designated by the principal.
- Students are not permitted to enter and exit the building multiple times during their privilege unless prior permission from the Principal is obtained.
- Additionally, once attendance is taken in a study hall, students may not then decide to employ this privilege, nor should they sign back in in the midst of a period.

A senior or junior may lose his or her privilege and remain in a study hall for the following reasons:

- Falling behind in schoolwork (outstanding makeup work, incomplete schoolwork, or having a grade average dropping below an unrounded 70 in any class).
- Not completing assigned stewardship responsibilities.
- Returning late from the privilege or violating any other privilege guideline.
- As a result of a consequence assigned by the principal for poor attendance or behavior.
- The principal may also, on occasion, require students to remain at the school for special events or meetings.

Refer to “Student Parking” in the “Driving Privileges” section of the “HS General Policies” of this handbook.

### **Times, Doors, & Waiting Areas**

The school day will end at 3:20 p.m., at which point the dismissal tone will sound. Students whose parents have so indicated on the Dismissal Form may leave the school upon the 3:20 p.m. tone through the basement door adjacent to the student locker room. Students whose parents have not given permission to leave the school at dismissal time are to report to the designated dismissal area and wait until their parents or carpool arrive. They must not leave the dismissal area until that time.

### **Traffic Flow & Loading**

Dismissal poses a special challenge because many parents arrive before the actual dismissal bell, thus needing a place to park while they wait. As a result, those who are waiting in line often block the alley entrance to all traffic. As a courtesy to our neighbors and in order to ensure a safe dismissal environment, it is important for us to carefully manage this process. We appreciate your careful adherence to the following guidelines:

1. Please do not enter the alley from Coalter Street until after the official dismissal time. If you arrive early, please consider parking on one of the side streets until after that time. This will greatly help us in relieving traffic congestion before the dismissal bell. Please remember that the dismissal bell rings at 3:20 p.m. on full days and at 12:20 p.m. on early-dismissal days. Students will generally not be in the dismissal area until a few minutes after dismissal.
2. When you enter the dismissal area from Coalter Street, GCS personnel may be available to assist you in embarking your student(s). Please carefully follow instructions from GCS personnel in order to help ensure a safe and orderly dismissal process for all.
3. Consider delaying your arrival at school a few extra minutes to help “spread out” the dismissal process. Your arrival any time between approximately 3:21 and 3:35 p.m. is appropriate. If you will not be able to arrive by 3:35, please inform your student(s), so they can inform the GCS personnel on duty.

### **ATTENDANCE RECORD**

Attendance is entered into FACTS SIS by our faculty and staff and is monitored by the principal. It is the student’s and parent(s)’ responsibilities to keep track of attendance in the Family Portal and to notify GCS if any irregularities are discovered.

Attendance records are also included in each student’s report card and filed in each student's cumulative folder at the end of the school year.

Initially, faculty will enter an absence (“A”) or tardy (“T”) into FACTS SIS. Later, the principal or his/her designee categorizes an absence or tardy by changing those codes accordingly:

“AC” = Communicated (Refer to *Absences: [Parental Communication.](#)*)

“AW” = Waived (Refer to *Absences: [Wavied Absences.](#)*)

“AU” = Uncommunicated (Refer to *Absences: [Parental Communication.](#)*)

“PV” = Participated/Participating Virtually (Refer to *Absences: [Virtual Participating.](#)*)

## **TARDIES**

Arriving on time is critical for the success of the student, as tardies are disruptive to classes and result in the student losing valuable instructional time.

### Communication to School

Parents should notify the school office by phone prior to 7:30 a.m when their student will be tardy to school. This helps the school account for the whereabouts and security of each student. After initially notifying the school, parents should also immediately send an email describing the cause(s) of the tardy to [hsattendance@gcswarriors.org](mailto:hsattendance@gcswarriors.org).

- Students who arrive late to school are to receive a pass from the office before being admitted to their class, and the tardy will be recorded for the period occurring upon their arrival, and an absence (refer to “Absences”) marked within whatever period(s) they may have missed.
- Students must also submit to the GCS staff member who processes their late arrival any homework that was due in classes which have already occurred, and s/he will forward such to the respective teacher(s).

### **Types of Tardies**

#### **Excused Tardies**

The principal has the authority to designate a tardy as “excused” if he/she deems the cause(s) for such to be beyond the control of the student/parent(s)

#### **Unexcused Tardies**

The following process and consequences will be used to deal with an accumulation of unexcused tardies to school or a specific class/study hall within a semester:

- 5 Tardies = The student and parent(s) will be notified by email.
- 10 Tardies = A notification email and letter will be sent to the student and parent(s), and the student will be assigned one Behavioral Detention.
- 15 Tardies = A notification email and letter will be sent to the student and parent(s), and the student will be assigned a second Behavioral Detention.
- 20 Tardies = The principal will make phone or personal contact with at least one parent and send a notification email and letter to the student and parent(s). Additionally, the principal will convene a meeting between the student, parent(s) and principal to generate an *Attendance Action Plan* which will be signed by all attending parties. This plan will contain the following:
  - Steps to be taken by the student/parent(s) to break the cycle of habitual tardiness.
  - The below-listed consequences may be applied immediately and also upon being tardy 25 times within a semester.
    - Additional Behavioral Detentions being assigned,
    - Loss of Student Privileges (extracurricular activities, early dismissal, etc.),
    - Loss of credit for course(s) impacted by the tardies,
    - In-School Suspension(s)



Each student's semester tally for tardies will reset at the end of the semester unless the principal deems doing such is not in the best interests of the student and/or GCS.

If a student's unexcused tardies within multiple class periods stem from being tardy from school on the same day, those tardies will be tallied as 1 tardy when applying the above consequences.

Any student with more than five unexcused tardies during the school year will not be eligible for the *Perfect Attendance Award*.

## **BEHAVIORAL POLICIES**

### **CATEGORIES**

#### **Academic Integrity**

The school assumes that ninth through twelfth grade students understand the necessity of honesty and integrity at a personal level as an essential character quality in all aspects of their lives.

Academic integrity infractions (academic cheating, inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI)<sup>1</sup>, or plagiarism<sup>2</sup>) have academic and behavioral consequences:

#### 1. Academic Consequences

a. Initially, the assignment grade will be entered as "incomplete" ("I").

i. If the infraction only involved 10% or less of an assignment, he/she will proportionately reduce the grade.

ii. If the infraction involved more than 10%:

1. The student must redo and resubmit the entire assignment without additional academic integrity concerns by a due date and in a manner determined by the teacher.

2. The earned grade on the resubmission will be reduced by 50% (i.e. If the resubmitted assignment is graded as a 40%, then the entered grade would be 20%).

3. Before the 50% grade reduction is assigned, the student's grade on the resubmitted assignment must be 70% or better. Failure to do so will result in additional behavioral consequences.

4. If the assignment was a quiz or test, the student must retake the entire quiz/test within one week's time. Upon grading the retaken quiz/test, the teacher will enter the grade after reducing it by a mandatory 30%.

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<sup>1</sup> While this relatively new technology can be a valid tool in academic settings, students should not use AI to complete any academic assignment unless the teacher explicitly permits such. Regardless of intention or percentage of an assignment impacted by the use of AI, if done without explicit permission, this will be considered an infraction of our academic integrity policies.

<sup>2</sup> Plagiarism is representing the words and ideas of others as one's own without acknowledging their source. Plagiarism is often the result of carelessness on the part of the student; nevertheless, it is still a serious offense. Whenever a student uses someone else's idea or a direct quotation, the student should acknowledge this within a written or verbal presentation. Teachers will instruct students in how to properly cite sources and how to avoid plagiarism.

## 2. Behavior

- a. A behavioral incident record in FACTS SIS will be entered.
- b. Depending upon the egregiousness of the infraction, whether there was a previous academic integrity infraction, or the cooperation and attitude of the student when confronted, the principal may also assign behavioral consequences ranging from after school detentions to possible expulsion (Refer to “Suspensions/Expulsions - All Grades” and the “Suspensions/Expulsions” in “Behavioral Consequences” for the HS.)

Academic integrity violations are cumulative throughout the student’s enrollment at GCS in grades nine through twelve, and are typically a part of the student’s permanent record.

### **Controlled Substances**

Student use or possession of drugs/medications,\* alcohol, vaping, or tobacco products on or off campus at any time *is strictly prohibited*.

Violations of this prohibition may result in:

1. confiscation of the controlled substance(s),
2. automatic three-day suspension and automatic consideration by the Head of School for expulsion, even if it is the first offense, (Refer to the school-wide policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#) and the HS policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#).)
3. the infraction being recorded in the student’s permanent record, and
4. constituted legal authorities being notified.

Attempts to sell or distribute controlled substances to others, especially those within the covenant GCS family, will make the probability of expulsion more likely.

\*This policy does not apply to situations involving GCS receiving prior notification from a parent that a student will be bringing in a specified medication for that student or a sibling and the medication it is given to a GCS employee to supervise its on-site use.

### **Dress Code**

Grace Christian School gives high school students the privilege of a dress code rather than requiring uniforms. Cooperation with these standards reflects maturity, accountability and respect for authority, traits that are important in developing young adults of character and followers of Christ. We rely on our partnership with families to reinforce these guidelines and to help our students make wise decisions about their appearance at school.

The emphasis of the dress code focuses on modesty, appropriateness, neatness and cleanliness.

The principal will serve as the final authority in interpreting and enforcing this dress code. Violations of the dress code will be monitored and recorded on the Family Portal. If students arrive dressed inappropriately, they will be instructed to correct the situation. If unable to comply, they will be asked to call a parent to bring clothing to the school or wear alternative clothing provided by the school.

Please refer to our [MS/HS Dress Code](#) & [HS Formal/Semi-Formal Dress Code](#).

### **Honesty & Transparency**

Students are to be honest even when doing so may negatively impact themselves or others. Additionally, being transparent and open, especially when confronted about their or others’ actions/communication, is expected.

### **Internet Activities**

Students are held responsible for the content of their internet-based postings, and any inappropriate content as defined by general school policies is subject to school disciplinary actions as outlined in these various policies, up to and including expulsion.

The application of this policy is not limited to only when the student is on school property, using school technology, or during the school day.

### **Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

Immoral behavior in direct contradiction of content about marriage, gender, and sexuality in the *GCS Statement of Faith*, or other GCS policies, regardless of when and where, in the form of communication or action, may result in a suspension and automatic consideration by the Head of School for expulsion, even if it is the first offense. (Refer to “Suspensions/Expulsions—All Grades” and “Suspensions/Expulsions” in “Behavioral Consequences” for the HS.)

### **Property Damage**

Any student who damages or destroys school property or the property of someone else will be expected to pay for the repair or replacement costs. If the damage or destruction is of a malicious nature, the student will be immediately suspended from school for up to three days and the Head of School will consider whether expulsion is warranted. (Refer to “Suspensions/Expulsions - All Grades” and the “Suspensions/Expulsions” in “Behavioral Consequences” for the HS.)

### **Weapons**

Refer to the [School-Wide Policy on Weapons](#).

## **CONSEQUENCES**

### **Minor Infractions**

In the spirit of love and grace, when a student violates a school or classroom policy or directive, a teacher, administrator, or staff member will speak with the student and give them guidance on correcting his/her action. This is known as a “quiet word” of instruction, and this may or may not be entered into FACTS SIS as a behavioral incident.

If the student fails to heed the advice given and repeats the infraction, when warranted, additional “quiet words” of instruction may be given or possibly additional measures will be taken. Regardless, a behavioral incident will be entered into FACTS SIS, and an email notification will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Though not an exhaustive list, samples of minor infractions include:

- chewing gum in the building
- dress code violations
- disruptive behaviors (i.e., talking in class, horseplay, passing notes, etc.)
- failure to return uniforms, etc. in a timely manner
- failure to be in an assigned area
- unsatisfactory stewardship performance
- leaving personal belongings in common areas
- inappropriate language
- other inappropriate behaviors identified by the administration, faculty, or staff
- similarly or less egregious infractions

\*Disrespectful behavior, may be treated as a “minor infraction” or the principal may determine that the egregiousness of the disrespect warrants more serious consequences being assigned. (refer to “Honor and Respect”).

Repeated violations of minor infractions may result in detentions being assigned.

### **Detentions**

Academic and Behavioral Detentions are completed after school from 3:20 to 4:20 p.m. and supervised by school staff. Failure to report to assigned detentions without prior arrangement with the administration will result in the original detention being rescheduled and assignment of an additional detention.

When a detention is assigned, the incident will be entered into FACTS SIS, and the parent(s) will be sent a written description of the infraction and the scheduled date(s) of the detention.

The principal may choose to reschedule detentions due to direct conflicts with part-time jobs, athletic competitions (not practices), and family commitments. If the principal does not reschedule, the student and family must adjust their plans.

### **Academic Detentions**

These may be assigned by the principal when students fail to submit an assignment on time for three successive school days. (Refer to [Submitting Assignments](#).)

The student will spend most of this time completing the assignment related to being assigned a detention and is expected to submit it in good form to the supervisor of the detention who will then forward it to the respective teacher.

If a student completes the related assignment prior to serving the detention, he/she still must submit to the detention supervisor the assignment (if a teacher expects a hard copy submission) or show that the digital copy has been submitted to the teacher, and then he/she will spend the remaining time in detention actively working on other assignments or studying for upcoming quizzes/tests/exams.

Also, during this time the Principal may seek opportunities to provide additional counseling and encouragement to the student, and may assign menial tasks for the student to complete.

### **Behavioral Detentions**

For repeated violations of minor infractions or more serious infractions of GCS policies, Behavioral Detentions will be assigned.

Typically, menial tasks are assigned to students, and the student is expected to complete such in good fashion.

Also during this time the principal will seek opportunities to provide additional counseling and encouragement to students.

## Suspensions/Expulsions

If a student chooses to violate more serious GCS standards or repeatedly violates less serious ones, a suspension may result, and in such instances, the following processes and expectations will fulfilled:

1. The principal will make phone contact with a parent to inform her/him of the specific infraction(s) and when the suspension will occur, and a follow-up email will be sent to the parent(s) and student.
2. Serving the suspension:
  - a. The student may not participate in or attend any GCS programs, activities, or events nor enter GCS property unless specifically authorized by the principal or head of school.
  - b. The student will write a paper pertaining to the reason(s) for the suspension, and specific steps s/he will take to reconcile relationships, restore damaged property, and avoid repeating the infraction(s). This report must be submitted to the principal prior to 2:00 p.m. on the first day of the suspension unless the student secures the principal's acceptance of a different deadline.
3. A suspension will be entered into FACTS SIS and recorded in the student's permanent record.
4. The student and parent(s) must meet with the principal before being readmitted to school for the primary purpose of generating a Behavioral Action Plan that must be signed by the student, the parent(s), and principal.
  - a. This will document the agreed-upon steps that will be taken by the student, the parent(s), and GCS.
    - i. Among other provisions this plan *may* include:
      1. A requirement to secure spiritual and/or professional counseling from within GCS or other sources approved of by GCS,
      2. A requirement that the student perform a community service project, as approved by the principal before returning to school or by some other agreed-upon deadline.
      3. A probation period during which the student's enjoyment of privileges or ability to participate in extra-curricular activities may be limited,
      4. Limitations upon or guidance about how the student will interact with GCS students and/or personnel, and/or
      5. A requirement to secure a drug or alcohol test(s) (regardless of any previous similar requirement or whether the infraction involved a controlled substance).
    - ii. If an agreed-upon plan is not signed by all parties, the matter will be referred to the Head of School who will determine whether an expulsion is warranted.
    - iii. If an agreed-upon plan is later violated by the student, then additional disciplinary measures may be assigned by the principal, and the matter will be referred to the Head of School, who will determine whether an expulsion is warranted.

For the most egregious violations of GCS Behavioral Standards, or repeated violations for which a student has already been suspended, the GCS Head of School may determine that an expulsion is warranted.

All suspensions and expulsions will be entered into FACTS SIS and recorded in the student's permanent record.

Refer to School-Wide Policy on [Suspensions/Expulsions](#).

# **GENERAL POLICIES**

## **ATHLETICS**

GCS generally offers the following interscholastic sports high school programs:

Boys'/Girls' Soccer	Boys'/Girls' Basketball
Girls' Volleyball	Co-ed Golf
Boys' Wrestling	Boys'/Girls' Cross Country
Boys' Baseball	

Interscholastic sports are viewed by GCS as an important part of the overall educational program.

Participating in the HS Athletic Program is viewed to be a privilege to be enjoyed by students whose behavior and academic performance merits participation. Refer to [Extracurricular Eligibility](#)

Refer to the *Parent-Student Athletic Handbook* on the school [website](#) for additional details about the overall HS Athletic Program.

## **CELL PHONES**

If a student brings a cell phone to school, they must register it with the school. When a student arrives on campus, they should turn off their cell phone and place it in their assigned pouch. If the student does not have a phone or did not bring it to school, they should place a “No Phone” card in their pouch. This card is obtained by the receptionist. Every pouch should have a phone or a card in it. Random inspections will be made for compliance. Any student who does not have a phone or card in their pouch will receive a warning. Repeated violations will result in a detention or other disciplinary measure being assigned by the principal.

Refer to [HS Phone Calls](#).

## **CHAPELS**

Chapels are held weekly. Occasionally, local area pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, and special guests are invited to share with the students. Sometimes, chapels are led by GCS employees in order to strengthen the school community and relationships. Parents and visitors are welcome to attend the weekly chapels, but notification should be received by the principal at least two school days prior to the chapel. Refer to [Visitors](#).

## **CHRISTIAN SERVICE HOURS**

### **Biblical Worldview on Serving Others**

As followers of Christ, Christians cannot escape his earthly example of being a servant-leader (Mark 10:45) who exemplified compassion, grace, and mercy. Additionally, His revealed word includes many imperatives. In describing the future judgment, Jesus explains that feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, ministering to the sick and imprisoned, and doing these to “the least of these” were all ways to serve our King (Matthew 25:34 – 40). Similarly, James 1:7 describes “pure religion” as a ministry to orphans and widows in their affliction.

Thus, GCS seeks opportunities to train our younger brothers and sisters in Christ to take action (James 1:22 and 2:17), be “examples of the believers” even in their youth (I Timothy 4:12), “do good to everyone” (Galatians 6:10), and thus learn and apply the eternal principle that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

## **Guidelines**

GCS prepares the next generation of kingdom-building servant-leaders in many ways, including an expectation that GCS HS students complete Christian Service Hours (CSH) from June - May.

Fulfilling the CSH expectation is required to graduate from the GCS HS, and, at a minimum, the final transcript of a student who does not complete this will be withheld until the total required hours are served and documented. (Refer to [Graduation Requirements](#).)

Students do not receive academic credits or grades for CSH. Even so, students should submit CSH to the HS administration at the end of each semester. The HS administration will then review the submitted hours. Parents will be notified if insufficient progress has been made towards completing the annual total or concerns have been raised about the quality of service rendered by the student.

How and when students serve may not conflict with any GCS policies or curricular activities/events, nor may they conflict with any extra-curricular activities/events to which they have previously committed.

During the 2024-25 School Year, freshmen and sophomores are only expected to complete 10 CSHs, while juniors and seniors are expected to complete 20 CSHs. Whether we repeat these grade-level expectations or change them for future school years will be determined during the 2024-25 school year.

50% of CSH may be served during the summer break.

25% to 50% of their CSH within a church (preferably their own).

No more than 25% of CSH can be served at GCS.

Hours served in GCS-organized service projects or community outreach endeavors (i.e., Pass It cannot be claimed to fulfill CSH.

Exceptions to this will only occur when it is expressly communicated.

To encourage families to serve together, when at least one parent or guardian serves alongside their HS student(s), the hours accrued by the individual student(s) will be multiplied by a factor of 1.5. Thus, four hours served may be claimed as six hours.

“Double-dipping” will not be permitted; however, if a student splits up hours served in one opportunity to fulfill CSH and other service responsibilities (NHS, Prefecture, etc.), this will not be considered “double-dipping.”

## **Google Forms**

[CSH Proposal Form](#) – The GCS student submits this form as the initial step, and he/she will provide GCS with some basic information about what they intend to do and for whom they will render their service.

This form should be digitally submitted at least two weeks prior to when you intend to start serving.

Before submitting this form, the student should talk with the individual who is authorized to approve the proposal. This person may not end up being the supervisor of the rendered service.

The HS administration will email the next form directly to the individual/organization being served and will copy the student so that he/she is informed that progress is being made.

*CSH Approval Form*<sup>3</sup> – The individual or organization for whom you be serving submits this form to officially approve the details, and upon receiving this the HS administration will notify the student about whether final approval from GCS is given, or why approval is being delayed/denied.

No hours should be served until the GCS administration notifies the student that all is approved.

This form should be digitally submitted by the potential supervisor at least one week before the student will begin to serve. This guidance will be included in the *Google Form*, but it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the supervisor about this deadline being met.

*CSH Completed Form*<sup>3</sup>—This form is used by the “supervisor” to report directly to GS the hours served and a rating of the service rendered.

This form should be submitted by the supervisor at least one week before the end of each semester. This guidance will be included in the *Google Form*, but it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the supervisor about this deadline being met.

Seniors must submit their second-semester form before May. Once received, GCS will send a copy to the student’s service supervisor. This guidance will be included in the *Google Form*, but it is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the supervisor about this deadline being met.

Hours served can be lost due to forms not being digitally submitted on time, forms being incomplete or inaccurate, or service rendered by the student being rated as inadequate by the on-site supervisor.

If the supervisor is unable to access or use *Google Forms*, then hard copies must be obtained from the HS Administration and then relayed back and forth by the student; however, the student cannot complete any portion of the form(s).

### **Insurance Considerations**

GCS insurance does not cover any injuries incurred while fulfilling Christian Service Hours.

### **Service Ideas**

*This is not an exhaustive list, and students may propose other ideas.*

#### **Within Your Family**

- Assisting with caring for sick or feeble family members (beyond everyday household chores).
- Tutoring/mentoring a family member.

#### **Within GCS**

- Tutoring a GCS student (any grade level)
- Assisting a faculty or staff member before or after school hours.
- Assisting with a building or grounds project or task before or after school hours. (Tasks may not include those typically assigned to Stewardship Teams.)
- Volunteering at GCS-sponsored events (picnics, the Auction, etc.)

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<sup>3</sup> A link is not included since this form is never to be accessed by the student OR



### Within Your Church

- Playing on a worship team or assisting with a portion of the church service
- Serving as an usher, parking lot attendant, etc.
- Leading or assisting with a Sunday School class or the nursery.
- Leading or assisting with the youth ministry.
- Participating in a short-term mission trip or outreach endeavor.
- Participating in evangelistic endeavors.

### Within Your Community

While organizations that students serve do not need to be Evangelical or even religious institutions, they may not have actions or messaging that oppose any part of the GCS Statement of Faith or our Statement of Marriage and Sex.

### **COPY MACHINE**

Students are not permitted to use the copy machine but may request copies be made or digital files be printed by office staff. Such requests must be submitted to the GCS receptionist via email.

If wanting the file to be printed in time for the first two periods of the day, students must submit the job by 7:30 a.m. Print jobs requests for later in the school day must be submitted at least 2 class periods prior.

Once submitted, students are responsible to pay the full amount for the print job even if they forget to pick it up or change their mind.

Cost per page:

Black & White: 10 cents

Color: 50 cents

### **DRIVING PRIVILEGE**

#### **Authorization**

Students with a Virginia license may drive to school once a *Driving Authorization Form* has been submitted to the HS Principal for approval.

In addition to providing information about the vehicle/driver, a copy of the student's VA license and proof of insurance for any vehicle(s) he/she will be driving must be provided

The authorization form is part of the *Summer Google Form* and thereafter as its own *Google Form*..

#### **Parking for Students**

When parking on our property, which is quite difficult as we have an insufficient number of parking spaces, please be aware of and comply with any posted signs or any traffic cones that have been set in place.

Student drivers are not permitted to park in the staff/visitor parking lot adjacent to the school until after 3:20 PM unless previous permission has been granted by the administration.

Student drivers (who have submitted digital copies of their driver's license, as well as information about their license plate(s) and car insurance policy(ies)) should park in the lot towards the east end of Kalorama Street, which is owned by another entity that has given permission for our school to use it.

As such, we should be good stewards of this lot and park in a manner that will allow the most drivers (not just from GCS) to park their cars and to easily arrive and depart. Specific guidance will be provided in the “High School Arrival/Departure Guidelines” document that is sent out to school families before each new school year.

Refer to the “Arrival/Departure Guidelines” within the “HS Attendance Policies” section of this handbook.

## **FINE ARTS**

Grace Christian School's Fine Arts Program encourages and assists students in developing their God-given gifts and talents through music, visual arts, and drama as a way of honoring and worshipping God, the Master Artist.

It is our goal to nurture student-artists from preschool through graduation and beyond. Students will develop artistic thought and skill, be challenged to articulate effectively through various artistic media, and practice their skills to engage the culture and redeem it for Christ and His kingdom.

High school students may participate in the worship team, chorus, art, advanced art, acting, and theater classes. Our students perform throughout the year in chapel services, concerts, festivals, and competitions, one-act plays, and a spring musical. Students can be seen serving our community by sharing their gifts and talents at area nursing homes and blessing our own school community by leading worship and caroling around the elementary school each Christmas.

Participating in the HS Fine Arts Program is viewed to be a privilege to be enjoyed by students whose behavior and academic performance merits participation. Refer to [Extracurricular Eligibility](#).

### **Applied Music Courses**

Students also have the unique opportunity of taking individual private music lessons during their school day for elective credit. Lessons are offered in guitar, piano, strings, and voice. Students and their parent(s) participating in Applied Music lessons are required to sign a commitment form at the beginning of the semester, agreeing to participate as required by the Fine Arts department. Students will also be required to submit a quarterly practice report, signed by a parent or guardian. Grades are given based on student performance during lessons as well as meeting practice requirements. Students taking Applied Music lessons for elective credit are required to perform in the spring music recital.

## **LOCKERS**

Each student will be assigned a locker at the beginning of the year. The student will be responsible for maintaining his/her locker in a neat and orderly manner. Students are not to change lockers unless first receiving permission from the principal.

Students are not to post pictures or slogans, etc. in or on their lockers which are inconsistent with Biblical values or GCS policies. No stickers are permitted on the interior or exterior of lockers, but magnets may be used. Exterior postings are limited to messages posted by individuals or groups approved by the principal.

Students may not place locks on their individual lockers.

Locker inspections may be conducted (also, refer below to “Reasonable Search”). Students whose lockers are not maintained in a clean, neat manner may at the least be assigned a work detention by the principal.

All items left on the floor will be removed and placed in the Lost & Found. In addition, items left on the top of the lockers on Fridays will also be placed in Lost & Found.

## **LOST & FOUND**

The Lost & Found bins are located in the meeting room closet and in the basement entryway.

## **LUNCHESES & SNACKS**

### **Lunches**

Students in grades 9-12 should bring their lunches every day, unless they intend to order hot lunches on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. Orders and cash payment for hot lunches are routed through our receptionists.

Microwaves are available for student use in the lunchroom.

Students are expected to assist in helping to clean the lunch area after lunch along with other areas of the building. (Refer to Stewardship.)

### **Snacks**

Students are encouraged to bring food that is healthy and nutritious for snacking at appropriate times and to bring water bottles that they may keep with them in the classrooms.

Students may also consume snacks during lunch, class breaks, or during any study halls held in the lunchroom.

Food should not be brought into classrooms unless a diagnosed medical condition necessitates such, or the teacher of that classroom has given explicit permission to bring food to a specific class period. Refer to [Dispensing of Medications](#).

Snacks can be secured from a vending machine located within the locker room; however, use of the vending machine should only be done before or after the school day, towards the beginning of lunch, and during the long class break. Having complications with securing a snack from a vending machine is never an excuse for being tardy to class, as students should inform the receptionist later during a break from classes.

## **PHONE CALLS**

Use of school phones during the school day is generally limited to essential calls (sickness, etc.). All such calls must be approved by a GCS employee (typically the receptionist). The receptionist will then designate the GCS phone to be used or where the student can use their cell phone.

Alternately, students may make essential calls or texts, but must first get permission from the receptionist and then call/text within the reception area so that the receptionist can easily see them.

Refer to [HS Cell Phones](#).

## **PREFECTURE (Student Government)**

The Student Prefecture is tasked with organizing and running many areas of student life at GCS. All of this occurs under the guidance of the HS Principal or his/her designee. The Prefecture is organized under the GCS Prefecture Constitution and led by the Head Prefect and several other prefects who serve under the Head Prefect. All Prefects are chosen by the HS Principal in a process defined in the constitution, and class representatives are elected by the respective classes.

Participating in the HS Prefecture is viewed to be a privilege to be enjoyed by students whose behavior and academic performance merits participation. (Refer to [Extracurricular Eligibility](#).) Also, the Prefecture has standards for maintaining membership.

## **STEWARDSHIP**

All HS students are placed onto Stewardship Teams that are led by seniors. During each month these teams are assigned to specific areas with specific tasks related to keeping our campus clean. Students should cooperate with their leaders by fulfilling these tasks that are assigned to them. Student who fail to do their part may receive behavioral consequences as assigned by the principal. Points are awarded or deducted from teams who do well or who don't fulfill their assigned duties. The team with the highest amount of points each semester and for the entire school year receive awards as determined by the principal.

## **VISITORS**

All parents and visitors must check in with the office upon their arrival, check out when they depart, and follow all applicable GCS policies. Visitors must be over 18, unless accompanied by an adult.

Students who are currently attending other schools, who are homeschooled, or graduates of other schools are welcome to visit students at school athletic events or socials (if open to the public) but are asked not to visit GCS during school hours.

Exceptions to this policy may be approved by the Principal, but requests for such exceptions should be made at least three days prior to a visit.