



Parent/Student Handbook  
2022-2023

## 2022 Board Members

Brian Smith, chairman

Bob Hughes

Amy Smith

# Handbook Table of Contents

Click on the topic and it will take you to the page.

2022 Board Members	2
Handbook Table of Contents	3
Guiding Principles and Mission	10
Mission Statement	10
Core Values	10
History	10
Philosophy of Education	11
University-Model	12
Statement of Faith	13
Statement on Non-Denomination Affiliation	15
Student Code of Honor	16
Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality	17
Non-discrimination Policy	18
Admissions	19
Admissions & Enrollment Process	19
Admission Requirements	20
Requirements to Enroll	22
Admissions Priorities	25
Current Family Policy	25
Spring Registration	26
Waiting Pool	26
Admissions Assessments	26
Activity Participation Guidelines	26
Re-enrollment	27
Re-enrollment Requirements	27
Family Education Program	28
GCA Parent Training and Workshops	28
Eagle 101 New Family Orientation (mandatory)	28
Parent University (mandatory)	28
Back to School Mini Day (mandatory)	29
Re-enrollment/ State of the School Meeting	29
Spring Transition Meetings	29

Coffee with the Headmaster (Dads - optional)	29
Grade-Level Teacher's Lounge Meetings	29
Call to Encourage	29
Financial Policies	30
Financial Standing	30
Fees	30
Graduation Fee	30
Athletic Fees & Extra-Curricular Activities	30
Late Pick Up Fees	30
Tuition Agreement	31
Tuition Payment Policies	31
Withdrawal and Refund Policy	31
Discounts	32
Textbooks and Supplies	32
School Supplies	33
Uniforms	33
Roles and Responsibilities	33
Parental and Student Responsibilities	33
Parental Roles in a University-Model School	34
Co-Instructor (Grades K-6)	34
Guide for Dependent Study (Grades 7-10)	34
Guide for Independent Study (Grades 11-12)	34
Parent Coach	35
Affirmation of Parental Responsibilities	35
Enrollment of Courses	37
Academic Prerequisites	37
Placement Testing	37
Adding and Dropping Courses	37
Audit	38
Grading, Evaluation and Feedback	38
Reporting of Grades	39
Lower School	39
Upper School	39
Grading Percentage Guidelines	40

Report Cards	41
Grading Standards/ GPA	41
Academic Communication Policy and Procedures	42
Progress Reports	42
Parent Teacher Conferences	42
Requested P/T Conference for Possible Accommodations	43
Academic Standing	43
Academic Probation	44
Credit Recovery	44
Extracurricular Participation Guidelines	46
Eligibility to Participate - Grades K-5	46
Eligibility to Participate - Grades 6-12	46
Athletics/Extracurricular Participation	46
PULSE Enrollment	46
Homework, Test, and Project Guidelines	47
Lower School, Grades K-5	47
Upper School, Grades 6-12	48
8th Grade and High School Homework Time	48
Re-Testing and Test Make Ups	49
Late Work Policy (K-12 <sup>th</sup> )	50
K– 2nd Grades	50
3rd–5th Grades	50
6th–12th Grades	50
Projects, Papers, Other Long Term Assignments	50
Due Date for Late Work: Excused Absences Only	51
Tests Scheduled on the Day of a Student’s Return: Grades K-5	51
Tests Scheduled on the Day of a Student’s Return: Grades 6-12	51
Late Grade Due to Extended Absences	51
Final Exam Grades	52
Achievement Testing	53
How We Use Data	53
Tests Administered	54
CogAT	54
Iowa Assessment	54

PSAT	54
PreACT	54
SAT & ACT	54
Accommodations and Modifications	55
Conferencing Regarding Accommodations	55
Lower School	55
Upper School	56
Attendance	57
Credits and Attendance Policy	57
Definition of Credits	57
Minimum Per Credit Attendance Requirement	57
Attendance Requirements	57
Excused Absences	58
Pre-Planned Absences/ Vacations	58
Unexcused Absences	59
Make-up Work for Unexcused Absences	60
Final Exam Week Absences	60
Tardy Policy	61
Credits	62
Athletic Related Credits	62
Dual Credit Classes	63
Dual Credit at GCA	63
Transfer of Dual Credit	63
Transferring Credits	64
Dual Credit Guidelines for Transfer	66
Credit by Examination	66
Fine Arts Guidelines for Transfer	66
Physical Education Guidelines for Transfer	67
Graduation Requirements	67
Academic Advising Policy	67
Diploma Plans	67
Requirements for GCA Diploma Types	68
Diploma Options	68
Distinguished Diploma	68

Recognized Diploma	69
Self-Managed Diploma	69
Graduation Regalia & Honors	70
Cap & Gown	70
Honor Cords	70
Stoles	70
Diplomas	70
Self-managed Diploma Students	70
Academic Awards and Recognition	71
Valedictorian and Salutatorian	71
President’s Award	71
General School Policies	72
Uniform Guidelines/ Dress Code	72
Hair	72
Piercings	72
Accessories	72
Lower School   Grades K -5	73
Middle School and High School   Grades 6 - 12	73
Off-Campus/ Non-Field Trip Events	74
Communication	75
FACTS	75
Email	75
Website	75
Privacy Policy	76
Drop off, Pick Up, and Sign Out Procedures	76
Drop Off	76
Pick Up	76
Release to Non-Parent	76
Pick Up Authorization	77
Sign Out	77
Early Pick Up	77
Pick Up From After-school Activities	77
Student Drivers & Their Passengers	78
Visitor Policy	78

Communicating Concerns and Suggestions	79
Opportunities for Involvement	80
School Board Responsibility	80
Emergency Instructions	80
School Integrity & Reputation	81
Romantic Relationships	82
Food, Gum, Drinks and Substances	82
Medications	82
Student Use of Electronics	82
Cell Phones	83
Gaming Devices & MP3 Players	83
Social Media Policy	83
Internet Usage Policy	85
Acceptable Uses	85
Unacceptable Uses	85
Pranks and Practical Jokes	86
Photo and Statement Release	86
Electronic Signatures	87
Academic Dishonesty	88
Definitions	88
Specifics	89
Quizzes, Tests, and Examinations	89
Homework	89
Major Papers and Projects	90
Discovery and Determination of Academic Dishonesty	90
Penalties	90
First Offense	91
Second Offense	91
Third Offense	91
Fourth Offense	91
Appeals Process	92
Discipline Policy	92
Guidelines	93
Standardized School Classroom Rules	93



Classroom Consequences	94
Disciplinary Process	94
Level 1 Violations: Classroom and School “Disturbances”	96
Level 2 Violations: “Hazards”	96
Level 3 Violations: Moral Offense (1st Degree)	97
Level 4 Violations: Moral Offense (2nd Degree)	98
Level 5 Violations: Moral Offense (3rd Degree)	98
Character Probation	99
Character Disenrollment	99
Definitions of Disciplinary Actions	99
Assignments	99
Detention	99
Study Detention	100
Suspension	100
Disciplinary Probation	100
Behavioral Contract/Growth Plan	100
Disenrollment/ Withdrawal	101
Dismissal/ Expulsion	101

# Guiding Principles and Mission

## Mission Statement

---

Grace Covenant Academy assists parents in disciplining their children to know God and make Him known through a distinctively Christian education.

## Core Values

---

While Jesus Christ and the Gospel message are our secure foundation, these core values uphold and guide our ministry. Every decision we make, from employment to student activities, is motivated by these distinct core values.

- Love for God
- Devotion to Truth
- Love for Learning
- Commitment to a Biblical Worldview
- Partnership with Families

## History

---

Early in 2009, six local homeschooling families had a vision to start a ministry that would come alongside families who had a vision to educate their children at home. Consumed with creating curricula, lesson plans, and the constant concern about whether they were achieving their academic goals, these families struggled with how to balance the demands of education and parenting.

They came together to create something new: a school that would combine the important elements of parental mentorship and excellent academic education. Their desire was to serve North Texas families by carrying some of the burden of schooling – freeing parents to major on what they were called to do – and so Grace Covenant Academy was born.

The name Grace Covenant Academy was chosen in light of the founding families' commitment to three things:

**Grace** represents our belief in the life-changing power of the Gospel, the context

and reason for education. The founding families believed that the grace of Jesus Christ should inform all areas of our lives.

**Covenant** represents our commitment to work together as a community. These families “covenanted together” to build a viable school community.

**Academy** represents our desire for an academically rigorous education that creates college ready students. The goal from the beginning has been to facilitate clear thinking, articulate students representing Christ in the world.

Today our name reminds us of our heritage and encourages us to proceed in the vision set out by our founding “covenant” families.

## Philosophy of Education

---

Amazed by our Savior, and guided by His Word, we seek to develop:

- **Passionate** students who experience the love of God and respond by loving Him, loving others, and loving the truth.
- **Wise** students who, through an ever-deepening understanding of God’s grace, embrace God’s standards for living.
- **Clear-minded and articulate** students who engage their culture with a biblical worldview and persuasive proclamation of the gospel.
- **Fruitful** students who faithfully steward their gifts and mature into disciple-makers themselves.

We pursue these goals knowing that our students are both made in God’s image and sinners in need of a Savior. *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child.* (Proverbs 22:15) Yet through new birth and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, each person can change and bring God great glory. This motivates us to be patient and encourage our students daily. Without minimizing sin, we strive to magnify grace in the gospel.

Under the parents’ delegated authority, a Christian teacher guides students to think and live according to Scripture.

- We seek to model a love for God, the family, the Church, and for learning.
- We view our students as individuals with unique gifts and needs.
- We seek to make knowledge attractive through a broad range of age-appropriate teaching methods and resources.
- We maintain biblical standards for student appearance, conduct, and

- academic achievement, and we communicate regularly with parents.
- We aim to instruct, exhort, rebuke, and encourage with all humility, depending on the Holy Spirit to convict and illumine.

Learning is a hard but wonderful privilege. It is an incremental process. Students learn most effectively as active participants, by asking and imitating and doing, not simply hearing. The goal of learning is to gain wisdom as biblically defined: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.* (Psalm 111:10)

GCA challenges all students to be life-long learners devoted to serving God, the local church, and their community. In each subject and grade, we seek to teach students to master the tools of learning, not just the facts, with the goal of producing disciples who love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

## University-Model

---

Grace Covenant Academy is a University-Model® school (UMS) that takes the best attributes of home schooling and combines them with the best attributes of traditional, Christian education. In so doing, GCA preserves and maintains the God-ordained family relationship, while offering students the opportunity to achieve a high degree of academic excellence.

The University Model® School education provided at GCA includes a rigorous academic program, student activities, and character development.

- The academic program utilizes a university-style schedule adapted to the elementary, junior, and senior high levels. Professional teachers instruct in their areas of expertise, in what we refer to as the **central classroom**.

Elementary students (grades K-5) attend classes on two days of the week: Tuesday and Thursday. This comprises the Lower School.

The high school and middle school comprise the Upper School. Upper School students (grades 6-12) go to school three days a week: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

Students spend alternate days at home, where parents continue their instruction or monitor student progress in the **satellite classroom**.

Teachers provide parents with detailed instructions for days spent at home.

University Model School allows a wide range of enrollment opportunities. A student may choose to take only one or two classes, or may opt to take a full academic load.

- The student activity program gives students an opportunity to pursue and develop special interests in addition to academics, including sports, art, speech, and others. Participation in these activities helps motivate students to succeed and provide another avenue for learning important life skills, such as teamwork, relating well to others, work ethic, time management, goal-setting, and more.
- Character development permeates both the academic and co-curricular programs, as the school works with the parents to reinforce Christ-like attitude and behavior by helping to encourage, support, and train parents; by reinforcing parental values and expectations while at school; and by enforcing school behavior and discipline policies based on shared core values.

## Statement of Faith

---

Grace Covenant Academy is a Christian school partnering with Christian families who attend Bible-believing local churches. All members of our community sign and agree to our Statement of Faith.

**We believe the Bible to be the inspired**, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

**We believe that there is one God**, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is infinite, eternal, almighty, and perfect in holiness, truth, and love.

**We believe in God the Father, the Creator of heaven and earth.** By his word, he created the world from nothing. Through His word, He daily sustains all his creatures. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love him, and gave his Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made man for fellowship with Himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory.

**We believe God created man—male and female—in his own image**, as the

crown of creation. Man rebelled against God and became estranged from his Maker. Yet responsible to him, man became subject to divine wrath, inwardly depraved and, apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God.

**We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ**, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world. By His death in our place, He revealed divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God.

**We believe Jesus Christ is the gospel.** The good news is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins which demonstrates His mysterious love, reveals His amazing grace, satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

**We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit**, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He persuades men through the gospel to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth, and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, and enables the Christian to live a godly life.

**We believe in the Body of Christ.** God created the Church, calling men into the fellowship of Christ's Body. The Church universal is made up of those who are genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally believed the gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God.

Upon conversion, newly redeemed people are added to a local church, in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. All believers are to be committed to and vitally involved in a local church and are to be nurtured and equipped for the work of ministry.

**We believe Christ will return visibly, personally, and gloriously.** There will be a resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, a judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. All those outside Christ will be separated from the glorious presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in redeemed bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. The Church will be in the presence of God forever, enjoying, serving, and giving him unending praise and glory.

## Statement on Non-Denomination Affiliation

---

GCA's Statement of Faith is its official stance concerning fundamental Christian tenets and includes those doctrines we will regularly teach. Consequently, it is vital that parents choosing to partner with us agree with those statements and understand that their student(s) will be exposed to purposeful teaching regarding them.

There shall be no attempt made by parents, students, staff, or school board members to promote or disparage denominational doctrines regarding issues upon which the ministry itself has assumed no official stance: church-government authority, time and mode of baptism, security of the believer, timing of future events, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, sinless perfection, and the specific nature of the interaction of human choice and divine sovereignty.

We will honor parents and maintain the unity of the faith by intentionally directing students to parents and church regarding denominational doctrines. Additionally, we will require respectful dialogue when subjects naturally arise pertaining to denominational tenets, recognizing God's inspired Word as our standard for truth.

## Student Code of Honor

---

Our code of honor details the commitments our student body strives for at Grace Covenant Academy. All upper school students are expected to wholeheartedly agree with and sign the agreement detailed below:

### **Grace Covenant Academy is a community of learners who**

- *imperfectly, but genuinely* pursue a relationship with God through Jesus Christ; and
- pursue our calling as learners/ disciples; so that
- we can know God and make Him known in this world.

Relying on God's grace - and knowing that I will be able to enjoy the privilege of attending Grace Covenant Academy only so long as I faithfully seek to fulfill these commitments, I pledge that:

### **I want God to be my primary pursuit**

God is the center of all things. He has made me in His image, for His glory, and for a personal relationship with Him. (Ps 27:4, Mt 6:33, 2 Cor 5:19, Pr. 1:7, Jn 17:3, Is 43:7, 21)

*I will pursue a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the gospel.*

### **I view the Bible as my primary standard for truth; the gospel as its primary message**

I would not know God, what He is like, nor His plan or desires if He didn't tell me, but He has chosen to reveal these things in His word, the Bible. (1 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21)

*I will seek to understand, embrace, and enjoy God's will as found in the Bible.*

### **I will embrace my parents as my primary trainers**

God gives parents to protect, train, disciple, & discipline. My parents are not perfect, but they are God's primary way of guiding me to adulthood. (Dt 6:6-7, Eph 6:1-4, Pr. 1:7-8)

*I will seek to listen to, honor, and obey my parents – and embrace their role as leaders of my learning on the home days.*

### **I will engage my local church as my primary community**

God places all of His children in a local church in relationship with other people so we can grow while helping them to grow. (Acts 2:43-47, Eph 4:15-16, Ro 12:4-12, Heb 10:24-25)

*I will attend my church regularly and seek to invest my time in His people there.*

### **I will view learning as my primary calling at GCA**



God has called GCA to equip students through classes, events, & relationships. Learning is our calling and we take it very seriously.

Only students who desire to attend GCA and embrace learning are permitted to enroll. (1 Cor 10:31, Pr 2:1-6)

*I sincerely and fully desire to attend GCA, am committed to pursuing learning in each class, and embrace this as my calling while I am enrolled at GCA.*

**I will treasure and honor the GCA community, my classmates, staff, and teachers.**

God places authorities and teachers in my life to train, guide, and encourage me. He also places peers around me so I can grow in godly friendship. (1 Pet 2:13-17 and 3:8-12)

*I commit to God to honor and respect my teachers and fellow students as gifts given by Him. I will seek to value and protect the relationships God has provided at GCA.*

## Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

---

In order to preserve the biblical community that GCA strives for, we require all members of our community to sign and abide by the following statement.

We believe God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27.) We believe that rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25.)

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18, 7:2-5, Heb. 13:4.)

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality as outlined in Scripture (including among other things, adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual

conduct, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20, 1 Cor. 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Covenant Academy as a local Christian community, and to provide a biblical role model for Grace Covenant Academy families, it is imperative that all persons employed by Grace Covenant Academy in any capacity, any who serve as volunteers, and any student enrolled in the school agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16, Phil 2:14-16, 1 Th. 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21, Rom. 10:9-10, 1 Cor. 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31, Luke 6:31.) Hateful or harassing behavior directed towards any individual, including those living in rebellion to God's standards as outlined in the Bible and including those individuals that are not allowed inclusion in the Grace Covenant Academy community, are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of this organization.

## Non-discrimination Policy

---

Grace Covenant Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or nationality in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or programs. Grace Covenant Academy gladly admits students of any race, color, and nationality to all programs and activities with the same rights and privileges as all students in the school. We believe that Christ came to all ethnic groups, saving some from all ethnic groups, thus glorifying himself *through* all ethnic groups. We count it a privilege to serve qualified students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

## Admissions

## Admissions & Enrollment Process

---

- 1. Attend a GCA Information/Admissions Meeting or Tour:** Parents seeking admission to GCA for their student(s) must attend an Information/Admissions meeting the semester prior to enrollment.
- 2. Submit Application Documents and Non-refundable Fees:** An online application for admission must be completed for each student and submitted on the day and time specified by the Admissions Coordinator at the Eagle Preview or as stated on the GCA web site.

The non-refundable, per student fee is due with submission of the application. Upon submission and receipt by the school, the application date and time are recorded to be used as a factor in determining class enrollment priority. *Students will not be admitted without complete records. Immunization records must be submitted with the application.*

- 3. Placement Testing and Evaluation:** Placement testing is required for all students seeking admittance into GCA.
- 4. Family Interview:** The purpose of the family interview is to answer questions about the partnership and to discern if GCA is the appropriate school for each student. Both parents and potential students (in grades 6 and up) must attend the on-campus interview. If a third party (i.e. grandparent or stepparent) will be at home with the student on satellite classroom days, that person(s) must also attend the family interview.
- 5. Acceptance:** After the assessment, after all student references are received and the family interview has been conducted, each family will receive a letter from the school indicating the decision of the GCA Admissions Committee regarding acceptance into the school. Acceptance into the school is based on date and time of application, placement test scores, and family interview.
- 6. Academic Advising:** Middle School or High School students wishing to transfer in high school credits, or receive a GCA diploma, are required to meet with the Academic Advisor or the Dean of Academics prior to placement testing. All transfer students must provide an official transcript of high school courses. If the courses will not be transferred to GCA, no documentation is required.

The student will provide his own transcript of these courses for colleges. Once students are enrolled at GCA, any outside course taken for GCA credit requires an Intent to Transfer Credit form prior to starting the course to ensure it meets GCA requirements.

- 7. Enrollment:** The GCA enrollment process takes place online. Parents will complete an online enrollment packet for each student. GCA reserves the right to assign the section/time of a desired course to maximize enrollment and balance classes. If a class does not make or if an administrative change is needed, the parent will be notified. If a student is opting out of certain classes or not taking a full load, an enrollment form with Course Requests must be filled out.

Students who register for more than five core classes must receive permission from the Dean of Academics in order to do so. After the Course Request process, the Registrar will verify the family's requests. Once confirmed, any changes made to the student's schedule after the Course Request process is complete, must be done on an add/drop/transfer form.

Student's personal documentation must include:

- Copy of birth certificate;
- Current immunization records;
- Copy of most recent report card for 1st–8th graders or an official transcript for 9th–12th graders.

*Enrollment is not complete and students will not be admitted without these complete records.*

## Admission Requirements

---

Grace Covenant Academy is devoted to helping committed Christian church members disciple their children in the context of the academic setting provided by the school. Because of the school's emphasis on character training and spiritual formation, enrollment is reserved for those students who desire to grow in Christ. Knowing that the quality and effectiveness of a school's ministry is directly affected by the character of its student body, we have identified criteria that we use to guide our student admission decisions. Student eligibility for enrollment is re-evaluated each year according to the following criteria:

1. **Parents are members of a gospel proclaiming church.** The parents must be members of a local Christian church with a demonstrated commitment to the values shared in the church and school. Exceptions will be considered in the case of single parents or church members with an unbelieving (but supportive) spouse.
2. **Parents are effectively serving in their God-given role as parents.** Because God has given parents, not teachers, primary responsibility for training their children, admission will hinge on the parents' commitment and ability to exercise their biblical role.
3. **An evident desire to know and follow Christ.** We are overjoyed when a student responds to the gospel, and we look for growing evidence of faithful obedience to God and His ways.
4. **Parents are willing to partner with the school in the roles and policies** described in the Parent Student Handbook.
5. **A willingness to receive instruction.** We look for students to respect authority and to receive correction humbly from peers and adults, as the discipline of the Lord.
6. **A positive influence on others.** The student's potential impact on his or her classmates will be an especially significant factor. Our desire to serve each church family must be balanced by a passion to preserve the spiritual integrity of each classroom and the entire school.
7. **The composition of the student's class.** Admission decisions will be made with the strengths and weaknesses of the entire class in mind.
8. **The student's academic ability and diligence.** The student's academic history must show a willingness to work on all classroom assignments and the basic skills necessary to succeed in the school's academic program.

---

## Requirements to Enroll

---

Parent involvement and student cooperation are essential for the successful

fulfillment of the GCA mission. Therefore, as a condition of acceptance to this school for new families and for re-enrollment of current families, the parents and students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. **Christian Testimony.** At least one parent must be a committed follower of Jesus Christ.
2. **Local Church Membership.** The family must be active members of the body of Christ, regularly attend a Christian church, and agree to participate with GCA under GCA's Statement of Faith.
3. **Annual Partnership Contract.** A signed enrollment contract for each family will be required on an annual basis.
4. **Statement of Faith.** Parents must sign a form showing agreement with our Statement of Faith as an expression of who we are and what will be taught in the classroom.
5. **Affirmation of Parental Responsibilities.** Parents must sign a form agreeing to be involved in their student's education.
6. **Immunization Records.** Parents must provide immunization records to GCA with and keep current records. In addition, parents must participate in the GCA screening process for vision, hearing and spinal screening records for their student(s) as mandated by the Texas State Department of Health.
7. **Attendance at Workshops and Required Events.** Parents are required to attend certain school workshops and Parent-Teacher-Fellowships. ***Not attending these events may affect the student's status to re-enroll and/or GCA may require the family to attend parenting or educational training at their own expense.***
8. **Statement on Marriage and Gender.** Parents and upper school students must sign GCA's Statement on Marriage and Human Sexuality.
9. **Verification of ID.** Parents of students 11 years old and younger must provide verification (for the state of Texas) of name, age, and school records (if applicable.)

10. **Commitment to Policies.** Parents and students must be committed to the University Model school learning experience and Christian environment of GCA. Each student must be willing to adhere to GCA's student code of conduct, dress code, uniform policies, and all other policies regarding student behavior.

Parents and students must be willing to abide by the school's rules and regulations as expressed in the GCA Student Handbook or by the Administrator.

Parents must be supportive of the school's procedures for handling student discipline.

11. **Code of Honor.** Parents and upper school students (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>) must sign a form showing agreement with our Student Code of Conduct and Honor Code.

12. **Presence of Satellite Teachers.** Satellite teachers/co-teachers (i.e. at least one parent) must consistently be at home during normal school hours (8:00a.m–3:00 p.m.) to provide partnership instruction in the satellite classroom. In certain instances, co-teachers other than the parent may be utilized. However, arrangements with a co-teacher other than the parent must be communicated to the Admissions Coordinator for new students and the Dean of Academics for current students. A meeting with the co-teacher may be requested.

13. **Student Work Schedule.** Students' work schedule should not interfere with satellite classroom days/hours.

14. **Agreement to Conciliation.** Parents must be willing to use a Christian conciliation service, if necessary, and agree to the following statement:

*"The parties to this agreement 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 church. (See Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.) Therefore, the parties agree that any claim or dispute arising from or related to this agreement shall be settled by biblically-based mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of*

*Peacemaker® Ministries* (complete text of the Rules is available at <http://peacemaker.net/project/rules-of-procedure-html-version/>). *Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. The parties understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising out of this agreement and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.*"

(Quoted from Peacemaker Ministries)

Each party, regardless of the outcome of the matter, agrees to bear the cost of his/her/its own arbitrator and one-half of the fees and costs of the neutral arbitrator and any other arbitration expenses.



## Admissions Priorities

---

Only students who have gone through the admissions process and meet admission standards may register for classes at Grace Covenant Academy.

Students will be enrolled in the following priorities:

- Returning Former Student. Priority within this category is based on the date the student's application is received.
- Siblings of Current Students and Students of Newly Hired Teachers. These students receive priority over new students as long as they register within the time frame set by the admissions staff for currently enrolled students. Siblings of current students must follow the same application process as a new student, including an interview with the administration, and are subject to acceptance by GCA prior to their registration being processed.
- New student – Priority within this category is based on the date the student's application is received.

Once the stated registration period is over, current families lose priority and are processed along with new students who are in the next registration period.

## Current Family Policy

---

Current students and their siblings receive priority over new students as long as they register within the time frame set by the admissions staff for currently enrolled students. However, siblings of current students must follow the same application process as a new student, including an interview with the administration, and are subject to acceptance by GCA prior to their registration being processed.

Once the stated registration period is over, current families lose priority and are processed along with new students who are in the next registration period.

## Spring Registration

---

Registration for the spring semester will only be allowed for new students who have completed the admissions process in the Fall and attended the Eagle 101 orientation offered in December. Siblings of current students, current students wishing to add an elective class, and current students adding a core class who have taken the appropriate placement test may also register. Dates and times for the placement tests are established by the Admissions Department. Electives may be added before the deadline determined by the Registrar's Office.

## Waiting Pool

---

When class sizes are full, students who apply will be put in a waiting pool. A student must complete the online application prior to being placed on a waiting pool. If a student is notified that Grace Covenant Academy classes are full, but chooses to go through the application process, the family is not entitled to a refunded application fee. Conversely, if a family completes the application process, and then learns that Grace Covenant Academy classes are full, then a refund may be issued for the application fee.

## Admissions Assessments

---

All students are given a DRA (diagnostic reading assessment) test when admitted, and as needed throughout the elementary years.

Lower school students in grades Kinder and 1 are also given a phonemic awareness test, are asked for a writing sample, and given a math placement test before admission.

## Activity Participation Guidelines

---

To be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, a student must enroll in **at least three classes, with at least two of those being core classes**. Core classes are math, science, English, history and foreign languages.

All students wishing to participate in extracurricular activities must be enrolled in **PULSE**. PULSE is a mid-day track that meets for 30 minutes before or after the lunch hour and includes one day of chapel, one day of small group discussions,

and one day of social activities. Students will not receive a grade or have homework for PULSE, but it will appear on the transcript.

Exceptions to this policy must be cleared with the administration and are granted in circumstances that are beneficial to the full time students and in accordance with the leagues we are associated with (i.e. we need extra players for our teams to make.)

## Re-enrollment

---

The re-enrollment process is done each spring semester and is completed online via FACTS. The online enrollment packet includes enrollment forms, waivers and agreements. This enrollment is a commitment for the entire school year. Parents must complete an online enrollment packet for each student.

### Re-enrollment Requirements

- All financial accounts must be current for a student to re-enroll.
- A student may not re-enroll while they are on any form of probation/suspension during the re-enrollment period.
- Current students must be approved by the school, which may include a placement test, to enroll in future courses.

Parent involvement and student cooperation are essential for the successful fulfillment of the GCA mission. Therefore, as a condition of acceptance to this school for new families and for re-enrollment of current families, the parents and students must fulfill all of the enumerated requirements for enrollment. (See **Requirements to Enroll** on the previous pages of this handbook.)

## Family Education Program

Following UMSI guidelines (University Model Schools International), GCA's Parent Education program seeks to "keep parents confident, competent, encouraged and involved" in the spiritual, moral, and academic training of their children.

Parent education meetings are vital to bringing the GCA community together. We do this through worship, training, encouragement, fellowship, vision, and sharing information. The meetings are mandatory and are one of the prime expressions of our partnering relationship. They help orient parents to GCA and to the elementary, junior high and high school programs. Parent education meetings help train parents to be confident, competent and involved co-teachers while also promoting parent training skills, strong marriages, and secure, close-knit families.

Each year GCA offers a combination of parent workshops in the fall (back to school week): mid-week meetings for each grade at least once per semester, and selected topical presentations. Ideally both parents are expected to attend; if that is not possible then at least one parent should attend so that the family is represented at all training meetings.

Attendance is required and is recorded. Calendar dates for the meetings are published well in advance and weekly reminders are sent out in the weeks prior to each meeting. Should a conflict occur, parents must notify the school office if attendance is not possible. In that event, a make-up meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

### GCA Parent Training and Workshops

---

#### **Eagle 101 New Family Orientation (mandatory)**

Eagle 101 Part 1 is a training session, done via video, to prepare the teaching parent with the tools and information necessary for success in the University Model at Grace Covenant Academy.

Eagle 101, Part 2, is scheduled in the "Back to School Week" before the first day of school for all new families.

#### **Parent University (mandatory)**

Parent University is a full day training event for the schooling parent for grades

Pre-K- 5. This is a foundational meeting for co-teachers, stressing practical skills, parenting skills, developmental issues, and spiritual issues. This may include break-out sessions for new and seasoned families to the UMS, as well as different sessions for various ages.

### **Back to School Mini Day (mandatory)**

Back to School Mini Day is a training event for the students and parents in grades 6-12. This is a foundational meeting for co-teachers, stressing practical skills, parenting skills, developmental issues, and spiritual issues. This may include break-out sessions for new and seasoned families to the UMS, as well as different sessions for various ages. There is also a portion of the day devoted to meeting each teacher and rotating through the schedule of a “normal” school day.

### **Re-enrollment/ State of the School Meeting**

In January, all returning families meet to celebrate God’s goodness, look forward to the future, and examine changes for the coming year.

### **Spring Transition Meetings**

Staff and home teachers meet up for advice and information on transitioning into the next season of GCA life from specific grades of transition: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> (graduation planning).

### **Coffee with the Headmaster (Dads - optional)**

Dads meet with the headmaster quarterly at a local coffee shop to pray, ask questions, and fellowship.

### **Grade-Level Teacher’s Lounge Meetings**

Once each year. Co-teaching parents meet for grade-level meetings and a time to connect with the teacher, ask questions, and be encouraged.

### **Call to Encourage**

Call to Encourage is a meeting time to build up parents in their calling, with practical advice and wise teaching.

# Financial Policies

## Financial Standing

---

A family in good financial standing is defined as follows:

- Family account is current.
- Has had no more than three delinquent payments in a school year.
- Has communicated in a timely manner regarding financial challenges.

## Fees

---

### Graduation Fee

Seniors planning to participate in Grace Covenant Academy's graduation ceremony will be charged a non-refundable fee to cover expenses related to the graduation. This fee is due at enrollment. See the website for the current fee amount.

### Athletic Fees & Extra-Curricular Activities

Participation in official athletic teams at GCA will count as elective courses. Thus, tuition charges will be applied. To encourage participation in athletics, we offer discounted rates for students who participate in multiple sports. The current breakdown of athletic fees is listed on the school website: [www.gcafrisco.org](http://www.gcafrisco.org).

Other extracurricular activities, special lunches, field trips, pictures, health screenings, and other miscellaneous events are not included in tuition and additional expenses might be required. No refunds, partial or otherwise, will be given to students who drop out of a sport or activity. Similarly, no refunds will be given to students who are temporarily suspended from participation due to academic eligibility or behavioral issues. Parents should also expect additional expenses for possible equipment, clothes, travel expenses, and more. If you need assistance paying for student fees, please contact the Athletic Director or Dean of Student Life.

### Late Pick Up Fees

Parents are expected to pick up students within 15 minutes after their last class is dismissed. A late pick up fee will be assessed for every five minutes late after this original 15 minute period.

## Tuition Agreement

---

At GCA, we believe in the partnership between families and the school in education. Prior to each school year, we evaluate the needs of our students and programs and plan for the year. Curriculum is purchased and staff hired based on the number of enrolled students and the financial commitment of their parents. We want to be good stewards of our finances and plan every projected dollar. Therefore, we ask that each family **prayerfully commit to the full year of tuition** at the beginning of the school year.

## Tuition Payment Policies

---

By joining in partnership with Grace Covenant Academy, families are committing to pay the tuition **for the entire school year**.

- Tuition may be paid annually (upfront) or made in monthly payments.
- The first payment of the school year is due on **June 1st, or at the enrollment appointment**.
- A late charge will be due on accounts whose balances extend past thirty (30) days. An additional charge will be added, per month, if the account balance is not paid in full. Accounts will be charged again the following month should the balance not be paid in full.
- If payment is not made for tuition, the student(s) may be removed from their classes until accounts are reconciled. The school reserves the right to withhold services until the account is reconciled.
- Student report cards and transcripts cannot be released until all financial obligations are met.

## Withdrawal and Refund Policy

---

By joining in partnership with Grace Covenant Academy, families are committing to partner with the school in education, discipleship, training, and financial commitment **for the entire school year**. (The tuition agreement is similar to signing a lease, rather than paying a cable bill.)

## **Tuition payments are non-refundable.**

In the rare event that withdrawal is unavoidable, our refund policy is as follows:

- **Pray. Contact the Head of School.** In many scenarios, a solution can be found to assist with the difficulties you are facing.
- **Provide the Head of School with a written notice of withdrawal.** Include in the letter the last day of attendance for the student(s) being withdrawn.
- **Official date of withdrawal.** The “official date of withdrawal” will be **the last day of the month in which the student is withdrawn.**
- **Prepaid tuition payments are non-refundable.**
- **Families with students on a monthly payment plan** are responsible to pay for 50% of the remaining tuition after the "Official Date of Withdrawal."

Non-Refundable Costs and Fees. Books, materials, application costs, testing fees, registration and enrollment expenses and other fees are non-refundable.

## **Discounts**

---

Tuition discounts are available for siblings of current students, students of GCA faculty/staff members, and students of pastors. Please contact our office for more information.

## **Textbooks and Supplies**

---

Book expenses can vary per class. Grace Covenant Academy supplies some of the consumable textbooks used in certain classes, but parents are responsible for purchasing additional consumable textbooks, books and supplies. A full list of books that parents are required to purchase will be distributed mid summer. Families are responsible for purchasing all materials required for class **before the first day of school.**

We do our best to keep book expenses as low as possible. Most of the time, parents purchase books for the school year and then resell them at the end of the year.



## School Supplies

---

Grace Covenant Academy will furnish a list of supplies required for students. Teachers may periodically require additional supplies for special projects or assignments. Parents will be responsible for purchasing each student's supplies.

## Uniforms

---

Uniforms must be purchased through our exclusive provider, Land's End, before the first day of school. To purchase uniforms, please visit the Land's End website at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com), click on "school" and enter our school code: 900140856.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## Parental and Student Responsibilities

---

Grace Covenant Academy depends upon parents to give their children specific guidance and oversight in the daily application of biblical principles to life. The administration and staff will serve to assist parents with helpful information and resources.

As partners in the satellite classroom, parents are responsible for providing regular structure for completing home assignments, checking assignment sheets, monitoring the student's completion of these assignments, and helping the student as needed. Grace Covenant Academy will provide parents with academic expertise, challenge, pacing, direction, and accountability, in a way that enhances and assists the parents' efforts at teaching their children.

Parents share joint responsibility with the school for building a work ethic that leads to academic success, and for encouraging students to accept increasing responsibility for their decisions.

The parental teaching role ranges from direct instruction in cooperation with the central classroom teacher to monitoring of student progress, as the student progresses from elementary to high school. Grace Covenant Academy is committed to providing a vital learning experience for students that encourages and facilitates the parent/child relationship.

Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their students are prepared for class. Books and supplies should be purchased before the school year begins. A textbook list and ordering information will be furnished before each semester. In order to facilitate the use of textbooks in the classroom, students are not allowed to share with a sibling.

## Parental Roles in a University-Model School

---

University-Model Schools are unique because they try to ensure that parents remain the priority influence in students' lives. Additionally, University-Model Schools allow parents to partner with education professionals, allowing students to receive a quality education while still remaining family focused. As partners, parent roles change and evolve as their students grow. Below is a brief breakdown of a few roles you are likely to play in the UMS model.

### **Co-Instructor (Grades K-6)**

This role is typically for parents with students in elementary school, or younger. At Grace Covenant Academy, teachers will provide general instruction, tests, and assignments. Then, at home, parents continue general instruction and ensure that students are learning the subject material. Additionally, parents are the primary teachers of character development at this age.

### **Guide for Dependent Study (Grades 7-10)**

This role is typically for parents with students in 7th - 10th grade. At this age, students begin covering subject matter that may be unfamiliar to parents. Students are still at a dependent age where study habits and personal character must be cultivated. In this role, the teacher provides instruction during class, but is dependent on the parent to make certain that students complete course assignments.

### **Guide for Independent Study (Grades 11-12)**

This role is typically for parents with students in 11th and 12th grade. Junior and senior level courses are great opportunities for students to grow spiritually and academically. So at this stage, parents should supervise the progress of their students and provide them with guidance related to entering college. In this role, all classes are taught by Grace Covenant Academy faculty, but parents maintain the primary character influence in their lives.

## Parent Coach

Depending on your student's involvement at GCA, parents may play the role of a parent coach. In this role, parents provide at home, personalized coaching in a particular activity. This may include athletics, fine arts, or other activities at Grace Covenant Academy. Or it could simply be coaching and encouraging your students in their academics. Whatever the circumstances are, this role is an incredibly important aspect of the UMS parent.

## Affirmation of Parental Responsibilities

---

Each parent agrees to these responsibilities when they enroll at Grace Covenant Academy.

### **God is the primary pursuit of our family**

God is the center of all things. He has made us in His image, for His glory, and for a personal relationship with Him. (Ps 27:4, Mt 6:33, 2 Cor 5:19, Pr. 1:7, Jn 17:3, Is 43:7, 21)

*We will pursue a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ through the gospel, and use our children's education as a way to point them to a knowledge of God.*

### **The Bible is the primary standard for truth; the gospel its primary message**

We would not know God, what He is like, nor His plan or desires if He didn't tell us, but He has chosen to reveal these things in His word, the Bible. (1 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21)

*We will seek to understand and submit to God's truth as found in the Bible, and will teach this to our children, making relevant applications of God's Word to the circumstances of our family life.*

### **Parents are the primary, but not exclusive, trainers & influence of children**

God gives parents to protect, train, disciple, & discipline. Parents are not perfect, but they are God's primary way of guiding children to adulthood. (Dt 6:6-7, Eph 6:1-4, Pr. 1:7-8)

*We embrace God's calling as parents to be the primary influence & trainers of our children, modeling a genuine but imperfect Christ-centered life and cultivating an atmosphere of discipleship in our home.*

### **The local church is the primary community**

God places all of His children in a local church in relationship with other people so we can grow while helping them to grow. (Acts 2:43-47, Eph 4:15-16, Ro 12:4-12, Heb 10:24-25)

*We will demonstrate our personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ through faithful attendance and involvement in a Bible-believing, gospel-centered local church.*

### **Learning is the student's primary calling at GCA**

God has called GCA to equip students by partnering with parents in their education. We value learning as a calling from God – and rely on the responsibility of parents to model and monitor that at home. Only families who commit to desire to attend GCA, embrace learning, and are active in their student's education are permitted to enroll.

*We commit to supervise the learning of our students on the homedays including ensuring the student is prepared for class by completing their required assignments.*

*We desire to provide our children with a distinctively Christian education, partnering with GCA & committing to model a love for learning in our home.*

### **Relationships within the GCA community are a primary value**

God places authorities and teachers in our lives to train, guide, and encourage. He also places us in community so we can experience godly fellowship. (1 Pet 2:13-17 and 3:8-12)

*We will seek to value and protect the relationships within the GCA community:*

- *cultivating a partnership marked by grace;*
- *modeling a proper honor for the authorities God places in our lives;*
- *maintaining a non-adversarial posture towards all; and*
- *seeking to resolve problems biblically – valuing and preserving relationships while working together to solve problems.*

### **Locking arms for the year in partnership**

The school partners with families who are committed to the school for the year. Parents make a commitment, much like a lease, to honor and fulfill the obligations for the full school year. Healthy and engaged parental partnerships are central to the the core ministry of the school.

*We commit to*

- *pay the annual tuition, as outlined in the Withdrawal Policy;*
- *attend all mandatory parent meetings and conferences;*
- *abide by the admissions, academic, discipline, and other policies contained in the Parent/ Student Handbook; and*
- *daily engage in the education and training of our student.*

*We understand that acceptance into Grace Covenant Academy is a privilege and enrollment herein is contingent upon our continued commitment to the standards and responsibilities outlined above.*

## Enrollment of Courses

### Academic Prerequisites

---

Students must achieve a passing grade in all core academic courses each semester to be approved for enrollment in the following semester's course sequence (e.g. a student must earn a passing grade in the first semester of ninth grade English I to remain in the second semester of ninth grade English I). Re-enrollment may be withheld if the Dean deems it necessary for the student to have additional testing.

### Placement Testing

---

Placement testing is required for all new students or current students wishing to add a core class. Current families should contact the Dean of Academics upon receipt of their enrollment notification and instructions if they are uncertain regarding whether their student needs to test in order to enroll in a particular class.

### Adding and Dropping Courses

---

Courses may be added to a student's initial registration no later than October 1 during the first semester and February 15 during the second semester, provided that the student is in good standing with the school and that space for him/her is available in the desired course. Should a student drop a course by Oct. 1 the first semester or by February 15 for a one-semester course beginning in the second semester, no record of his/her original enrollment in the course will be indicated on the student's transcript. Should he/she drop a course after this time, a record of enrollment will appear on the transcript and the student will receive a grade of WP (withdrew passing) or WF (withdrew failing); this grade will have no impact on the student's grade point average.

To drop or add a course, the parent must send the request in writing to the academic advisor. An email is sufficient.

Students who withdraw completely from Grace Covenant Academy may, at the discretion of the administration, receive grades of I (incomplete) for all courses dropped at the time of withdrawal. Grades of I, WP, WF, and P are not calculated into the student's grade point average at any time.

## Audit

---

GCA does not have an audit option. Any student enrolled in any class at GCA will receive a grade reflecting his/her level of achievement in the class.

## Grading, Evaluation and Feedback

GCA will strive to view and publicly present grades not as a commentary on the relative worth and value of the individual but rather as accurate reflections of the quality of his work in a given subject at a given time. While many in our society do indeed use grades for the purpose of classifying students, we commit ourselves to avoid this tendency. At GCA, grades serve four basic purposes:

- to help us teach, rebuke, correct and train;
- to help us in the on-going (and, hopefully, progressive) placement of students at a level that suits their abilities and in subjects responsive to their needs, background, and abilities;
- to provide us with a just and legitimate means of holding students accountable for the quality of their work; and
- to provide us with an ongoing and widely understood means of communicating a student's relative progress and achievement to his parents and other parties, such as college entrance boards or other schools to which the student may transfer, who have a legitimate interest in knowing such information.

In order to accomplish this, we aim to establish just and objective standards which are based on legitimate expectations. This means that students will be graded by comparing their level of accomplishment against reasonable expectations of what they should be able to accomplish. It also means that we

will make every reasonable effort to place students properly, basing such placement upon their background and abilities rather than any social criteria (such as age). Finally, it means that students will receive (or not receive) credit based upon what they have done (or not done) relative to a common standard, rather than upon individual considerations (such as learning disabilities).

The grading standards themselves will be oriented toward the work of the student rather than the student himself. They will recognize multiple levels of legitimate achievement, so that less is expected of lower level students (e.g., elementary) than of upper level students (e.g., secondary). They will be objective and evenly applied within a given class. They will also allow for individual differences by defining minimum passing standards in terms that allow for a range of acceptable achievement. The ultimate purposes of these standards will be to define what ought to be, as opposed to what is, and so give the student and his parents valid and meaningful feedback, to encourage a disciplined approach to academic study, and to encourage the student to progress in his learning and achievement.

## Reporting of Grades

---

It is the parents' responsibility to monitor their student's progress by utilizing GCA's online database system (FACTS). Parents may log onto the website at any time and view their student's grades and attendance records. *The internet is GCA's primary means of communication and is required for each family.*

### Lower School

- Pre-K-1st grade will complete assessments each grading period with skill set marks entered on report cards at the end of each quarter.
- 2nd–5<sup>th</sup> grade: Grades for lower school classes will be averaged for each of the quarters. The two quarter grades will be averaged to determine the final semester grade. Report cards will be uploaded to FACTS and available for parents to print from home two weeks after the last day of each quarter.

### Upper School

- 4 quarter grading periods.
- Each semester is awarded credit and listed separately on the transcript.
- On the report card, the two semesters are averaged together for a final grade in the class.

- Report cards will be loaded and will be available to be printed from FACTS two weeks following the last day of each quarter.
- Official transcripts can be requested from the Dean of Academics two weeks following the last day of each semester.

## Grading Percentage Guidelines

---

<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Homework &amp; Daily</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
Pre-K--1	Skill Sets	Skill Sets
2-4	60%	40%
5	50%	50%
Minimum # of assignments per quarter	6 for core content areas	3 for core content areas

<b>Middle School</b>	<b>Homework &amp; Daily</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
6th-8th grade	40-50%	50-60%
Minimum # of assignments per quarter	12	3

<b>High School</b>	<b>Homework &amp; Daily</b>	<b>Assessments</b>
9th-12th grade	25-40%	60-75%
Minimum # of assignments per quarter	9	3

## Report Cards

---

Report cards can be accessed through FACTS, and are loaded and ready to print from home two weeks following the end of each quarter. The gradebook can be



accessed at any time during each quarter by parents and students.

## Grading Standards/ GPA

---

Most courses at GCA (the exception being courses graded on a pass/fail basis) are graded on a scale of 0-100. The course grade itself represents a percentage of content mastery, which is then used to determine the grade value of individual courses.

Numerically graded courses are graded on a scale of 0-100 which is then used to determine the grade point average (0–5.0) of individual courses. The earned grade points are then multiplied by the number of credits earned for the course to determine the earned course grade points (which may be fractional). The sum of all course grade points is divided by the sum of all credits attempted to obtain the semester, and later, the cumulative GPA. Grace Covenant Academy recognizes the difference in rigor between standard and dual credit(DC) courses by assigning them differing values. The letter grade equivalents of this system are as follows:

<b>0-100 Scale</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Grade Points (Standard)</b>	<b>Grade Points (DC)</b>
90-100	A	4.0	5
80-89	B	3.0	4
70-79	C	2.0	3
65-69	D	1.0	2
0-64	F	0	0

No course grades in excess of 100 are awarded, although a cumulative GPA in excess of 4.0 is possible due to the value differential between standard, honors, and DC courses. No grade points are awarded for any failed course, even though the course may have a grade value above 0, since no credits are earned for a failing grade.

Other grades recognized by GCA are I (incomplete), WP or WF (withdrawal pass or withdrawal fail), and P (passing - applicable to a restricted number of courses which are graded on a pass/fail basis). Grades of I, WP, WF, and P are not calculated into the student's GPA at any time.

Each department will define specific criteria for assessing grades in any given course. All such criteria must honor any standards, requirements or limitations imposed by curriculum guides and other relevant policies for the establishment of grading criteria within a given course.

## Academic Communication Policy and Procedures

---

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are sent out as needed by teachers. All parents are given the option of selecting their setting in FACTS to receive progress reports each time an assignment is marked incomplete or a non-passing grade is assigned. Progress reports will be sent out each fall after the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of school, right before parent-teacher conferences. Teachers may, at their discretion, send out progress reports weekly to all students.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

GCA believes that the parent teacher relationship is vital to the success of our students and school and therefore schedules a mandatory parent teacher conference each fall after the first 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week of school. The purpose of this conference is to establish a good relationship between the GCA faculty member and the co-teacher, identify any strengths and weaknesses in each student and their work habits, and to preventatively address any problems that may arise in the future.

The spring parent-teacher conference times are optional, and can be used for further relationship building, assessing a student's giftings or struggles, and for gauging a student's level of achievement and mastery of the subject area. GCA parents are also given the option of a phone conference for the spring conference times.

A parent or teacher may request a conference at any time outside of these scheduled conference times as the need arises.

### **Requested P/T Conference for Possible Accommodations**

GCA teachers and co-teachers, at times, may make formal or informal observations about a student that might indicate a need for a change or adjustment to the program for a student. This might be as simple as a new home

day schedule, suggested strategies for time management, or it may require further evaluation to determine a possible learning difference.

The classroom teacher or co-teacher may request a parent teacher conference to determine how to best meet the needs of the student and ensure maximum academic achievement. If a teacher and/or parent suspects that additional outside evaluation would be helpful, a parent teacher conference including the Dean of Academics will be requested and the appropriate options can be discussed.

GCA will communicate with parents when further testing is suggested or required. Recommended testing service contacts are available from the Dean of Academics.

A GCA faculty member should consult with the Dean of Academics in determining if further testing will be suggested or required and following a conference with the parent, the teacher, and the Dean, a conclusion will be reached as to whether further testing will be suggested or required, or whether an accommodations summary will be filled out.

Also, if a student remains on academic probation for more than 2 quarters and is putting in the time and effort expected of his or her grade, further outside testing may be required.

## Academic Standing

Students must earn a semester grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher each semester in attendance at Grace Covenant Academy in order to remain in good academic standing. A student whose semester GPA falls below 2.0 at the completion of the semester may, at the discretion of the Academic Dean, be placed on academic probation. A student placed on academic probation must raise his/her GPA to a 2.0 or above, as indicated on progress reports or the final grade report, in order to return to good academic standing. If a student should earn a GPA lower than 2.0 for two consecutive semesters, he or she may be blocked from further enrollment in classes or be required to retake any classes in which he earned a grade less than 70.

### Academic Probation

---

A student may experience academic challenges and difficulties for a number of

reasons. Our goal at GCA is to help each student achieve at his or her highest level. Academic Probation is not seen as punitive, but as a structure that helps a family and student focus intently on academics and find solutions to academic difficulties that the student has encountered.

A student may be placed on Academic Probation if their GPA falls below 2.0 in any given quarter or if the student has two or more F's, or one F and two or more D's. Academic Probation requires a student to meet with the Academic Advisor, homeroom teacher, or Dean of Academics once per week to review grades and missing assignments. A student on Academic Probation may not participate in extracurricular activities until the GPA can be improved.

Academic Probation lasts until the end of the current quarter. If a student is placed on Academic Probation within the second half of a quarter, the probationary time will extend to the end of the following quarter. At the end of the period of Academic Probation, a meeting with the home room teacher, the parents, the student, and the Dean of Academics will be called if the student's grades have not improved.

A student on Academic Probation at the time of re-enrollment may be required to be off probation before being allowed to re-enroll, or a family interview may be requested by the Head of School.

## Credit Recovery

---

Any sequential course required for graduation that a student fails, must be successfully repeated before the student will be allowed to enroll in the subsequent course. When the student successfully completes the failed course, the passing grade earned will absolve the failing grade, which will be struck from the transcript. When a failing grade has been absolved in this manner, both attempts at taking the course will be noted on the transcript, but only the passing grade will be recorded, and only the passing attempt will affect the GPA. On the transcript, the failing grade of an absolved failed course will be replaced with NG.

Students may attempt to absolve a failing grade in another academic setting, such as another school or a home school. In this case, students must request transfer credit through the usual channels following the successful completion of the course, should they desire to have the course credit recognized by GCA. In addition, if taking the course through an unaccredited school, including online or home school, GCA will require that the student pass the normal GCA course

exams (usually six tests plus two final exams) for a \$250 fee payable upon preapproval of the Application to Transfer Credit.

If such credit is granted, it will absolve the failing grade on the student's transcript; however, both attempts will be noted, and neither the original failed course nor the transferred credit will be calculated into the student's GPA. Any student, including one who has been granted transfer credit, must take a placement test to be able to enroll in any course for which placement testing is required, unless he has successfully completed at GCA the previous course in the course sequence.

Courses in high school for which a student earns an A, B, or C may not be repeated. A secondary student who earns a D (a numerical grade of 60-69 on the 100 point scale) in a course will be permitted to retake that course only if there is sufficient space available for him after all other existing students who have earned the right to register for the course have had the opportunity to do so.

Should a student elect to retake a course in which he has already earned a D, and the grade earned during the second attempt is passing, both attempts at taking the course will be reported on the student's transcript but the grade earned during the first attempt will be replaced with a grade of NG (no grade) and will then cease to affect the student's GPA (no credit will be awarded for any course in which a student has been given NG as a grade). If the grade earned during the second attempt is failing, both attempts at taking the course and both grades earned will be reported on the student's transcript, and both grades will be used to calculate the student's GPA.

A secondary student who earns a D in a course that is a prerequisite for the next course, must pass a placement exam or must have the instructor's permission to enroll in the next course in the sequence.

## Extracurricular Participation Guidelines

### Eligibility to Participate - Grades K-5

---

All students wishing to participate in extracurricular activities must be enrolled:

- in one or more classes to participate in school events and field trips.
- full time for overnight events including Outdoor Education camp.

## Eligibility to Participate - Grades 6-12

---

All students wishing to participate in extracurricular activities must be enrolled in a minimum of two core classes plus one elective and PULSE.

## Athletics/Extracurricular Participation

---

- For sports/competitive teams in the building phase, recruitment may be extended to the homeschool community when additional players are needed, after the students who meet the above guidelines have been accepted to the team.
- Athletic sports participants must maintain the minimum attendance requirements for all enrolled classes.
- When a game falls on a class day, students must attend all academic classes to be eligible to participate. If a planned absence on a game day is unavoidable, athletes may appeal to the Athletic Director to participate.
- If a student is suspended the day before and after an athletic event, and the event falls on a home day, the athlete is not eligible to participate.

## PULSE Enrollment

---

Students who participate in extracurricular activities represent GCA to our community and therefore are holding visible positions of leadership. Enrollment in PULSE is required for these students for the leadership training, the character building, and discipleship with fellow classmates that takes place.

PULSE is a mid-day track that meets for 30 minutes before or after the lunch hour and includes one day of chapel, one day of small group discussions, and one day of social activities.

## Homework, Test, and Project Guidelines

## Lower School, Grades K-5

---

GCA lower school teachers will adhere to the following guidelines:

- No more than three tests will be given in one day and no more than five tests will be given in one week in the following subject areas: English, spelling and/or phonics, history, math, and science.
- Teachers will utilize projects during the semester to provide alternate learning experiences for the students. Projects must be tied to course objectives and be full of learning. The teacher will alert parents several days or weeks in advance of a project so that the parent/co-teacher can be prepared to supply needed materials or assistance for their student. Time spent on other satellite classroom work will be lessened for that subject when a student is working on a project.
- Time spent on satellite classroom work will gradually increase from Kindergarten to 5th grades. Kindergarten –3rd graders will be given no weekend homework. Assignments such as math logs, reading logs, and/or projects may be assigned with a Tuesday due date, assuming that work could take place over the weekend, which allows the co-teacher flexibility in planning of assignments within the week. Fourth–5th graders will generally be given weekend homework in no more than two subjects per weekend (i.e., English and math).
- As students enter 4th grade, parents will notice a greater level of responsibility placed on their child. In grades 4 and 5, students are reading to gather more information and understand deeper concepts. Their home workload will increase in the upper elementary years.
- Students must show all work to receive full credit on all assignments and tests

## Upper School, Grades 6-12

---

- No more than two major tests (unit exam, final exam, etc.) will be given in one day and no more than three tests/ projects will be due on the same

day.

- A project is something that is above and beyond the normal course work and takes more than one week to complete. For example: a term paper or a presentation with a partner.
- Teachers will utilize projects during the semester to provide alternate learning experiences for the students. Projects must be tied to course objectives and be full of learning. The teacher will alert students so that the student can be prepared and plan in extra time, if needed. Time spent on other satellite classroom work may be lessened for that subject when a student is working on a project.

### 8th Grade and High School Homework Time

The following are school policies for the amount of time spent on homework. The “**core**” classes are **English, Science and Mathematics**. Non-core classes are everything else.

#### High School 3 hour/week **Core** class (English, Science & Math)

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday School Day Homework	Wednesday- Friday Home Day Homework
30 minutes MAX daily	1.5-2 hrs daily
30 minutes x 3 days= <b>1.5 hours/week</b>	1.5-2 hrs x 2 days = <b>3-4 hrs/week</b>

- 4.5-5.5 hours of homework a week per core class.
- Students/parents must check Facts for homework every single school and home day.
- This does not apply to all classes and would only apply to classes that need the extra time.

#### High School 3 hour/ week Non-Core Academic Class (History, Bible, Speech, Elective, etc.)

Monday-Tuesday-Thursday	Wednesday- Friday
-------------------------	-------------------



<b>School Day Homework</b>	<b>Home Day Homework</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>1.0 hr</b>
	<b>1.0 hr x 2 days = 2 hrs/week</b>

**8th Grade 3 Hour/ week Core Class (English, Science, Math)**

<b>Monday-Tuesday-Thursday School Day Homework</b>	<b>Wednesday- Friday Home Day Homework</b>
<b>0-15 Minutes</b>	<b>1.5 hr</b>
	<b>1.5 hr x 2 days = 3 hrs/week</b>

**8th Grade 3 Hour/ week Non-Core Academic Class**

<b>Monday-Tuesday-Thursday School Day Homework</b>	<b>Wednesday- Friday Home Day Homework</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>1.0 hr</b>
	<b>1.0 hr x 2 days = 2 hrs/week</b>

## Re-Testing and Test Make Ups

---

Retesting due to a failed test will be allowed in some cases. If a teacher determines that it would be in the best interest of a student to offer a retake, the student may be given a different test from the original.

- The highest possible grade on the retake will be 70. A student must score below a 70% to be eligible for a retake.
- Test retakes and make-ups due to excused absences are done at GCA. The schedule for test make-ups and sign up are found on The Nest.
- If a student is absent for a test, the makeup test deadline is as follows:

<b>First Day Back Is:</b>	<b>Deadline to make up the test is on the subsequent</b>
---------------------------	--

Monday	Thursday
Tuesday	Monday
Thursday	Tuesday

## Late Work Policy (K-12<sup>th</sup>)

---

GCA faculty will give credit for late work or give extra time before homework incurs late penalties only in the case of excused absences. Whenever possible, arrangements for making up work should be made with the teacher prior to the absence, although this is not always possible, due to the teacher’s lesson plans and in-class activities. (See “Attendance.”)

When a student falls behind and desires to turn in work after the due date, grades will be given as detailed below.

### **K– 2nd Grades**

Homework is a vital component of the University Model school partnership. In lower elementary schools, parents are more responsible for the return of assignments than students. If late work becomes habitual, a conference may be necessary to determine the continued partnership and/or role of co-teacher.

### **3rd–5th Grades**

Homework received one class day late will receive a maximum score of 85.  
 Homework received two class days late will receive a maximum score of 50.  
 Homework received after two class days late or later will receive a 0.

### **6th–12th Grades**

Homework received one day late will receive a maximum score of 85. Homework received two class days late or later will receive a 0.

### **Projects, Papers, Other Long Term Assignments**

If an assignment is left at home, a teacher may, at his/her discretion, allow a student to turn it in via email or in person after school.

### **Due Date for Late Work: Excused Absences Only**

Students with excused absences of any length should turn in all work by the

second class day back at school. Work that was due the first day that was missed is due immediately upon return to school. For example, if a student who attends class three days a week (M-T-Th) is absent Monday and returns to school Tuesday, the homework that was due on Monday is due the day they return: Tuesday. The homework due Tuesday is due Thursday.

In summary:

- The work that was due the day that was missed is due the student's first day back to school.
- The work that was assigned while the student was absent (including in-class work) is due on the second day back, unless other arrangements are made with the teacher. Teachers may use their own discretion concerning make-up work due dates if there are special circumstances.

### **Tests Scheduled on the Day of a Student's Return: Grades K-5**

In the case of an excused absence, it is recommended that students take scheduled tests on the day of their return, if possible. At the discretion of the teacher, a test may be delayed until the next regular school day.

### **Tests Scheduled on the Day of a Student's Return: Grades 6-12**

In the case of an excused absence, it is recommended that students take scheduled tests on the day of their return, if possible. However, students will have the option of delaying a test scheduled for the day of their return to the next available make-up test time. The test should not be delayed beyond this.

### **Late Grade Due to Extended Absences**

Students who miss three or more consecutive class days will be given a written plan created by the academic department to determine due dates for missed assignments, quizzes, tests, papers, etc.

For elementary and middle school students, it is the parent's responsibility to initiate a plan. If a plan is not in place, teachers are not required to make any modifications in regard to due dates of missed work.

For upper school students, it is the student's responsibility to communicate with the Academic Dean/ Academic department for a plan to follow for making up missed work.

## **Final Exam Grades**

---

Students enrolled in core classes will take final exams at the end of each

semester.

**Students may not miss final exams.** A review day will be scheduled prior to exams with the purpose of providing student and parent accountability that will motivate students to review semester materials in preparation for final exams. During this time, the students can expect to have (1) no new material covered; (2) no tests, projects, or papers due; and (3) review activities planned, which may include homework and quizzes over material being reviewed.

Fine Arts and Elective finals may take place a week before finals week.

- **Seniors** who have an A in a class the Friday prior to the week before finals for the spring semester only --will be exempt from review days and final exams for that class.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade will have no finals.
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will have finals for all classes in the spring semester.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade will have final exams in the fall in their credit bearing classes only.
- Grades for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade non-credit bearing classes will be averaged each quarter with the final exam grade counting as 10% of the semester grade.
- Grades for credit-bearing high school classes will be averaged each quarter, with the final exam grade counting as 20% of the semester grade.

# Achievement Testing

GCA utilizes several standardized tests to track and evaluate student progress as well as instructional effectiveness over time. The data is used to direct curriculum choice and development, and to track general trends in individual students for the purpose of meeting their learning needs.

## How We Use Data

---

### **Individual improvements to academic performance**

Improving academic performance: The results of this test are provided to GCA on a disk that shows individual achievement and class by class percentile ranks.

The GCA academic department meets with each family of each student that scores below average in any subject to help determine ways to provide feedback for better support and achievement.

If a student stays below average for more than one year a referral for outside diagnostic testing is given.

### **School wide improvements to academic performance**

- Each class or subject is looked at as a school score.
- The Academic Department compares scores to curriculum alignment to determine a cause for a score that falls below the normal range for GCA.
- If the curriculum is aligned to the test, and the scores fall in the below normal range, the Lead Team meets to discuss all possible causes, and investigates the following :
  - Program: Look at teacher observations
  - Student: Look at student levels and needs
  - Other factors: Schedule, time of day, testing environment, etc.
  - Curriculum Alignment
- If a curriculum change is a consideration, that request is made to the Curriculum Committee.

## Tests Administered

---

### **CogAT**

Grades 2 and 5 are given the The Cognitive Abilities Test™ (CogAT) which measures general reasoning abilities in three domains: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal.

### **Iowa Assessment**

GCA uses the Iowa Assessments for grades K-8 which is a standardized test and is also known as the ITBS, or Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

### **PSAT**

The PSAT is administered to all 10<sup>th</sup>- 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

### **PreACT**

These tests are used by 9th - 10th graders in preparation for the ACT.

### **SAT & ACT**

Students in grades 11 and 12 are also required to take the SAT or ACT. The ACT will be administered at GCA during the Spring semester.

### **SAT**

The College Board states that the SAT measures literacy and writing skills that are needed for academic success in [college](#). They state that the SAT assesses how well the test takers analyze and solve problems—skills they learned in school that they will need in college. However, the test is administered under a tight time limit (speeded) to help produce a range of scores.

### **ACT**

Created by ACT Inc., the ACT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The idea (in theory, at least) is to provide colleges with one common criterion that can be used to compare all applicants. The weight placed on ACT scores varies from school to school.

# Accommodations and Modifications

## Conferencing Regarding Accommodations

---

GCA teachers and co-teachers, at times, may make formal or informal observations about a student that might indicate a need for a change or adjustment to the program for a student. This might be as simple as a new home day schedule, suggested strategies for time management, or it may require further evaluation to determine a possible learning difference.

The classroom teacher, co-teacher, homeroom teacher, or the high school course teacher may request a parent-teacher conference to determine how to best meet the needs of the student and ensure maximum academic achievement.

If a teacher and/or parent suspects that additional outside evaluation would be helpful, a parent teacher conference including the Dean of Academics will be requested and the appropriate options can be discussed. GCA will communicate with parents when further testing is suggested or required. Recommended testing service contacts are available from the Dean of Academics.

A GCA faculty member should consult with the Dean of Academics in determining if further testing will be suggested or required and following a conference with the parent, the teacher, and the Dean, a conclusion will be reached as to whether further testing will be suggested or required.

If a student remains on academic probation for more than two quarters and is putting in the time and effort expected of his or her grade, further outside testing may be required.

## Lower School

---

Grace Covenant Academy is not equipped to make modifications to the program at the elementary level, but will work with each student needing accommodations on an individual basis.

GCA will make accommodations to the academic program for students in the Lower School program who have been determined, based on observation, testing, or diagnosis to have learning differences that may require

accommodations.

Students in need of accommodations due to dyslexia or other processing differences may qualify for the “Take Flight” program that is offered at GCA at an extra expense. This program serves students with dyslexia and other learning differences. GCA will provide an initial assessment and may require more outside testing to determine if the Take Flight program is appropriate. The Take Flight program does in incur an additional fee.

The Take Flight instructor will work directly with the GCA teachers to coordinate the instruction that is being given in place of the regular class work to make sure that all GCA standards are being addressed. Students may leave the GCA classroom and work with the private Take Flight instructor for subjects that need extra accommodations. All students are expected to work on strategies in reading and writing that will allow them to join their classmates in the standard course work within 2 years of entering Take Flight.

Other accommodations will be employed as needed in the elementary classroom including specific seating arrangements, re-reading instructions, extra time on tests, etc.

If a teacher or parent feels that a student would benefit from accommodations in the classroom, a parent-teacher conference should be requested with the Dean of Academics.

## Upper School

---

In the Upper School, GCA is not currently equipped to modify the curriculum in response to a student's learning disabilities or other special challenges, such as ADD. All students will receive (or not receive) credit based upon what they have (or have not) done relative to a common standard, rather than upon individualized standards developed in response to special needs.

Accommodations at all levels are used only as needed and as deemed necessary by the classroom teacher, the Dean of Academics, the parent, and outside testing. Each Upper School student receiving accommodations must have a diagnosis by a certified educational diagnostician before receiving accommodations at GCA.

If GCA staff determines that outside testing is needed, the family will be given



one month to complete the testing, or, if they are using the services of Frisco ISD, a packet requesting testing should be submitted within 14 days of the meeting with the Dean. It may be decided that the student needs extra tutoring or other assistance, which, once agreed upon, will be the responsibility of the parents to secure and to notify the Dean of Academics of the progress.

## Attendance

### Credits and Attendance Policy

---

#### Definition of Credits

For academic courses, one credit equals three hours of classroom instruction per week (five hours of study when home days are included) for an entire school year. Classes that meet less than this are generally worth half a credit.

#### Minimum Per Credit Attendance Requirement

The Minimum Per Credit Requirement for all courses offered at GCA will be 42 hours of instruction per semester for each half credit earned. Credit will not be awarded to students in attendance below this requirement. The table below shows the maximum number of absences allowed to receive credit for the course.

<b>Class meeting schedule</b>	<b>Number of absences allowed</b>
3 times per week	6 absences per semester
2 times per week	4 absences per semester
1 time per week	2 absences per semester

### Attendance Requirements

---

Students must regularly attend classes in order to successfully complete a course. This means that they may not be absent, whether excused or unexcused, more than the 6 instructional hours during a semester. Students failing to meet these attendance requirements will not be recognized as

having completed the course, meaning they will be awarded a grade of “incomplete,” and in the case of credit-bearing high school courses, denied credit for the course. In most cases, a failure to successfully complete a course because of excessive absences will also prevent a student from being able to register for the next course in the sequence.

Removal of the incomplete grade can be accomplished by the granting of a variance or by make-up course work prescribed by the school. If the incomplete grade is not removed, a grade of F will be assigned for the course. In addition, the student may be asked to discontinue attendance of the class after the maximum number of absences has been reached.

## Excused Absences

---

Absences that occur because of circumstances beyond the immediate control of students or parents will be considered excused. Examples of an excused absence are for sudden illness, family illness or death, or personal or family crisis. Parents or students are responsible for collecting any make-up work or assignments; please allow 24 hours for teachers to supply needed materials.

Planned absences may also be considered excused if they fall within the specific guidelines outlined below.

### Pre-Planned Absences/ Vacations

Under certain conditions and circumstances, the School Administrator may grant special approval for a family event or mission trip during normal school days.

GCA’s mission is to support the family. However, with the limited number of school days in the University School Model, these special cases should be limited in number.

To be considered for approval, the following conditions must be met:

- Parents must apply & receive prior approval **at least one week prior** to the trip.
- No more than 6 GCA school days per semester can be approved.
- Student(s) must be in good standing prior to the trip.
- Any work assigned prior to the trip is **due on the first day back** or may be turned in prior to the trip. The work that was DUE the first day absent, is now due the first day back.
- Teachers are not required to provide assignments due during the trip prior to it.

- All tests and assignments due during the trip and not previously assigned must be made up **within a week of the return** from the trip.
- No late penalty is assigned if the assignments are made up within a week.
- Families are responsible to obtain any class notes during the trip from fellow classmates.
- Failure to follow the above guidelines could result in unexcused absences and zeroes recorded for the grades.

The parent must complete a Planned Absence Request form online (link found on “The Nest”) **at least seven calendar days prior** to the planned absence for it to be excused.

Please send requests for planned absences that do NOT fit the above criteria to [attendance@gcafrisco.org](mailto:attendance@gcafrisco.org) for special consideration by the Dean of Academics **at least 2 weeks prior** to the intended absence. Once the decision has been made, the Dean will notify both the attendance team and the parent via email or text regarding the request. *If the decision made is to excuse the absence, follow the steps for an excused planned absence as outlined above, unless an alternative is indicated. Otherwise, the unexcused absence policy will apply.*

Planned absences which do not fit the above definitions or are not accompanied by the required forms explained above will be classified as unexcused. Planned absences in excess of the number allowed will be classified as unexcused.

For students in positions of responsibility where the absence would negatively affect the team or school (i.e., role in a performance, game, student leadership team, speech team, etc.) advanced written permission must be obtained from the teacher/coach/adviser in order to avoid being permanently removed from the position/role and/or failing the course.

## Unexcused Absences

---

The following absences are unexcused:

- Skipping class
- Staying home to complete or prepare work for a class or test
- Not attending classes for scheduled tests or presentations
- Family vacations not pre-approved (see Pre-Planned Absences / Vacations for details)
- Absences not meeting the criteria above for excused absences.

Absences not reported to teacher or Attendance Registrar within the proper time

frame are assumed to be unexcused. The school reserves the right to withdraw any student from class(es) and/or the school for absences exceeding the maximum allowed for credit.

**Three unexcused absences in one year will result in the lowering of the course grade by a letter.** Students may submit homework assignments on the due date for full credit. Students may not make up any "in-class" assignments, tests and/or quizzes for a grade missed due to unexcused absences. Students are responsible for the content of assignments missed, as needed, for future learning and/or assessments.

### **Make-up Work for Unexcused Absences**

**Lower School students**(K - 5) may make up work that was completed in class for a grade with late penalty.

**Upper School students** (6 -12) may not make up any "in-class" assignments, tests and/or quizzes for a grade missed due to unexcused absences. Work that is completed in class will receive a zero.

For all students, work that was assigned while the student was absent is due on the student's 2nd class day back at school, but will incur a late penalty. Teachers may utilize discretion concerning make-up work due dates if there are special circumstances. Students are responsible for the content of assignments missed.

Arrangements for making up work should be made with the teacher prior to a planned absence. However, preparing a packet of lesson materials in advance for your student is extra work for teachers, who might not have their lessons fully prepared before the week of teaching. Therefore, your student will very likely need to make up work for the home days after the material is presented in class.

For Upper School students, three unexcused absences in one year will result in the lowering of the course grade by a letter.

### **Final Exam Week Absences**

---

Middle and High School students may not miss final exams. Students must make every effort to take final exams as scheduled. In the rare case that a student is incapacitated and cannot attend the final exam, make-up tests will be considered on a case-by-case basis & are not guaranteed. The school office, teacher, & Dean of Academics must be notified the day of the missed exam. A doctor's note must be presented noting the reason for the absence & the earliest date for retest. Failure to notify the administration will result in a 0 for the test.

If the test cannot be made up prior to the last day of testing, grades for all classes will be delayed until such time the test can be taken. Fall make-up finals must be done prior to the completion of the first week of the spring semester or the student will receive a zero for the test. Spring make-up finals must be completed by the end of the first week of summer break or the student will receive a zero for the test.

## Tardy Policy

---

- Students are required to be in their seats when the bell rings in order not to be considered tardy.
- All students who arrive late to any class must report to the reception desk to acquire a tardy slip for admission into class. These will also be recorded in FACTS.
- All tardy students will serve a 10 minute detention the same day as the tardy.
- Only those tardies beyond the immediate control of the student or his or her parents or guardians (such as sickness or vehicle malfunction) will be considered excused. Tardiness due to oversleeping, weather, or predictable traffic delays will not be considered excused.
- Unexcused tardiness will be treated as a discipline problem.
- A student will be allowed one unexcused tardy in a given semester.
- With the exception of the first unexcused tardy each semester, **Upper School students will accumulate one absence for every three unexcused tardy occurrences.**
- Arrival in class beyond 15 minutes after the bell will be counted as an unexcused absence, but the student will still be required to attend detention as for any tardy.
- It is the parent's responsibility to keep track of their student's attendance record, including both tardiness and absences.

## Credits

GCA awards one credit for a high school level class that has instructional time of three hours per week for two semesters. A class that meets three hours per week for one semester is worth .5 credits. These hours can be all on one day, divided between two days (1.5 hours each day) or divided between three days (one hour, three times per week.) Students will earn course credit on a semester by semester basis, with a typical course being worth .5 credits per semester. Each semester will be a minimum of 16 weeks in length.

The Standard Per Credit Requirement (PCR) for all courses offered at GCA is 96 hours of instruction for each credit earned. Secondary P.E. courses will be awarded  $\frac{1}{2}$  credit per season for each sport involving interscholastic competition. Thus, the fall and spring semesters will normally be scheduled for a minimum 16 weeks of instruction/coaching.

### Athletic Related Credits

---

Credits for physical education or athletics will be awarded on the same basis as other school credits. One half credit will be awarded for participation in competitive sports 16 week season. One quarter credit will be awarded for an 8-15 week season. Athletic credits may fulfill any of the elective graduation requirements. Students may earn physical education credits by serving as a manager or trainer for school athletic teams. PE and athletic students are to be evaluated by the same grading practices and standards employed in other school courses. No grades awarded for PE or athletics, however, will be used to determine a student's academic standing and will appear on the transcript as a pass/fail grade.

## Dual Credit Classes

---

### Dual Credit at GCA

Grace Covenant Academy offers dual credit classes in two ways:

- On-site: GCA credits may be offered as dual credit. Students will be required to apply and be admitted to a partner university for such classes. When available, students will have the option to choose a dual credit level or a standard level.
- Online: GCA may offer an online dual credit class option to students needing extra credits or students who have moved beyond classes the school offers. These must be students who can handle the load of college level work while concurrently taking the GCA classes needed for their diploma plan. Approval from the Dean of Academics is required.

### Transfer of Dual Credit

Grace Covenant Academy offers classes that are academically rigorous but also infused with a biblical worldview. It is our firm belief that students should be grounded in their faith and understand the world and how they fit into it. We believe that this is best taught throughout the curriculum. Therefore, we encourage students to take all high school level classes at GCA. We believe that the high school years are foundational times for forming beliefs, applying biblical principles, and identifying God-given gifts in our students.

Some students move ahead of the high school level in certain subjects, and it is helpful to move on to their college work before graduation. Others are interested in courses that are not offered at GCA. In these situations, GCA will accept dual credit transfer, up to four credits maximum: two per year, the junior and senior years.

GCA will consider dual credit transfer in these classes:

- University Chemistry, University Physics, Microbiology, Biology, Anatomy and Physiology, College Algebra, Calculus, Statistics, Spanish 1,2,3,4.

For upper level chemistry and physics, we advise that a student first complete the GCA course, then enroll in the “university” level of that same course at the college they are seeking dual credit from. For biology, microbiology, and anatomy and physiology, we advise that a student take the GCA level course first, then earn dual credit from a Christian university.

We do not recommend that students enroll in English or humanities/social studies courses, as these courses should first be taken in a Christian context and are infused with worldview questions. English and humanities courses are also not accepted at many Christian universities.

*Note that all courses to be transferred to Grace Covenant Academy must be pre-approved and follow the process for transfer.*

## Transferring Credits

---

Students may apply to transfer high school credits under the following conditions:

- Credit for courses taken previous to enrollment at GCA
- Credit for courses that GCA does not offer
- Credit for courses that cannot be taken at GCA due to schedule conflicts

These credits can be from an accredited public or private school, a certified University-Model® school, a homeschool, or a homeschool co-op. Juniors and seniors are allowed to transfer in two dual credit hours per year, for a total of four dual credit hours.

Approval of such transfers shall be determined by the Academic Advisor and the Dean of Academics. To transfer credits, follow the steps below:

**For high school courses taken at an accredited school before enrolling at GCA,** simply submit the complete transcript of the student's final grades in each course.

**For high school courses completed at an unaccredited school or homeschool before enrolling at GCA,** start with Step 2 below.

**For high school or dual credit courses that supplement the courses provided by GCA,** begin at Step 1 below. We do not offer credit for courses taken elsewhere that are also offered at GCA while a student is enrolled at GCA, but we do allow students who choose this option to follow the plan for a self-managed diploma plan, which means that their parents create the final transcript and diploma of graduation.

**Step 1** Before choosing to take an academic course through another institution outside of Grace Covenant Academy, make sure that course objectives and curriculum align with those of the corresponding course at



GCA. Objectives for academic courses can be requested from the GCA Academic Advisor or Dean of Academics.

**Step 2** Complete and return the **Application to Transfer Credit (ATC)** form to your GCA Academic Advisor prior to beginning coursework. The ATC must be submitted to the Academic Advisor to be reviewed by the appropriate department head.

The deadline for seniors to submit the ATC is by the end of the second full week of school in the fall semester of senior year. No changes may be made to the ATC, nor may any additional ATC's be submitted after this date for seniors for coursework done outside of GCA.

The preapproval portion of the Application to Transfer Credit approves the method and content (curriculum) the student intends to use to fulfill the requirement, but does not award course credit. To be awarded credit for the course, you must complete the process with step 3, as follows:

**Step 3** After you have completed the coursework, complete and return the **Application to Transfer Credit** with the second portion completed to the GCA Academic Advisor. You must include with this form course the accredited school or college's transcript OR, for an unaccredited school or home school, a sample of documents, tests, and quizzes for review. All documentation for completed courses must be received at least two weeks prior to graduation. Coursework submitted after this date will not be approved.

**Step 4** If your application is approved, the credits will be recorded on your transcript.

Each completed semester course will be awarded a maximum of half a credit. The student must have earned a minimum of a C before credit is accepted from an accredited or non-accredited school or non-formal setting.

ALL courses accepted for transfer must be equivalent in content, level, and rigor in comparison with the Grace Covenant Academy class for which the student is requesting credit. For academic courses, one credit equals three hours of instruction plus two hours of study per week (or five hours of study per week) for a 34-week year.

Courses transferred during the summer will be applied to the preceding spring semester. The ATC should be submitted *prior* to registering in the course being submitted as the transfer. Students have one year from the date when the ATC is approved to complete course work and submit application and required documentation.

## Dual Credit Guidelines for Transfer

---

Juniors and seniors are allowed to transfer in two dual credit hours per year, for a total of four dual credit hours. The student must submit an Application to Transfer Credit and the advising department must give written approval before the student enrolls in dual credit classes. Then the student should follow the steps to transfer credit to GCA, as detailed above.

Summer is the suggested time for adding in these extra credits, if desired. Dual credit classes offered on the GCA campus during the GCA regular day are not considered transfer courses, and do not count towards the two-credit limit for either year.

The advising department can also advise a student in suggested classes. This option is not for everyone, and the GCA advising department would be happy to discuss this with you.

## Credit by Examination

---

GCA does not award credit for CLEP tests or award credit by examination.

## Fine Arts Guidelines for Transfer

---

Because some fine art classes are not offered at GCA, it is not possible to directly compare the content, level, and rigor of these classes. Because of this, the following guidelines will be used and transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Fine Art credit will be granted where the student has an instructor and is progressing measurably in his/her skill level. Fine Art credit will not be given for

community experiences and volunteer opportunities where there is no instructor or measureable progression in skill level.

## Physical Education Guidelines for Transfer

---

GCA accepts and recognizes PE credits from physical education and/or sports clinics that provide documentation and are recognized by local ISD's.

GCA will accept PE credits on a case-by-case basis for other sports or athletic programs that involve instruction, practice, team play, and measurable progression in physical skills. Credits will be determined by the number of hours involved in the activity per week, and the number of weeks.

# Graduation Requirements

## Academic Advising Policy

---

All students entering high school are required to undergo academic advising for the purpose of establishing a diploma plan. If a student is transferring to Grace Covenant Academy, copies of the high school transcript will be required at this meeting. Freshmen who have completed courses for high school credit should bring copies of their transcript. Students not planning to graduate from GCA must still confer with the Dean of Academics their purposes for attending GCA. In addition to this, any requests for transfer credits may need to be assessed before new high school students are allowed to register. Please contact the Dean of Academic's office for information.

## Diploma Plans

---

Grace Covenant Academy offers three diploma options: Distinguished, Recognized, and Self-Managed. All GCA students who intend to graduate from GCA with a GCA official transcript must have an advising appointment with the academic advisor at least once a year in which they discuss and understand their personal Graduation Plan Audit (a report from FACTS that shows how many credits have been achieved and how many are required to graduate).

*A senior may not alter his or her diploma plan after the first full week of school of the spring semester of senior year. Students who do not satisfy the requirements for the diploma plan on file by the end of their senior year will not receive a GCA diploma, and will not participate in the GCA graduation ceremony.*

## Requirements for GCA Diploma Types

---

In order to receive a diploma from Grace Covenant Academy and/or participate in the GCA graduation ceremony:

- All candidates must successfully complete a minimum of six credits at GCA.
- A minimum of three credits must be earned each year of the junior and senior year. Two credits from each year must be academic.
- Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0.
- Candidates must take and submit scores for the ACT or SAT during their junior or senior year.
- Seniors must pay a non-refundable graduation fee at re-enrollment during their junior year. The current fee is on the Tuition and Fees page of the website.
- Students must be enrolled in PULSE for each year that they take three credits or more.

## Diploma Options

---

### **Distinguished Diploma**

*All GCA students are encouraged to attain the Distinguished Diploma.*

The Distinguished Diploma is designed to prepare students to meet the most challenging four-year college admissions standards. This diploma plan requires a total of 26 credits. Unless otherwise specified, all courses are two semesters in length; both semesters must be completed in succession. Transfer credits will be reviewed and credit assigned as appropriate. :

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Credits Counting for any diploma plan:**

- *Algebra 1*

### **Recognized Diploma**

The Recognized Diploma is designed to prepare students to meet or exceed most four-year competitive college admissions standards. In order to earn a Recognized Diploma, a student must earn 26 credit hours. Unless otherwise specified, all courses are two semesters in length; both semesters must be completed in succession. Transfer credits will be reviewed and credit assigned as appropriate.

### **Self-Managed Diploma**

The Self-Managed Diploma plan is designed for students whose parents supplement their education with GCA classes. Students participate in GCA graduation exercises, but do not receive a GCA diploma. Parents create and sign the diploma.

GCA allows Self-Managed Diploma students to participate in all graduation related activities with the rest of the graduating class although the diploma itself will not acknowledge the student as a graduate of GCA. GCA also provides a transcript for these students for the classes taken at GCA. However, **GCA does not include graduation dates on transcripts** and it does not take responsibility for course selection. Parents take on the full responsibility for academic advising, course selection, grading & record keeping for all courses not completed at GCA.

**Minimum Requirements:** Students electing to receive a self-managed diploma and wishing to participate in GCA's graduation ceremony must meet certain requirements and must be advised and approved by the academic office.

1. The self managed diploma requirements are on file with the GCA Academic Office.
2. All candidates must complete a minimum of six credit hours at GCA.
3. A minimum of three on campus credits must be earned each year of the junior and senior years. For each of these two years, 1 credit must be Bible, half a credit may be an elective and two credits must be academic.

Students must also be enrolled in PULSE for both the junior and senior year.

4. Students must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0.
5. Additionally, these students must submit a preliminary self-managed transcript and tracking form to the Academic Advisor no later than the first day of the fall semester of their senior year documenting all but the last course in each subject area. GCA administration recommends submission of this transcript at the beginning of each high school fall semester rather than waiting until the senior year. Seniors must submit their final self-managed transcript no later than the first final exam date of the spring semester to participate in GCA's graduation ceremony.

## Graduation Regalia & Honors

### Cap & Gown

Red cap and gown with red, silver and blue tassel and silver year charm are purchased in the fall and delivered in spring for the graduates as a part of the graduation fee.

### Honor Cords

Honor cords are worn as follows:

- **Gold cord: Summa Cum Laude** honor cord will be worn if the student has a cumulative GPA of 4.0 for the high school years.
- **Navy and Gold cord: Magna Cum Laude** honor cord indicates a GPA of 3.8 - 3.9.
- **Navy cord: Cum Laude** honor cord indicates a GPA of 3.5 - 3.7.
- **Light blue cord** indicates an NCFCA competitor who qualified for Nationals

### Stoles

Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be provided a stole with that designation.

### Diplomas

The diploma indicates the diploma plan and Summa, Magna, or Cum Laude if applicable.

### Self-managed Diploma Students

Self Managed Diploma students do not meet these requirements and are not eligible for Valedictorian/Salutatorian or honors recognition.

# Academic Awards and Recognition

## Valedictorian and Salutatorian

---

The title of valedictorian is awarded to the student graduating with:

- the highest cumulative grade point average above 3.5 accumulated over the high school classes (9th–12th) defined in the Recognized Degree Plan.
- enrollment at GCA for sophomore, junior and senior years
- character representing the ideals of GCA as recognized by administration

The title of salutatorian is awarded to the student graduating with:

- the second highest cumulative grade point average above 3.5 accumulated over the high school classes (9th–12th) defined in the Recognized Degree Plan.
- enrollment at GCA for sophomore, junior and senior years
- character representing the ideals of GCA as recognized by administration

Transfer students must be enrolled at Grace Covenant Academy full time on the first day of their sophomore year to be eligible for graduation honors.

## President's Award

---

**High School students** with a cumulative GPA of 3.7 or higher receive the President's Award during the spring academic and leadership award ceremony.

The minimum number of academic credits required to be eligible for the

President's Award are as follows:

- First year of high school - 2 credit hours
- Second year of high school - 6 credit hours
- Third year of high school - 10 credit hours
- Fourth year of high school - 14 credit hours

# General School Policies

## Uniform Guidelines/ Dress Code

---

Uniforms at GCA help to ensure a standard of modesty and neatness which glorifies God and helps students focus on academics. They can help students to be less tempted to compare themselves to others, and parents face less pressure to keep up with the current fashions. Lastly, uniforms minimize costs. As you keep these goals in mind, we trust that our dress code will prove to be more of a blessing than a burden for your family.

Uniforms must be purchased through our exclusive provider, Lands' End, before the first day of school. To purchase uniforms, please visit the Lands' End website at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com), click on "school" and enter our school code: 900140856. Shirt recommendations and restrictions are noted online for several pieces. Everything that is available on the Grace Covenant Academy Lands' End site is approved to wear at school.

Students are expected to be in uniform from the time they enter the facility until the time they leave the facility. Below is a list of expectations for how the uniforms should be worn. Students are urged to embrace the "spirit of the law" as they uphold these standards.

### Hair

The point here is not to draw attention to oneself. Only natural hair colors are permitted at school. Hair should be clean, well-groomed and neat at all times. Hair styles that, in the principal's judgment, may distract from learning are prohibited.

### Piercings

Only female students are allowed to wear a maximum of two regular sized earrings on the lobe of each ear. Anything more is out of dress code. No other piercing should be adorned or draw attention to itself for students of either gender.

### Accessories

- No headbands or barrettes for young men are allowed.
- Accessories that are not to uniform code may not be worn or draped on the uniform.



- Makeup, clothing and jewelry must not excessively draw attention to itself. (For example, black lipstick would not be allowed.)
- Tattoos, drawings or markings on the body -- temporary or permanent -- are not allowed to be visible.

### Lower School | Grades K -5

**All students must own a navy blue Lands' End polo** with the GCA logo embroidered on it. You are welcome to purchase red and white polos with logos as well. We wear blue polos on field trip days.

**Girls** may wear khaki pants or shorts in khaki or blue. These may be purchased elsewhere as long as style and color matches Lands' End pants. Girls may also wear Lands' End plaid skirts or skorts with modesty shorts or leggings, and a GCA polo from Lands' End. In addition, girls may also wear a plaid jumper with an embroidered Peter Pan blouse, accompanied by modesty shorts or leggings. The Peter Pan blouse is to be worn only with the jumper and not with other skirts or pants. Skirt length should be at the knee.

**Boys** must wear Lands' End embroidered polos with khaki pants or khaki or navy shorts. Pants and shorts may be purchased elsewhere as long as style and color matches Lands' End.

**Shoes:** All shoes must be closed toed. No Crocs, flip-flops, roller shoes, boots or sandals are allowed. Students should wear tennis shoes or shoes that allow them to be active for P.E.

**Socks:** Any color socks are acceptable, except with skirts or shorts. When worn with skirts, socks should be navy or white.

**Sweaters or jackets** worn in the classroom must be purchased through Land's End and have the GCA logo. Jackets worn back and forth to school -- outside of the classroom -- do NOT need to follow these guidelines.

All other products sold on our Lands' End school site are optional.

### Middle School and High School | Grades 6 - 12

**All students must own a Lands' End navy blue polo** with the GCA logo embroidered on it. You are welcome to purchase red and white polos with logos as well. Polos may be worn tucked or untucked.

**Formal uniform:** All Upper School Students must own a “formal dress ensemble” for chapel days, leadership events and special occasions.

**Girls formal attire** consists of a three-quarter sleeved or long-sleeved Lands’ End white blouse with GCA logo, Lands’ End navy criss-cross tie, a Lands’ End plaid skirt and dress shoes. Skirt length should be at the knee. Logo-embroidered cardigans or blazers may be worn but are not required. Blouses must be tucked and all buttons buttoned.

**Girls casual attire** consists of Lands’ End approved skirt (plaid, khaki, or navy), Lands’ End shorts (khaki or navy) or Lands’ End pants (khaki or navy) with a Lands’ End embroidered polo. The skirt may be accompanied by navy or black modesty shorts or leggings. Skirt length should be at the knee.

**Boys formal attire** consists of a Lands’ End white button-down oxford with GCA logo, Lands’ End plaid tie, Lands’ End pants (khaki or blue), belt (black or brown), dark crew socks, dress shoes or black tennis shoes with black laces and black soles. A logo embroidered sweater or blazer is optional. Shirts must be tucked with all buttons buttoned and tie properly tied.

**Boys casual attire** consists of Lands’ End pants or shorts (khaki or blue) and Lands’ End embroidered polo.

**Shoes:** Closed toed shoes are required for everyone. No athletic shoes or sneakers should be worn with the formal uniform, EXCEPT black tennis shoes with black laces and black soles are acceptable. No Crocs, flip-flops, roller shoes, slippers or sandals are allowed.

**Socks:** Any color socks are acceptable, except with skirts and with the formal uniform. When worn with skirts, socks should be navy or white. The boys’ formal uniform requires dark crew socks.

**Sweaters or jackets** worn in the classroom must be purchased through Land’s End and have the GCA logo. The GCA athletic warm up suit, including the jacket, should be worn only at athletic events, and not on a regular school day. All other products sold on our Lands’ End school site are optional.

### **Off-Campus/ Non-Field Trip Events**

A student should wear what they would wear on a Spirit Day at GCA. For example, jeans that do not have holes or rips or Land's End approved shorts. GCA spirit t-shirt or solid t-shirt.

## Communication

---

### FACTS

FACTS is our school management system. It provides a web-based interface between parents, students, teachers, and staff to share information. Through ParentsWeb, you will be connected with the school and stay informed of your student's progress 24/7, from work, home, or on the road. Parents and students are encouraged to become familiar with FACTS and all that it has to offer.

Parents have password-secure access to only your student's data such as:

- Attendance
- Daily Grades
- Progress Reports
- Report Cards
- Missing Assignments
- Discipline
- School & Staff Directory
- Teacher Email Addresses

**If you need to update any information, you can do so easily. Log into FACTS; under school information, click on Web Forms. Click on the Family Demographic form and update any and all information. Make sure to save at the end of each page.**

### Email

Teachers and staff will also use email as a method of communication. Parents should update email addresses in FACTS in a timely manner and notify the person in charge of communications so that newsletters and other communications will get to the correct address. The email address(es) listed in FACTS will be the email address teachers and administration will use to communicate important information regarding your student. Parents and high school students are expected to check email daily.

### Website

The Grace Covenant Academy website contains information regarding all aspects of our school, including information on our model of education and our mission statement. Go there to find forms, resources, the school calendar, procedures, college entrance procedures and current news about our school. Visit [www.gcafrisco.org](http://www.gcafrisco.org) to find out more. Information for GCA families can be found at [gcanest.org](http://gcanest.org).

## Privacy Policy

Personal information is information about you that is personally identifiable like your name, address, email address, or phone number, and that is not otherwise publicly available, and is not released to the public or site partners without explicit consent of our users.

## Drop off, Pick Up, and Sign Out Procedures

---

Parents should follow the Grace Covenant Academy traffic flow plan for parking, dropping off, and picking up students. Everyone should exercise caution while in the parking lot and/or crossing through the pick-up line.

### Drop Off

In the morning, parents should plan to drop off their students at the drop off line no later than five minutes before the first class begins. Students may be dropped off as early as **15 minutes before the start of school** in the designated drop off line and only when there is a staff member to supervise.

**Late drop offs** should come through the main office door and sign in.

### Pick Up

Parents should pick up their student after his or her last scheduled class in a timely manner, but not more than 15 minutes after the class has ended. Please call the GCA general phone number if you are going to be late. We will release students only to a parent or an adult on your approved pick up list. You may also send an email to [attendance@gcafrisco.org](mailto:attendance@gcafrisco.org) with permission for your child to be picked up by a different adult on a case by case basis (for example, if your child is riding home with a friend's parent.)

GCA teachers and staff will not release elementary level students into the custody of an older sibling or a family friend who is not on your approved pick up list. A fee will be charged for every 5 minutes late after 3:15 pm.

### Release to Non-Parent

Parents are solely responsible for updating FACTS to authorize non-family individuals for student pickup. Persons picking up a student **must be** recorded in the family- approved pick up list in FACTS. In the event of an emergency, a parent **must** notify the office on the day of alternate pick up.

### Pick Up Authorization

You can authorize another person to pick up your child, via FACTS Family Portal. [Instructions here.](#) Or you can fill out a paper form and give it to the front desk. [Form here.](#)

### Sign Out

Students who need to leave campus before their scheduled departure must have their parent sign them out (or back in) at the front desk. High school students who drive their own vehicle must still get parental permission to leave when they are scheduled to be in class. Parents should notify the lobby desk of their high school student's departure (or return) via phone or email. Emails may be sent to [attendance@gcafrisco.org](mailto:attendance@gcafrisco.org).

### Early Pick Up

If you need to pick up a child from school early, visit The Nest to fill out the early pick up link, or email [attendacne@gcafrisco.org](mailto:attendacne@gcafrisco.org). If this is a planned absence, you must fill in the "planned absence" form ahead of time as well.

Your student will be sent to the front desk at the time for pick up and will wait inside by the main office door. You can pull up under the porte cochere or park and come to the door. Your child will be released to you by a GCA staff member. Please show your car line family name sign on your dash or bring it to the door.

The GCA lobby is not open to extra visitors while the students are exiting the building for the car line, due to security reasons.

### Pick Up From After-school Activities

- Students are released from class directly to their after-school activities.
- Please pick up students who do not attend after-school activities or do not have a last hour elective class in the car line as usual. **GCA does not provide after school supervision for siblings** of students in clubs and activities.
- You are welcome to come in and cheer on our GCA Eagles basketball teams through the lobby doors on game days.
- The lobby is cleaned after school for the next group and is not available as a waiting area for parents of students in after school activities.
- The gym is not available for an open gym time after school due to basketball scheduling and our liability and staffing.

## Student Drivers & Their Passengers

---

High school students with valid Texas state licenses may drive to and from GCA. The following guidelines will govern this policy:

1. Any student wishing to drive to and from school must submit a permission form (from the school office) signed by a parent.
2. Vehicles must be registered with the school office.
3. Student drivers must abide by all Texas state laws.
4. Students must park vehicles in designated area(s) upon arrival and follow the designated traffic flow pattern.
5. Vehicles may not be used as a place to spend free time during or after school, nor used for leaving school grounds to do errands, eat meals, etc. unless the student has been given a specific privilege.
6. Any student not attending an after school activity should be picked up in the car line or should exit the building with their driver by five minutes after their last class.
7. All vehicles must leave the school grounds immediately after the driver's final commitment of the school day (including study detention, activities, etc.). Students may not wait in the parking lot or in cars.
8. As a rule, student drivers will not be used as transportation for field trips or other school events. Any exceptions must be approved by the headmaster or high school principal.
9. Driving privileges may be denied if warranted by a student's disciplinary record; privileges may be suspended or revoked if, in the opinion of the administration, a student driver or student rider disregards these guidelines or uses a vehicle irresponsibly.

## Visitor Policy

---

By its very nature, Grace Covenant Academy must encourage a high level of parental participation in education. However, in order to enhance both student safety and operational efficiency, GCA has adopted the following guidelines

governing the presence of visitors on the campus during regular school operating hours (8:00-3:30 on school days).

For the purposes of this policy, "visitors" are defined as all individuals other than staff or students (on their respective class days) present in any part of the building other than the front foyer, or on the grounds other than the normal student loading area (e.g., the front walk).

- All visitors must check in at the front desk upon arriving at the campus. Visitors must identify themselves, explain their intended business, and indicate how long they expect to be on campus. A visitor badge will be issued at the point of signing in, and it must be returned when the visitor signs out to leave. Failure to fully follow this procedure may result in denial of access on future visits.
- All visitors must be willing to comply with all rules and regulations governing student and/or staff conduct, including the appropriate dress regulations (variances for legitimate and honorable reasons may be granted).
- Any student who is not a current or former student of GCA (who left or graduated in good standing) must be accompanied by an adult.

Anyone failing to abide by these provisions may be denied access to any and all restricted areas or be required to leave the campus. Persons having no legitimate connection with the school or reason for being present on the school campus will be expected to leave immediately.

## Communicating Concerns and Suggestions

---

Each person has a different perspective of "school," and so each one has a unique opportunity to make suggestions which could lead to improvement in something we do. We want the parents to have a legitimate sense of ownership when it comes to the school, and we desire to see every service, program and curriculum through as many eyes as possible.

Please help us by passing your thoughts along to us. The best way to do this often is in writing. This will help you to focus your thinking, and it better enables us to understand your thoughts and respond properly. Also, general thoughts are

helpful, but specific recommendations are most helpful.

Even in the best situations, people may have concerns, or problems may arise. We want to hear any concerns you have and we want to do what we can to solve problems. The best rule to follow is to communicate first with the person on the school staff that is closest to the area of problem or concern, and go to others with greater authority only if the situation cannot be resolved at that level.

## Opportunities for Involvement

---

Grace Covenant Academy represents the cooperative effort of parents, teachers, and other friends of the school who work together to provide a quality, well-rounded, Christ-centered education for its students. It is the practical involvement of us all which makes these years so special for the children and memorable for parents. One of our goals is to provide ways for parents to play a meaningful part in their children's school experience. Therefore, we ask all parents to consider ways in which they might be able to serve in the school.

Parents should contact the school office to find how they can make the most helpful volunteer contribution to the school, or sign up as a volunteer with the Helping Hands link on the The Nest.

## School Board Responsibility

---

The GCA School Board holds ultimate authority and responsibility in all matters pertaining to the school. This board is responsible for the raising, disbursement, and accounting of all monies; the appointment of staff and faculty; and the setting of policy. The board delegates responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the school to its deans and head, who act as instructional leaders to the faculty and provide counsel and leadership to the students, parents, faculty and staff in matters related to the training of children and young adults in the school program.

## Emergency Instructions

---

In the event of an emergency that affects the entire school, the following procedures will be followed:



Students should remain calm and follow instructions given to them by Grace Covenant Academy personnel at all times. Students should refrain from texting, tweeting, posting, emailing, etc. during the crisis. If necessary, and soon as is safely possible, students will be relocated to a safe and secure location.

Parents are requested not to directly contact the school office or teachers. GCA employees' primary job in a crisis is to take care of your child(ren), and this will be hindered if they attempt to answer phone calls and emails from hundreds of concerned parents. Grace Covenant Academy will keep parents informed with accurate information through FACTS's Parent Alert (via SMS) and appropriate social media as quickly and as often as is possible. Deference will be given to accuracy over expedience, but we recognize the angst parents feel and will communicate to you with as much haste as prudence will allow.

A time and location for parents to pick up their students will be communicated as soon as it is known. Parents should arrive in a timely fashion, and be prepared to show a photo ID in order for your child to be released to you.

## School Integrity & Reputation

---

A fundamental expectation of those who are a part of the Grace Covenant Academy family is that all students, parents, and staff members will represent the cross and biblical standards at all times, not just during school hours. As representatives of the cross and Grace Covenant Academy, it is critical that each person guard the reputation and public perception of the school and refrain from any activity that would cast a negative light on Grace Covenant Academy or cause someone to question the authenticity of the Savior we represent.

Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Any display of inappropriate content or any reference by name or disparaging remark about Grace Covenant Academy or anyone affiliated with Grace Covenant Academy on personal internet blog sites (public or private), Facebook, Twitter, or other social media
- Participation in any group or organization whose reputation is not above reproach (e.g., gangs, some fraternal organizations, etc.)
- Behaving immorally, such as public intoxication, lewd behavior, or physical altercations with others. Individuals are not authorized to use the school name, logo, insignias, or reference themselves as being affiliated with Grace Covenant Academy on blog sites, chat rooms, or any other public forum without prior permission from the Headmaster. Grace Covenant

Academy will guard the reputation of the school and individual persons affiliated with the school by implementing appropriate discipline for behavior in violation of this policy.

## Romantic Relationships

---

Because of our commitment to moral purity and healthy relationships, we ask that students refrain from romantic relationships, and discussion about them, at school. We expect each student to communicate honestly with their parents about their romantic feelings, and not to their peers while at school. Experience has shown that romantic relationships and the rumor of possible relationships are distractions in the learning environment.

We insist that students avoid suggestive speech and sexual contact of any kind. (Eph. 5:3-14)

## Food, Gum, Drinks and Substances

---

To maintain the good condition of our facility, we ask that students not eat or drink in the classrooms except as given permission by the classroom teacher. Gum is not allowed anywhere in the facility at any time during the school day. Students may use water bottles in class with teacher permission.

Possession or use of tobacco in any form, alcohol, drugs, vaping or related paraphernalia is forbidden.

## Medications

---

Students may not be given medication by the staff without verbal or written consent of the parent or guardian. Students may not possess medications or self-administer medications at school or during school supervision. These medications may be given to the front desk for safe-keeping and administration.

## Student Use of Electronics

---

Electronic devices for personal or entertainment purposes may not be used at any time during the school day. They will be confiscated and returned only to the

parents. If there is repeated use, parents will be contacted and the student will be moved into the disciplinary process.

### **Cell Phones**

Students may possess cell phones on campus but they must be turned off while in class and formal assemblies, unless cell phone use is permitted by a teacher for specific instructional purposes in class. If students need to contact their parents during the school day, they may bring their cell phone to the school office and make a call with permission from the office staff.

### **Gaming Devices & MP3 Players**

Portable electronic game devices (PSP, Nintendo DS, etc.) and MP3 devices (including the MP3 functions of smartphones, iPods, etc.) are not allowed to be used on campus. Headphones may not be worn while in class or around the school.

## **Social Media Policy**

---

All members of the GCA community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all social media interactions. Staff, students, and parents should act so that the reputation of Jesus Christ first or the school second is not dishonored and in a way that does not harm individual members of the school nor its community.

### **Student Guidelines:**

Students are not allowed to access social networking sites during the at-school day.

Social media should be utilized in a respectful and responsible manner, honoring the personhood, rights, and confidentiality of others.

Students may not use offensive or threatening language, impersonate or falsely represent, bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten, make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community, nor harm the reputation of GCA or those within its community.

Any accounts for student-led activities must be supervised by an GCA employee.

Students may not join a GCA staff member's networking or social media sites.

### **Parent Guidelines**

Parents should monitor their children's online activity and set appropriate limits.

Parents should not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents. Do not spread false or unsubstantiated rumors, or false information about the GCA community and its members.

Experts recommend that parents not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.

All social media accounts related to GCA (school groups, booster clubs, athletic programs, etc.) must first receive approval from the GCA Lead Team.

Parents assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.

Before uploading photos, audio or video, parents need to seek appropriate permission from any individuals (staff, parents, or students) involved.

Parents using classroom blogs and parental “chats” should act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

## **Staff Guidelines**

### **General**

Staff members who identify themselves online as affiliated with GCA need to be aware that they are by definition representing the school. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school’s values and mission.

Staff must not discuss students or colleagues, or publicly criticize school policies or personnel on social networking sites. Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumors or false information about the GCA community or its members.

When contributing online, staff should not post confidential student information.

### **With students**

Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.

Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.

Private social sites – eg Snapchat – may never be used to communicate with students.

Texting between staff and students is not allowed. If a student should contact a

staff member, they are to communicate to the student that you are unable to communicate in this way, suggest email, and then contact the parents.

Staff should not accept students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.

## Internet Usage Policy

---

This policy requires that computers, network and internet resources of Grace Covenant Academy be used in a manner that conforms to the school's educational mission and values. While a primary purpose is to serve the needs of the students and staff, we must first glorify Christ in all we do. This includes the use of the technology God has blessed us with. It is therefore a requirement that any student using the computer equipment and internet access at Grace Covenant Academy agree to this acceptable use policy.

### Acceptable Uses

- Students may only use the computers or internet if a teacher is present.
- Parents and school personnel may revoke approval at any time.
- Students may save files on their home drive or to a USB flash memory stick.

### Unacceptable Uses

1. The computers may not be used to download, copy, or store any software, shareware, or freeware without prior permission.
2. Students may not store files on the hard drive of the computer.
3. The computers may not be used for receiving or sending personal e-mail, but may, with permission, open it momentarily to print a copy of a homework or school-related document.
4. Students may not access chat rooms, instant messaging, or blog sites.
5. Students may not access web sites that contain inappropriate, pornographic, or violent material. If a user accidentally accesses this type of information, he or she should immediately turn off the monitor and notify a teacher.
6. The internet and the school computers may not be used for entertainment purposes. Students may not use the computer lab to play computer or internet games or play music. Students also may not shop on the internet.
7. The internet may not be used for commercial purposes. Users may not

- buy or sell products or services through the system.
8. Use of the internet for advertising or political lobbying is prohibited.
  9. The internet may not be used for any activity, or to transmit any material that violates United States or local laws. This includes, but is not limited to, illegal activities such as threatening the safety of another person or violating copyright laws.
  10. Students may not use vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language. Students may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person.
  11. "Hacking" or otherwise trying to gain access to another person's or organization's computer system is prohibited.

## Pranks and Practical Jokes

---

Appropriate humor is an essential part of a healthy school. However, inappropriate humor can easily breed disrespect, strain relationships, and hinder true fellowship. As Solomon said, "Reckless words pierce like a sword." (Pr. 12:18) So do reckless pranks. In order to prevent harmful attempts at humor, we ask that students stay within these four biblical boundaries:

- **Respect:** Do you respect the person you are targeting? Will this prank inconvenience or embarrass him? (1 Pet. 2:17)
- **Honor:** Will this prank build others up or tear them down? Is it a form of retaliation? How would others interpret your intentions? (Rom. 12:10)
- **Love:** Will this prank strengthen your friendship with the other person? Are you doing it to bless him/her or to please yourself? (Rom. 12:10)
- **Wisdom:** Will this prank cause any damage? Could it inconvenience people other than those you have targeted? Have you gotten approval from someone in authority? (Lk. 2:52)

## Photo and Statement Release

---

All parents, students, staff, and others who may be included as set forth below in various media or written statements (Grantors) hereby irrevocably grant and

convey to Grace Covenant Academy all right, title and interest in and to record their name, image, voice, statements and/or writings including any and all photographic images and video or audio recordings made by Grace Covenant Academy.

Grantors further irrevocably grant to Grace Covenant Academy, its advertisers, customers, agents, successors and assigns, unrestricted rights to use the above mentioned sound, still, or moving images in any medium, including posting on the Internet, for educational, promotional, advertising, or other purposes without limitation.

Grantors further agree that all intellectual property rights to the sound, still, or moving images belong to Grace Covenant Academy Prep.

Grantors voluntarily waive the right to inspect or approve such images and waive any right to any royalties, proceeds or other benefits derived from such photographs or recordings.

As an enrolled student or employee, you understand that this release constitutes a waiver of your privacy rights, if any, under The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

This release is effective on the date of acceptance at Grace Covenant Academy and will remain in effect indefinitely.

**If you are not in agreement and do not want to waive your right with the photo and statement release policy, please send a letter to Grace Covenant Academy stating that you do not waive your right.**

## Electronic Signatures

---

An electronic signature shall have the same force and effect as a handwritten signature. Any document that is signed by an electronic signature shall have the same legal and administrative force as a document signed by hand and created or maintained in other formats or media.

# Academic Dishonesty

One of the major goals of GCA is to aid parents as they accept their God-given calling to train up their students to know Him and to make Him known in this world. We also strive to provide our students with a high quality academic education, which we understand in terms of real spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth. Among other things, this demands that we require our students and their parents to adhere to high standards of personal integrity, and provide corrective disciplinary action when they fail to do so.

Academic dishonesty in any form is both a serious breach of personal integrity and a serious hindrance to real student learning. Because of this, GCA has developed this policy, which is intended to curb and, when necessary, correct academic dishonesty, in order to better help the institution minister to the needs of its students.

## Definitions

---

Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as any attempt on the part of a student or parent, whether realized or not, to falsely represent the student's level of achievement or mastery in a given course or with regard to any element of that course. This includes but is not limited to:

- Claiming or indicating in any form or fashion that the student has fulfilled any assignment or other academic responsibility, such as reading assigned texts or engaging in assigned study, when in fact he has not done so.
- Using any assistance, including but not limited to copying the work of other students, in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations without the direct and explicit authorization of the course instructor,
- Using any resources, including but not limited to solution manuals and teacher edition textbooks, other than those authorized by the course instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or completing other course assignments,
- Obtaining quizzes, tests, examinations, or other academic materials or evaluation instruments created by or belonging to an instructor, other staff member, or GCA itself, including but certainly not limited to such materials



properly used and in the possession of students currently or previously enrolled in the course, without the explicit authorization of the course instructor,

- Engaging in plagiarism, which includes but is not limited to "the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment" and "the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency"<sup>1</sup> which customarily sells or offers free of charge term papers or other academic materials,
- Altering a graded paper or project for disputing the accuracy of the grade,
- Collaborating without explicit authorization with another student or students during any quiz, test, or examination or in the fulfillment of any other academic assignment or responsibility.

## Specifics

---

The following guidelines define GCA's standard application of the general definition given above to (a) quizzes, tests, and other examinations, (b) homework, and (c) major papers and projects. Individual course instructors may grant exceptions to these guidelines, but must do so explicitly, as indicated by the relevant policy statements given below. Any academic assignments, which, by their nature, are not addressed by these guidelines, will be governed by whatever guidelines are provided by the course instructor with regard to such an assignment.

### **Quizzes, Tests, and Examinations**

All quizzes, tests, and other examinations, whether conducted in the classroom or in some other location, must be taken at a single sitting and without outside assistance of any sort, including but not limited to books, notes, other individuals, reference works, and audio or visual media. Any exception to these guidelines must be given in writing by the instructor on assignment sheets, the evaluation instrument itself, or other written instructions disseminated to all of the students in the class.

### **Homework**

Homework should be done by the student alone and without assistance of any sort, including but not limited to information provided in teacher edition textbooks,

unless such assistance is authorized, either orally or in writing by the instructor in the course, or by the catalog or an approved curriculum guide's description of parent role for the course. The course instructor may grant such authorization, either in conjunction with the giving of the assignment or in response to student requests, at any time and for any duration to all of the students in the class or to selected students only, provided that the instructor feels it is in the best educational interests of the student(s) receiving such authorization.

### **Major Papers and Projects**

Major papers and projects should be completed only by the student or by the members of a student group constituted by the instructor for the purpose of completing the paper or project in question without other assistance of any sort, except as explicitly authorized by the instructor. This authorization may be articulated either orally or in writing when granted in the classroom directly under the supervision of the instructor, but must be given in writing on assignment sheets or other written instructions disseminated to all of the students in the class when granted for work to be completed outside of the classroom setting.

### **Discovery and Determination of Academic Dishonesty**

---

Determination of academic dishonesty may be made by the instructor of the course in which it was deemed to have been committed. Other school officials, including proctors or other instructor substitutes, may alert the instructor to the possibility of academic dishonesty should they acquire or become aware of credible evidence, including but not limited to eye-witness observations, which indicate that cheating, plagiarism, or other dishonest acts have taken place. Once the instructor has determined that academic dishonesty has indeed taken place, he shall inform the affected student(s) of his finding and, in conjunction with the relevant school officials, shall impose the proper penalties as described below.

### **Penalties**

---

The primary intentions of the imposition of penalties against students found guilty of academic dishonesty are to (a) act as a deterrent against such conduct, (b) to enhance the integrity of grades awarded by GCA, and (c) to place pressure on an erring student in the hope of motivating him to abandon this destructive behavior. Discretion in the administration of penalties may be exercised by the instructor in consultation with school officials in the event that a student

voluntarily acknowledges academic dishonesty rather than being discovered. Otherwise, the penalties described below are to be dispensed automatically, once dishonesty is confirmed. The penalties are assessed according to the number of occurrences the student has been discovered to be engaged in academic dishonesty over the course of a full academic year (at least two full semesters).

### **First Offense**

A first offense will result in (1) a written warning from the teacher to both the student and his parent(s), (2) a grade of zero (0) for the assignment affected by the academic dishonesty, and (3) a written report sent to the campus administration.

### **Second Offense**

A second offense will result in (1) a written warning from the principal to both the student and his parent(s), (2) a grade of zero (0) for the assignment affected by the academic dishonesty, (3) a conference between the principal and the parent(s) of the student, and (4) a writing assignment for the student, in which he investigates and reports on biblical instruction regarding honesty and integrity.

### **Third Offense**

A third offense will result in (1) a one day suspension from school, in accordance with the guidelines generally applicable to such a suspension, (2) a grade of zero (0) for the assignment affected by the academic dishonesty, (3) placement of the student on scholastic probation, which shall remain in effect until two (2) full regular semesters have passed with no further confirmed incidence of cheating, and (4) removal of all participation privileges for extra-curricular activities, including those unaffected by GCA's policies on scholastic probation.

### **Fourth Offense**

A fourth offense will result in expulsion from GCA.

*Note: GCA gratefully acknowledges its indebtedness to Denton Calvary Academy and the University of North Texas for several of the fundamental ideas from which it developed its own policy on academic dishonesty. The UNT Student Handbook was especially helpful in defining the nature of academic dishonesty and in providing some guidance in developing the policy's approach to enforcement. UNT Student Handbook, 1997/98, p. 105.*

## Appeals Process

---

Should a student desire to appeal the determination of the course instructor, he must request in writing a hearing with the dean, who will arrange for a conference with the student, one or both parents (or guardians), and the instructor of the course. During this conference, all relevant evidence will be presented and examined. Following the conclusion of the conference, the principal -- or another administrator, should the principal be an original party to the case -- will render a determination in the matter based on his assessment of the weight and credibility of whatever evidence is presented for review.

Should the student desire to appeal the determination of the dean or head of school, he must request in writing a hearing before the Lead Team, which shall be chaired by a member other than the principal for the purposes of the hearing. During this hearing, only that evidence that was presented and examined during the previous conference with the principal shall be reviewed; should new evidence having a serious bearing on the matter surface during the hearing, the matter shall be referred back to the principal for a new hearing to be conducted according to the procedures described above. The Lead Team shall be responsible for determining the admissibility of any new evidence.

Following the conclusion of a hearing before the Lead Team, that committee, excluding the principal and any other member who has been a part of any earlier conferences or discussions regarding the matter, or any member who feels he may have a conflict of interest in the matter, will render a determination in the matter based on its assessment of the weight and credibility of whatever evidence is admitted for consideration. In all cases, the determination of the Lead Team will be final. If that committee finds the student guilty of academic dishonesty, it shall impose the proper penalties as described below.

## Discipline Policy

Biblical education in Grace Covenant Academy takes place in the larger context of Christian parents training their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Eph. 6:4) Parents have the responsibility to effectively secure in their children the proper attitude toward authority and the willingness to adhere to the policies, standards, and practices of Grace Covenant Academy. (1 Tim. 3:4)

When parents are faithful and effective in their role, the school is then able to assist them in the character training and spiritual formation of their children.

There are two primary goals of GCA's discipline policy. The first is to help our students grow in godly character. Our disciplinary actions provide parents the opportunity to lead their children through biblical self-examination and then to apprehend the grace of God to change. (Heb. 4:16) Some of the most fruitful times of training, formation, and change take place as parents and students embrace these unique and important opportunities. The more transparent and proactive parents are about informing the school administration of disciplinary situations, the easier it is for the school and parents to agree on a mutually acceptable disciplinary consequence.

The secondary goal is to provide and protect an environment in which our students can learn and grow. Our disciplinary actions enable us to identify students who persistently demonstrate improper attitudes toward authority or who resist the policies and standards of the school. These students may forfeit the privilege of attending Grace Covenant Academy.

## Guidelines

---

We expect all students to embrace with due seriousness their responsibility to submit to the authority of God's Word and the school's policies, standards, and faculty. Upper School school students (Grades 6-12) are expected to conduct themselves according to the Code of Honor, which they sign each year. Students and their parents must express a desire to pursue learning, to be enrolled at the school, and to commit to the mission and goals of the school.

## Standardized School Classroom Rules

---

The classroom teacher is the primary communicator of school standards and expectations. In a vast majority of cases, the teacher will be able to adjust the behavior of students with his or her classroom rules. In order to communicate a clear and consistent set of standards to our students, the following rules will be adopted by all classroom teachers:

1. Love God by respecting your teacher
2. Love your neighbor by respecting your classmates
3. Follow directions the first time

Add the following for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades:

4. Be prepared for class

### Classroom Consequences

The goal of classroom consequences is to adjust the behavior of the student and protect the learning environment of the classroom. Consequences are progressive and are intended to train the student in self-control, while preserving his or her dignity.

#### K-2<sup>nd</sup>

**First Step:** Warning (ex. “go from green to yellow”)

**Second Step:** Warning – talk to parent (“go from yellow to orange”)

**Third Step:** Meet with principal (“go from orange to red”)

#### 3-4<sup>th</sup>

**First Step:** Warning (ex. “remove a dot”)

**Second Step:** Warning (“remove a second dot”)

**Third Step:** Warning + email sent home to parents

**Fourth Step:** Remove from room – go to principal

#### 5-6<sup>th</sup>

**First Step:** Warning

**Second Step:** Warning + email sent home to parents

**Third Step:** Remove from room – go to principal.

#### 7-12<sup>th</sup>

**First Step:** Minor consequence– sign the book with an assigned paper likely or similar minor consequence

**Second Step:** Possible consequence or similar: check name in book, assignment doubled + email to mom

**Third Step:** Remove from room – go to principal.

## Disciplinary Process

---

If a student should fail to submit to the rules or standards of the school, the faculty and administration will engage the student in the disciplinary processes outlined below. Except in minor offenses, the school will communicate with the student’s parents during the disciplinary process.

**Step One:** Most violations are dealt with in the classroom by the classroom teacher. If a student is given a detention, the teacher will record it in Facts so that it can be monitored by the school administration.

**Step Two:** If a student commits a more flagrant offense (levels 2-5 below) or is not responding to the disciplinary action of the classroom teacher or coach, that faculty member will contact the administration so that an incident report can be created and this offense added to FACTS.

**Step Three:** An administrator will gather background information on the situation from the faculty member and other eyewitnesses in order to ascertain the validity of the offense and its context.

**Step Four:** The administrator will meet with the student to hear his or her perspective. At this point, the administrator may need to gather more information to gain clarity of the situation. The administrator will work to bring the student to repentance, if possible.

The parents will be contacted, so that they may understand the nature of the offense, the consequences, and be given an opportunity to ask questions and give their thoughts. It is critical that the parents and the school work together at this point to bring the student to repentance, and a change in behavior.

**Step Five:** In the event of a suspension or probation, the parents will be asked to come to the school to discuss the offense, and the specific consequences required by the school. The repentance of the student and security of the school community are always in view. The parents and administration will work together to find ways of assisting the student.

**Step Six:** In the event of an expulsion, dismissal, or disenrollment, the parents and the student will be asked to have a conference with the administration. These events are not easy for any of the parties, but are used by the Lord to bring an awareness of the need of the student to respond to the Lord – and to protect the other students in the community.

## Level 1 Violations: Classroom and School “Disturbances”

---

These types of minor behaviors may require a disciplinary response:

- Violations of classroom rules
- Violation of playground or drop off area rules
- Tardies
- Failure to turn in assignments
- Chewing gum
- Classroom disruption
- Dress code infractions
- Cell phone use during restricted hours
- Minor disobedience.

Recommended likely or possible consequences for Level 1 violations:

- Warning
- Conversation with student in the hall
- Note to parent
- Writing assignment
- Detention
- Study detention
- Confiscation of “contraband”
- Wait at front desk until parent brings appropriate clothing
- Conversation with parent
- Counseling

## Level 2 Violations: “Hazards”

---

These violations include one-time actions that are more serious in nature and harm the learning environment of the school AND repetitive Level 1 violations.

- Profanity
- Failure to obey/ cooperate
- Intimidation/minor bullying
- Racial, sexual or inappropriate comments/writing/gestures
- Public display of affection
- Walking out of class
- Using property without permission
- Leaving campus without permission
- Other actions deemed as hazardous or abusive by the school administration
- Repetitive level 1 violations



Recommended likely or possible consequences for Level 2 violations:

- Parent conference
- Detention
- Removal from class
- Counseling
- Growth plan

### Level 3 Violations: Moral Offense (1st Degree)

---

Violations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level include one-time actions of a moral character that require immediate and more severe action AND ongoing or habitual violations of the previous levels.

- Explicit refusal to obey
- Stealing
- Cheating/ Plagiarism
- Forgery
- Verbal abuse of a staff member
- Cutting class
- Flagrant bullying
- Hitting
- Obscene/lewd behavior
- Sexual comments
- Use of tobacco or vaping
- Fighting
- Lying
- Minor vandalism
- Slander/libel
- Possession of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or vaping paraphernalia
- Other significant moral offenses
- Habitual/ ongoing violations of the previous levels
- Inappropriate violent comments
- Failure to follow through with actions from previous levels

Recommended likely or possible consequences for Level 3 Violations:

- Suspension
- Zero on all assignments on the day of suspension
- Behavioral Contract/ Growth Plan
- Parent conference
- In-house suspension
- Counseling

## Level 4 Violations: Moral Offense (2nd Degree)

---

Violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> level includes one-time actions of a moral character that require immediate and more severe action AND ongoing or habitual violations of the previous levels.

- Possession or sale of pornographic materials or images;
- Sexual immorality (repentant)
- Use/ sale of alcohol
- Other flagrant moral offenses as deemed by the school administration
- Habitual/ ongoing violations of the previous levels
- Failure to follow through with consequences from previous levels

Recommended likely or possible consequences for Level 4 Violations:

- Disciplinary Probation
- Suspension
- Behavioral Contract/ Growth Plan
- Parent conference
- Removal from extracurricular activities
- Counseling

## Level 5 Violations: Moral Offense (3rd Degree)

---

Some violations require immediate removal of the student in order to protect the community and/ or school environment. Violation of the 5<sup>th</sup> level includes one-time actions of a moral character that require immediate and more severe action AND ongoing or habitual violations of the previous levels.

- Possession of weapons
- Sexual immorality (unrepentant)
- Criminal behavior
- Use/sale of drugs or narcotics
- Flagrant vandalism
- Other flagrant moral offenses as deemed by the school administration
- Habitual/ ongoing violations of the previous levels
- Failure to follow through with consequences from previous levels

Recommended consequences for a Level 5 violation:

- Dismissal/ expulsion from the school
- Waiting period of at least 1-2 semesters before being able to re-apply at the school

## Character Probation

---

GCA students commit to embrace learning and encourage others to do so. If a student's behavior indicates that he or she is damaging the learning environment by their comments or actions, they will be warned by the school administration. If the student does not turn from this behavior, they may be required to stay at home until he or she indicates a desire to pursue learning at the school and each course.

## Character Disenrollment

---

GCA students in the upper school (6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade) must express an ongoing desire to be at the school, and embrace the mission of the school. If a student indicates that they no longer want to attend GCA, the school administration will contact the student to discuss the matter. If the student still does not express a desire to stay and embrace the mission of the school, the parents will be contacted for a conference. If the student does not appear to genuinely desire to remain and pursue the goals and mission of the school, the student will be disenrolled.

## Definitions of Disciplinary Actions

---

### **Assignments**

Students may be given assignments meant to reinforce their character development.

### **Detention**

Detentions may be issued by either faculty or administration in response to any misconduct displayed by students.

Students who arrive late for detention, or who miss detention without express permission, will receive an additional detention. Students receiving multiple detentions will be required to meet with the principal.

### **Study Detention**

In order to reinforce the importance of homework, upper school students may be required to serve a study detention for an assignment they fail to complete on time.

### **Suspension**

A suspension is defined as an involuntary, short-term separation from Grace Covenant Academy classes and activities for disciplinary purposes. The duration of the suspension will be at the discretion of the school administration, depending on the offense.

During the period of the suspension the student is not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities. The time served is considered an unexcused absence from the classroom. Students can expect to receive a reduced class participation grade for classes missed. All class work, quizzes, tests and reports must be made up at the discretion of the teacher.

### **Disciplinary Probation**

Students with serious or recurring patterns of unacceptable conduct may be placed on disciplinary probation. Disciplinary probation is defined as a period of grace during which a student must demonstrate a recognizable change in sinful attitudes, words or behavior that have been displayed in the students reoccurring patterns of misconduct.

Disciplinary probation is meant to be a proactive service to the student but it is also a clear indication that the student's current enrollment status is in question. Therefore, Disciplinary Probation serves as a final warning that the student is in danger of being dismissed from the school unless there is improvement. A behavioral contract outlining specific behavior and standards will be required.

### **Behavioral Contract/Growth Plan**

A Behavioral Contract is a written contract between the student and the school outlining specific behavior and standards of conduct that the administration indicates must be met by the student in order for the student to remain in school and not be dismissed. This contract would be reviewed periodically throughout that disciplinary or probationary period in order to monitor the student's progress. Failure to meet the criteria within this contract will result in dismissal from the school.

### **Disenrollment/ Withdrawal**

The school may request that parents withdraw a child from GCA due to significant instances or patterns of misconduct. Such difficult decisions involve consultation with parents and the student to prayerfully determine the best course of action. A student who is withdrawn during the school year will be ineligible for enrollment the following school year. The long-term goal is restoration with repentance.

### **Dismissal/ Expulsion**

This is the most severe consequence the school can impose on a student. Dismissal is defined as the termination of a student's enrollment in Grace Covenant Academy initiated by the school in response to extreme instances or patterns of misconduct. A student who is dismissed during the school year will be ineligible for enrollment the following school year. This disciplinary consequence becomes part of the student's permanent school record.

If parents believe the school administration has misjudged the situation, they may submit a written appeal to the Head of School. The School Board will review this appeal with all due consideration.

When students are required to miss school due to a suspension, withdrawal, or dismissal, the administration has the right, if deemed necessary, to inform the faculty and students of the disciplinary proceedings in order to maintain the unity of the school and to prevent misunderstanding.

A student who has been withdrawn or dismissed from Grace Covenant Academy is eligible to re-apply for admission after one full year has passed. The family should submit an application and then schedule a joint interview with the principal and the family's pastor. The principal and pastor will make a recommendation to the School Board, which has responsibility for making the final admissions decision.

---

*The Board of Directors and/or the President & Headmaster reserve the right to change policies at any time. Policies are the means by which we maintain standards and integrity. Our prayer is that they will provide a framework for seeing the Grace Covenant Academy vision come to fruition.*