

# Parent-Student Handbook

## 2023-2024



325 N. M140 Hwy.  
Watervliet, MI 49098  
269-463-5545

[www.gcspatriots.org](http://www.gcspatriots.org)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We are excited about a new year of opportunities. Whether you are new to our school or a returning student, we pray that this will be a year that you grow spiritually, mentally, and physically, so that you are prepared to meet the challenges and blessings that God will bring throughout your life.

Our school welcomes any families from our community who are willing to support the policies of Grace Christian School.

This handbook seeks to outline the major policies and practices that govern student life at GCS. **We expect students and families to support and conform to the guidelines listed. Consent is implied by enrollment.** In other words, if you are a part of the GCS family, you will be held to the policies and practices spelled out in this manual. Specifically, any student or family whose behavior is inconsistent with our standards may be asked to terminate their enrollment at GCS.

The parents of our students are a vital part of the school. No school can expect to be successful without parent support and encouragement. Specifically, parents can help by supporting the teachers and staff members in their efforts. Please set an example of respect for the teachers, staff, coaches, other students, and the school as a whole. In your interactions in the building, your regular conversations at home, on social media, and during games or other GCS activities, we ask that you be positive and encouraging. By avoiding negative speech and behaviors, we can teach our children valuable lessons about how to deal with stressful situations in a God-honoring way.

In keeping with Matthew 18, we expect students, parents and teachers to be direct in dealing with problems, rather than talking about problems to uninvolved persons. If a problem concerning your child's classroom exists, **please contact the teacher as soon as possible**. If the problem persists, you should contact the principal. If a matter outside the classroom exists (for example, a question about school policy) please contact the principal. If you need assistance in an area that is not listed, call the school office and ask to be directed to the appropriate person. We pray that parents and students can participate with enthusiasm in school life and work to improve the experience of all persons at GCS.

# **GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

## **Mission Statement**

Inspiring students  
to impact the world  
for Jesus Christ  
through an excellent  
educational experience  
from a Biblical worldview.

## **School Song**

Onward Patriots!  
Onward Patriots!  
On to victory!  
We will always stand beside  
And show our loyalty.  
Gold and blue, our colors true  
We lift our banner high.  
Fight! Fight!  
For GCS and Patriot Pride!

**Our school mascot is the Patriot**



## **Pledges**

### **To the American Flag**

I pledge allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America;  
and to the republic for which it stands,  
one nation under God, indivisible  
with liberty and justice for all.

### **To the Christian Flag**

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag  
And to the Savior  
For whose kingdom it stands  
One Savior, crucified, risen,  
and coming again  
with life and liberty to all who believe.

### **To the Bible**

I pledge allegiance to the Bible  
God's Holy Word  
I will make it a lamp unto my feet  
And a light unto my path  
I will hide its words in my heart  
That I might not sin against God

**The GCS Logos are as follows**



Academic



Athletics

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Campus Hours**

School hours are 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Full-Time Status.** A full-time student is defined as a student who is on campus for the entirety of their core class schedule, chapel services and any additional graduation requirements for their appropriate grade level. Students are encouraged to explore other learning opportunities during their elective periods. GCS offers a variety of choices which include activities in athletics, fine arts, languages, and individualized courses through independent study.

Grace Christian does not currently have part time or homeschool students. If you are interested in these options, please contact the principal to discuss the unique differences of these offerings.

**Contact with the School.** At GCS we believe it is very important that parents/guardians and teachers support one another in the process of Christian education. Although parents are encouraged to contact the teacher directly at any time with class questions or concerns, we have established regular methods to communicate with you at home. **Please remember that these are only effective means of communication if you make use of them!**

- ★ **Back to School Night.** This is an important evening of information and paperwork before the school year begins. Please join us Thursday, August 24th, at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ **The Patriot Preview.** This publication will be an electronic, weekly, brief overview of what is happening during the **current week** at GCS. It is a shorter publication than our monthly Communiqué.
- ★ **The Communiqué.** This publication is a longer, detailed edition that contains a great deal of school information, featuring the events of the month and current marking period. We also highlight business boosters and advertise local church events. The Communiqué will be sent out by the first Friday of each month. If you have information to be published in the Communiqué, please send it electronically to [cromeo@gcspatriots.com](mailto:cromeo@gcspatriots.com) by the 10th of each month before publication.
- ★ **GCSPatriots.org.** The school's website will be updated often and include important information.

- ★ **Email Blasts.** On occasion, there will be a need to let all parents/guardians know information quickly. Please be on the lookout for emails from our GCS office.
- ★ **Text Blasts.** We use the Gradelink texting service to deliver important and immediate information via the phone. You will hear from us in this manner whenever there is time sensitive information to relay, and whenever there is a snow day. **Make sure that your preferred email address is current.**
- ★ **Progress Reports.** Progress reports allow you to see your student's grades midway through a marking period. They are also used in the secondary to determine extracurricular eligibility.
- ★ **Report Cards.** Elementary report cards are sent home in Friday folders at the end of the marking period. Secondary report cards are sent home **electronically**. If you want a hard copy of your secondary student's report card you will need to notify the office. You are able to print your own as well.
- ★ **Parent/Teacher Conferences.** Conferences will be held at the beginning of the 2nd marking period. You are welcome to schedule additional meetings with specific teachers at any time.
- ★ **Classroom Communication.** Teachers will contact parents via our Gradelink system using the email address on file. Please make sure that your information remains up to date throughout the school year. Likewise, parents are asked to email teachers rather than text their personal phones. Teachers are not permitted to communicate with parents via text messages unless required by extenuating circumstances (such as a field trip, emergency, etc.).
- ★ **Gradelink.** Gradelink is our online grading system. It provides immediate access to a student's grades. Your login information is provided on Back-to-School Night. Please contact the main office if you misplace your username or password. We encourage you to set up customizable email alerts in Gradelink for your child(ren). **Make sure that your preferred email address is current.**

**Parent Involvement.** Parent involvement is critical to Grace Christian School's overall effectiveness. Parents and families can get involved in the following ways:

★ **Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF)**

The PTF supports and encourages the faculty and staff of GCS in many different ways. Examples of past efforts include planning fellowship events, writing words of encouragement or emailing devotionals, planning Teacher Appreciation Week activities and Luncheon; spirit wear sales and fundraising. If interested in this most important ministry, please contact the principal.

### ★ Volunteering

When volunteering at our school please understand that there are health and safety protocols we must follow. Volunteers must sign in and out in our main office, wear a name badge at all times, and follow instructions given by staff members while present. Background checks must be completed for anyone volunteering at GCS.

### ★ Fundraising

Tuition does not cover the entire cost of educating a child. Tuition covers approximately 70% of the cost of a child's education. The school depends upon the additional 30% from gifts and fundraisers to supplement tuition. Each family is requested to assist the school in various school wide fundraisers throughout the year. When we all pull together, the work is much easier.

There are many opportunities throughout the school year to participate in a fundraiser that fits into your schedule. We have multiple school-wide fundraisers and we ask all parents and staff to participate in at least one. There are many small fundraisers that you can participate in as well. Any participation in these events/sales is appreciated.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Student Placement.** The school has full discretion for the grade placement of each student. Students in grades K through 12 will be given an entrance test to determine grade placement and determine if they fit the educational capabilities of the school. The school will review students' transcripts, including their most recent report card, standardized test scores, and any disciplinary or special needs information from the last school attended or the school where the student is presently enrolled prior to enrollment. Grace Christian School does not allow students to skip a grade at the elementary or junior high level.

**Visitors.** All visitors, including parents, board members, volunteers, and alumni, must sign in at the main office immediately upon arrival to receive a visitor's badge. All individuals must be in the building for specific business and are not permitted to wander the campus. Individuals visiting during lunchtime must sign out promptly at the commencement of classes. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to class for social visits. All student visitors in class should be those who have an enrollment interest in GCS.



Please report pre-planned school visitors prior to the visit. Student visitors will be asked to meet the school dress code. Students and staff are encouraged to be friendly and courteous to all visitors. Expelled or suspended students will not be permitted on the school grounds without permission from the principal.

**Student Drop-off & Pick-up.** Parents are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the school, as the school does not operate buses. When dropping off/picking up students please follow the clockwise direction of pick up as directed by signage. Parents accompanying their students into the building must park in designated spaces in the main parking lot. Between 7:30 - 8:00 AM and 3:00 - 3:30 PM the parking spaces in the semi circle near the building will be off-limits due to heavy traffic volume during these times. In the afternoon, all elementary school students will enter and be dismissed through the south east doors. Secondary students will enter and be dismissed through the main door.

Upon arrival in the morning, elementary students will report to the gym, and secondary students will report to the cafeteria. Students and parents are not to go to the classrooms before 8:00. There will be a designated area for each grade in the gym where students may place their backpacks, lunchboxes, etc. until time to go to the classroom.

Students will be monitored until 7:50, when we will come together as a student body to say pledges, hear announcements, and start our day with prayer. Students will then be dismissed with their teachers to make their way to their classrooms.

Please do not plan to drop off your student(s) prior to 7:30 a.m. as there will be no supervision for them before this time.

**Before and After School Care.** The following options are available to assist parents who need hours beyond the scheduled school day.

- ★ **Before School.** Students are asked to come no earlier than 7:30 a.m. as there will be no one to monitor them until that time. If it is necessary for you to drop off earlier, we have limited space in our preschool room, where our Before Care staff is available starting at 7:00 a.m. There is an additional charge of \$6 per day for this service and space is filled on a first come, first served basis. Parents dropping students off for Before Care will need to drive around to the preschool building to park, walk them into the building, and sign them in.

★ **After School.** Unless reporting to a school activity immediately, all students are expected to vacate the campus before 3:15 p.m. After this time, students must go to our Aftercare Program and parents will be billed at the rate of \$6/hr per student. All students must be at their school activity or in an approved location with a GCS staff member or their parent(s). Students may not remain elsewhere on campus (gym, parking lot, playground, etc.) unsupervised after school.

Once the 3:15 bell has rung, parents must enter the preschool building to sign their child(ren) out of the aftercare room. Students are not permitted to pick up younger siblings.

**Absences/Attendance.** At GCS we believe that establishing a solid work ethic is important in the development of Godly character. Regular and punctual attendance is necessary for all students to excel to their maximum potential.

High school students who are absent from a class in excess of 10 days per semester for any reason (primarily unexcused absences) are in jeopardy of losing credit for that class. **Please do not allow your student to cut classes to avoid taking a test or to work on other assignments.** If a student arrives at school after a test has been given, the student will be expected to make up that test later in the same school day.

In order to participate in an extracurricular athletic event or contest, **a student-athlete must be at and remain at school by 11:00 a.m.** on the date of the event unless previous arrangements have been made with the school's Athletic Director. If a student is **too sick** to be in class, he/she should not be participating in these activities. Exceptions are on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the principal and athletic director.

GCS has a **closed campus**. Once students come to school they are **not permitted** to leave the school grounds during school hours unless they are with their parent(s). Exceptions to this would be any dual enrollment classes being taken (prior approval needed) or doctor's appointments.

Unless medical documentation of an extended illness is provided to the school, parents should call daily by 9:00 a.m. with an update on the child's status. If the student is absent for more than three days, a doctor's note must be submitted upon the student's return. The current number of student absences and tardies may be accessed via Gradelink at any time (a count is also visible on report cards).

**Excused Absences.** Absences are considered excused if it involves:

- ★ Student's illness or injury (with appropriate information for the school to report to the health department).
- ★ Death in the family
- ★ Professional appointments (i.e. doctor, dentist, etc.) which are supported by a doctor's note. Please attempt to schedule these after school hours when possible.
- ★ Extenuating circumstances as approved by the principal.

**Unexcused Absences.** Absences are considered unexcused when an explanation exists but cannot be approved. Please remember that parental consent does not automatically render the absence as excused. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- ★ Skipping class or chapel
- ★ Transportation issues
- ★ Oversleeping, alarm clock issues, etc.
- ★ Staying home to catch up on homework or taking a "rest" day
- ★ Unauthorized skip days (including to avoid taking a test or to work on other schoolwork or to catch up on sleep)
- ★ Choosing to stay home because of weather when school is still in session

**Student Illness.** Your child must be fever and symptom free without the use of medications for 24 hours before they return to school. Children should not return to school until 24 hours have passed after vomiting or having diarrhea. Please note that this time does not begin when your child is picked up, but rather when the fever breaks and symptoms subside.

**Preplanned Absences.** Families are strongly encouraged to review the school calendar, and when at all possible, schedule activities such as vacations, etc., on days that would not require missing school. When this is not possible and a student must miss several days of school, the student/parent should:

- Communicate with teachers no less than 3 days ahead of time so that teachers have time to gather work. (Requests too far in advance, while appreciated, may not be possible to accommodate.)
- When work is requested in advance, the student should make every effort to complete and submit it immediately upon return to school.

- Makeup work for full credit and without a grade penalty is allowed for all absences, including preplanned absences (regardless of whether or not work was given ahead of time). It is the student/parent's responsibility to request work and communicate with teachers until all work is made up. The number of days allowed to make up work will be the same as – and no more than – the number of days absent.

**Tardiness.** Being tardy is a serious situation which causes students to be unprepared and miss class time while also disrupting the classroom. As a result, the following tardy policy will be in effect. Any student arriving at school after 8:00 a.m. must sign in at the main office. A student is considered tardy if they are not seated in their classroom at 8:00 a.m. when the bell rings.

**Elementary Tardy Consequences.** A student's tardy will be recorded in the main office and appear on report cards.

**Secondary Tardy Consequences.** After 5 morning tardies the student will be counted as 1 day absent for the quarter. Students are allowed 3 unexcused class tardies per quarter. After 3 tardies have been exceeded, the student will serve a detention period for each additional unexcused tardy during that quarter.

Additionally, if a student arrives at school after a test has been given, the student will be expected to make up that test later in the same school day.

**Truancy.** Truancy (or skipping class) is a willful absence from an assigned class (including chapel and study hall) without parental permission. If a student is absent for more than 15 minutes of class without an excuse, they will be considered truant. Unexcused absences of less than 15 minutes fall under the school's tardy policy. Truancy is a deception and counter to the Biblical stance of the school. If a student is found to be truant the following three consequences will result:

- ★ Time missed will be made up with an after school detention. If the truancy involves a complete day, one day will be added on the end of the school year for that student.
- ★ The student will receive a "0" for any work in the classes skipped. This could include a daily participation grade, homework, quizzes and tests.
- ★ The student will be ineligible for any extra curricular activities for one week, commencing on the following Monday and running through the subsequent weekend.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**Grading Scale.** The grading scale for GCS is as listed. Each letter grade is followed by the equivalent grade point that would be awarded to secondary students. A student's grade point average (GPA) will be used to determine items such as class rank and eligibility status. Grade weight percentages (by assignment type) determining final quarter grades will be included in the course syllabus from each teacher at the beginning of the year.

Score	Letter	GPA	Score	Letter	GPA
93-100	A	4.00	67-69	D+	1.33
90-92	A-	3.67	63-66	D	1.00
87-89	B+	3.33	60-62	D-	0.67
83-86	B	3.00	Below 60	F	0.00
80-82	B-	2.67			
77-79	C+	2.33			
73-76	C	2.00			
70-72	C-	1.67			

**Midterm and Final Exams.** Both midterm and final exams will be given in all secondary core classes. Senior students have the option of opting out of final exams for classes in which they have earned an 83% or higher during the second semester (to be determined at the time of the Q4 progress report). All 6th and 7th grade exams count 10% toward the semester average. All 8th through 12th grade exams count 20% toward the semester average.

**Gradelink.** GCS uses Gradelink software to record and report grades. Both parents and students are able to view grades either online, via a desktop computer or by using the Gradelink mobile app. Students are responsible for checking Gradelink to monitor their course grades as well as missing assignments. Please do not ask your child's teacher to print off a list of missing assignments. Students/parents have access to do this at any time throughout the quarter.

Parent and student passwords will be given out at Back to School Night. They may be retrieved from time to time at the main office if necessary. After logging in for the first

time, parents may set up preferences for alerts they would like to receive regarding their child's progress throughout the quarter.

Grace Christian School expects students to achieve grades relative to their potential. **No student should ever be on academic probation** (see below) if they apply themselves and attempt to do their very best.

Students who consistently fail to meet the minimum GPA standards may be asked to terminate their enrollment at GCS and seek enrollment elsewhere.

**Distance Learning.** Recent years have taught us that there may be times when distance learning becomes necessary. While it is not our desire to utilize this method of delivery for classroom instruction, it is important that students become familiar with the process in the event that it is needed. Your child will have both instruction and practice in how to access and use Google Classroom so that they are prepared in the event of an extended illness, family vacation, or other event that takes them away from the classroom for more than one or two days.

For students who are absent for more than two days, assignments will be posted for informational purposes only (may not include lectures, notes, etc.). The student should follow up with their teachers when they return to school.

Please note, this is not an alternative to regular school for students who want to stay home for a day. Additionally, only students who require the information will have access to it in the Google Classroom.

**Academic Probation.** This is a secondary school policy.

Academic Probation status is assigned to students who fall into any of the following categories: student has demonstrated difficulty passing a specific core class over the course of at least one school year; student is at "cautionary" promotion status between grades; student is transferring from another school and has gaps or insufficient information on their transcript (or placement test shows areas of concern).

- Parents will be notified of a student's placement on Academic Probation by a letter from the Principal and/or Guidance Counselor.
- Academic Probation lasts for the duration of Quarter 1 (Q1) in the academic school year. Decisions will begin to be made at five week grade checks, and will be concluded by the end of Q1.

- The Guidance Counselor will closely monitor student grades for the first quarter and meet with student as needed to ensure student is working towards making progress in each course.
- If the student appears to be struggling at any point, the Guidance Counselor will email the parent to share areas of concern.
- Students who begin the year on Academic Probation must show significant effort/progress during the first 5 weeks of the marking period (determined by the Q1 progress report). If the student has an F in any core subject which was failed the previous year, the student will be returned to the previous grade at this time. If the student has two or more Fs in *any* classes at this point in the year, the Principal and Guidance Counselor will request a meeting with parents to discuss an improvement plan. Improvement plans will extend to the end of Q1, at which time a final placement decision will be made for the duration of the year.
- Once the Academic Probation status is removed, the student will again be in good academic standing with the school.
- A student who starts the year on Academic Probation for more than one school year must meet with parents and administration to discuss the future of their academic career at GCS.
- These policies are not intended to be punitive, but rather to ensure that students are fully equipped to succeed in the grade in which they are placed.

### Notes:

Regardless of GPA, the Guidance Counselor will meet with students who receive an F in any course required for graduation to devise a plan for making up the course.

Students are required to remediate any F in Bible and/or Community Service in order to graduate from GCS. See “Graduation Requirements” page in our parent/student handbook.

Remediation of F’s should take place the semester or summer following the grade report.

GCS does not offer summer school at this time. We will provide options, but it is ultimately the parents’ responsibility to find an acceptable program for credit recovery. The method of credit recovery **must** be approved by the Principal **prior** to the student’s enrollment. Parents will be required to show documentation of enrollment and final grade reports before school begins.

## **GCS Requirements for Grade Placement**

### **To earn SOPHOMORE status:**

*6 total credits, including...*

- 1 Bible\*
- 1 English
- 1 Mathematics
- 0 Sciences
- 0 Social Studies
- 0 World Languages
- 0 Fine Art
- 0 Health/PE
- 0 Other Electives

### **To earn JUNIOR status:**

*12 total credits, including...*

- 2 Bible\*
- 2 English
- 2 Mathematics
- 1 Science
- 1 Social Studies
- 0 World Languages
- 0 Fine Art
- 0 Health/PE
- 0 Other Electives

### **To earn SENIOR status:**

*18 total credits, including...*

- 3 Bible\*
- 3 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 2 Sciences



2 Social Studies  
1 World Languages  
0 Fine Art  
0 Health/PE  
2 Total Electives

**To GRADUATE:** (see detailed list below)

*24 total credits, including...*

4 Bible\*  
4 English  
4 Mathematics  
3 Sciences  
3 Social Studies  
2 World Languages  
1 Fine Art  
1 Health/PE  
2 Other Electives

\*\*Completion of Community Service Hours required for each grade  
(for years in attendance at GCS)

*\*Bible credits must include a half credit for each semester in attendance at GCS.*

*\*\*Students must complete the required number of Community Service hours each year to graduate. Students must complete community service hours each school year and cannot “bank” extra hours towards the next school year. Hours made up after the conclusion of a semester or school year will be listed in the “Credit Recovery” section of the students’ transcript.*

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Algebra I	1.0
Algebra II	1.0
Geometry	1.0
Senior Math Elective	1.0
English 9	1.0
English 10	1.0
English 11	1.0
English 12	1.0
Biology	1.0

Chemistry, Physics or Anatomy	1.0
Additional Science	1.0
Bible 9	1.0
Bible 10	1.0
Bible 11	1.0
Bible 12	1.0
Government	0.5
Economics	0.5
US History & Geography	1.0
World History & Geography	1.0
Physical Education	0.5
Health (CPR/AED)	0.5
Visual, Performing & Applied Arts	1.0
World Language	2.0
Electives	2.0
Online Learning Experience	0.0
Completion of Community Service Hours	0.0
<b>Total Required Credits*</b>	<b>24.0</b>

\*Math credits may vary based on the student's individual needs for personalization and/or acceleration.

A total of 24 credits are required to graduate. Successful completion of each of the required courses must be included in those 24 credits. Students may have more than 24 credits upon graduation.

## Ranking

A class ranking is a list of students in each grade, arranged by GPA from highest to lowest.

Juniors and seniors need ranking information because colleges request such numbers. Ranking of students in lower grades will generally not take place unless deemed necessary by the administration. GPA is based on semester grades converted to the 4.00 grading scale. Weighted grades for students taking honors classes will be included.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian designation are made from the senior ranking. In order to be ranked, a senior must meet the following qualifications:

- ★ Successfully complete the assigned courses listed under GCS graduation requirements.
- ★ Be enrolled full time on campus for the junior and senior year.

The senior GPA and class rank is fixed at the end of the third marking period. Therefore, fourth quarter grades for seniors are not represented in either class standing or the final GPA. This early cut-off date helps to accommodate students wishing to apply for academic scholarships in a timely manner.

Additionally, Valedictorian and Salutatorian candidates must meet the following criteria:

- ★ Students in the running for Valedictorian or Salutatorian must finish all honors work by the end of Q3 or will forfeit the weighted grade for honors work completed.
- ★ Students with 504 plans requiring academic accommodations are not eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian designation.
- ★ To qualify for Valedictorian status, a recipient's GPA must be 3.8 or higher; for a Salutatorian, 3.5 or higher.
- ★ Valedictorian designee must maintain a minimum 3.5 GPA in core classes during Q4; Salutatorian must maintain a minimum 3.2 GPA in core classes during Q4.
- ★ Candidates will be required to give a graduation speech to be written by them and approved by the Head of School. If the testimony and/or reputation of one of the candidates become compromised prior to the date of graduation, administration may decide, at their discretion, not to have that student deliver a speech at the graduation ceremony.

GCS will honor only one Valedictorian and up to, but not more than two, Salutatorians. Not all of the above awards may be given each year if students do not qualify.

**Tie-Breakers.** In the case of a tie, where Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian nominees' weighted GPA is exactly the same, the following tie-breakers will be applied:

- ★ Elective classes will be omitted from GPA calculation
- ★ Weighted classes will be omitted from GPA calculation

The Valedictorian and Salutatorian Awards are not designed to create competition or controversy within the student body. A student's individual ranking is information that is shared with the student and student's family only. GCS encourages students to pursue the academic program that will connect them with God's purpose for them following high

school. While the Valedictorian and Salutatorian awards are GPA calculations, students are asked to make course selections based upon their individual plans for the future, rather than by structuring their course load to enhance their GPA as a means of winning one of these awards.

**Dual Enrollment.** This is a program that allows high school students (usually juniors and seniors) to enroll in college courses for credit prior to high school graduation.

GCS will partner with parents who wish to pursue opportunities for high-achieving students who desire to challenge themselves academically by taking courses for college credit while still in high school. There are three different ways in which these dual credit courses may be delivered, including: 1) online, 2) on a college campus, or 3) a hybrid of both. In each case, **additional fees to be covered by the student/family are involved, and GCS is not responsible for course content or grades given.** In order to receive graduation credit for online courses, students must obtain prior approval from administration.

It is GCS policy that any classes offered on our campus are not available for dual enrollment approval. If a student wishes to take elective classes or a class not offered at GCS, they may wish to check into the dual enrollment option. Details regarding registration, requirements, fees, etc. may be discussed in a meeting with the Guidance Counselor.

**Community service requirement.** In order to help teach our students to “impact the world for Jesus Christ”, we require our secondary school students to serve the community a certain amount of time per marking period. This requirement is the equivalent of  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour per corresponding grade level. (For example, an eighth grade student would serve 4 hours per marking period, and a senior would serve 6 hours per marking period.) This time can be completed all at once or in shorter increments, but must be completed by the last day of each quarter. Students will keep a record of the hours served on the Community Service Log (available in the hallway outside the main office) and submit them each quarter. Any hours completed during the summer may count toward the following school year as long as proper documentation is provided. Students completing work for a teacher must get the task pre-approved. Students are responsible for arranging their own service projects which are to be free of compensation, financial or otherwise, and should benefit others in need, excluding their family members. Time must be served outside of school hours. If information on the service log is not clear and/or accurate, credit for those hours may be denied.

**Books & supplies.** Textbooks and activity manuals are furnished by the school. Extra supplies and accessories are to be purchased by the parents. Students are responsible for taking care of textbooks, library books, tablets, laptops, headphones, and other school property loaned by the school. Parents will be billed for lost or damaged books at the end of each school year. Report cards may be held until fines are paid.

During the summer, a supply list for each class will be available in the school's monthly publication, the Communiqué.

**Homework.** Homework is a necessary part of each child's education. All students will be assigned homework by their teachers in ways that are appropriate for a given grade level. Please keep in mind that the nature of subjects such as math, world languages, band, etc. requires (in most cases) daily practice in order to master the skills being taught.

**Make-up assignments.** It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative in completing missed work. Students will have as many days to make up the work as they were consecutively absent.

When absent due to illness for multiple days, the parent or student should contact the teachers and/or check for assignments in the Google Classroom, when applicable, so they do not fall farther behind.

For planned absences, including field trips and authorized school business, and approved pre-planned absences, the student will be responsible for obtaining the expected assignments in advance of their absence and is to be prepared to continue class upon his or her return. Work assigned prior to an absence should be completed and submitted immediately upon return to school and the student should be prepared to take all previously announced tests or quizzes when they return, unless alternate arrangements were made by the teacher before they left.

For unexcused absences or when students have exceeded the number of allotted pre-plans they will not be allowed to make up missed work for credit.

**Late work policy.** Daily work that is not present or complete at the start of the class period that it is due will lose 10% each day that it is late for five days. After five days the grade is a zero.

Daily work in all high school math classes must be completed on the date it is due. No late work will be accepted. Assignments are checked daily at the start of class and correct answers are given.

Projects with a due date at least one week in advance will lose 25% the first day that it is late and 50% the second day, and will not be accepted after two days late.

**Academic Letter.** Upon meeting the following standards, students will receive a chenille letter “G”:

- ★ The student must maintain a 3.5 weighted grade point average for the academic year. A student may also qualify with a 3.5 during the second semester and the first semester of the succeeding year.
- ★ The student must be enrolled in a minimum of five classes each qualifying semester. The academic letter is awarded only for classes taken at Grace Christian school.
- ★ Students may begin working toward a letter in the first semester of their freshman year, but will not receive the earned letter until the academic awards ceremony the following year.

Note: Senior academic letter awards are based on the first semester and the first marking period of the second semester. If a senior misses the academic letter based on the first nine weeks of the second semester and obtains a 3.5 at the end of the eighth semester, the letter is awarded after graduation. It is the students responsibility to notify the school if this happens.

Each succeeding year with a 3.5 weighted grade point average in enrollment of at least five classes will qualify the student for an academic pin.

**Academic Conduct.** Any form of academic dishonesty is considered to be a serious offense. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- ★ Intentionally incorrectly grading an assignment (either by changing or adding an answer or not marking an answer incorrect)
- ★ Cheating on assignments, quizzes, or tests
- ★ Passing on (or accepting) old tests, work, or notes etc. to students who have not yet taken the class
- ★ Copying or allowing others to copy your work on homework, quizzes, or tests
- ★ Sharing information about quizzes, tests, or exam questions
- ★ Plagiarism
- ★ Using AI technology
- ★ Altering or misusing documents

- ★ Googling answers
- ★ Copying answers from online sources and presenting them as one's own

If a student willingly and knowingly shares their coursework with another student they are guilty of cheating. Students should not share work or work on homework together unless a teacher has given permission for this to happen, such as assigning work with partners.

**Avoiding Academic Dishonesty.** To prevent confusion and conflict, the student should find out what documentation is required for papers, including the use of the Internet. Find out what is acceptable and unacceptable collaboration; for example, working with others. Students should protect their work from being used by others by keeping all evidence of their work process including notes, drafts, previous assignments, etc. When in doubt, go to your teacher first. It is better to admit you do not know something than to make a mistake that could constitute academic dishonesty.

**Plagiarism.** Failure to give proper credit to quoted or paraphrased material, through the use of parenthetical citations and a work cited page, is considered plagiarism.

**Artificial technology.** Using AI to write a paper or do other homework is considered cheating. A teacher who suspects a student of using AI may orally quiz a student on their work and ask them to elaborate, explain, or defend it. If suspicion remains, the student may be asked to redo the assignment in the classroom under direct supervision.

**Academic dishonesty infraction procedures.** Staff, faculty, or students that believe a student has violated the academic conduct policy should bring their concerns to the principal, who will then investigate the situation. For any dishonesty or cheating which can be validated, the following disciplinary actions will be taken:

#### **Elementary school**

- ★ First offense: score on assignment is negated; student is allowed to redo work. Parent is emailed.
- ★ Second offense: score on assessment is negated; student is allowed to redo work with an automatic 25% deduction. Parents and principal are notified.
- ★ Third offense: score is negated, no opportunity to make up work. Parents and principal are notified. Student receives additional consequences as directed by administration.

#### **Secondary school**

- ★ First offense: score and assessment is negated; student is allowed to redo work with an automatic 30% deduction. Parents and principal are notified.
- ★ Second offense: score is negated; no opportunity to make up work. Parents and principal are notified.
- ★ Third offense: score is negated, no opportunity to make up work, parents and principal are notified. Student receives additional consequences which may include detention or suspension as directed by administration.

The punishment for plagiarism, regardless of the number of previous offenses, is an automatic immediate 0% on the assignment in which it occurs. If the student is allowed to make up work (first offense only) the 0% will remain in Gradelink until the new grade is recorded. This may affect eligibility until the work has been re-graded.

Violations for plagiarism do not “start over” each school year for secondary students. Students are expected to learn from their mistakes and make every effort to demonstrate academic integrity moving forward.

**Honors classes.** Honors is an option that is offered in some high school subjects to allow a student to enhance his or her learning. The honors assignments are not meant to accelerate learning, but to provide more depth to the normal curriculum and to challenge students in their critical thinking abilities. This will look different for each class, but will be detailed at the beginning of each year as students are considering this option.

Honors credit is meant for students who are capable of working independently and meeting deadlines without reminders. Teachers will supply the necessary materials and are available when questions arise, but it is the responsibility of the student to seek out answers, be self-driven, and manage their time appropriately.

Students must make the choice to start honors classes at the beginning of the year. Students may opt out of Honors after the first semester, but no new students may be added. Students must complete both quarters of honors work to receive honors credit on their transcript for the semester. In addition, students must maintain at least a B average at each grade check to be eligible to participate in the honors segment. Honors credit grants an additional grade point for the purposes of calculating grade point average. Honors credit does not turn a B into an A, but turns the 3.0 associated with a B into a 4.0 when GPA is calculated.



**Extracurricular eligibility.** This policy applies to **all** extracurricular activities including sports and student council.

- ★ Students must attend full-time, carrying at least six credit hours.
- ★ Students must maintain proper conduct in and out of school
- ★ Students must maintain at least a C minus average or 70% which is a 1.67 GPA.
- ★ Students must not be failing any courses.

When a student becomes ineligible (at the mid-quarter progress report), he or she will be notified by the principal of his/her status. A list will be given to the appropriate teachers and the athletic director who will notify the coaches.

The student who becomes ineligible will become athletically suspended and will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities, including games, tournaments, and StuCo activities, for 10 school days following the notification of the student's ineligible status.

During the period of ineligibility, the student will not attend meetings or practices until all of his/her assignments, tests, quizzes, and or special projects are made up to the best of his/her ability. The student must, during the practice time, work on his or her classroom assignments, either with his/her instructor or in an appropriate supervised place, until all work is satisfactorily completed and handed into the appropriate teacher. Should the student refuse to do this, he/she may be removed from the team or group for the season.

If a student is missing work in any class during the time they are determined to be ineligible, they will not be allowed to participate in practice. When work is caught up, the student must take the responsibility to have an **Eligibility Recheck Form** signed by his/her respective teachers, stating that his/her work has been satisfactorily completed, no assignments are missing, and that the student's quarter grade is not a failing grade. (Please note, teachers may not be able to make this determination the same day the form is presented. Teachers will be granted 48 hours to bring the student's grade current, if needed.) Once the form is complete, the student will then submit the form to the principal. The GPA will be checked before the principal will advise the athletic director to contact the coaches. The student will be advised when they may participate in practice or meetings.

The student will not "suit up" for games or participate in extracurricular events until he/she has regained eligibility. Should a student's academic performance be such that there is little chance for regaining eligibility, the principal or athletic director or

appropriate teacher and the parent shall set up a meeting to discuss the student's future status.

**A student regains eligibility:**

- ★ At the midpoint of an eligibility (five school days), the principal will check the students grades and determine if his/her average is at least 70%, with no failing grades. If everything is in order no change to the student's status will be made. If the student does not meet these requirements, then the period of ineligibility restarts.
- ★ After the period of ineligibility (10 school days) is over, the principal will check the student's grades and determine if his/her average is at least 70%, with no failing grades. If everything is in order the student will be eligible for that week. If the principal has determined that the student is not considered eligible, then the student is ineligible from participation for one week. The principal will recheck the student's eligibility weekly thereafter.
- ★ The principal will notify the athletic director, who will then notify the student and coach of the student's eligibility status. The principal will continue to maintain this grade check weekly for the rest of the season or term.

Academic eligibility rules do not apply to homeschool students. It is the responsibility of the homeschool parent to determine academic eligibility.

**Study Halls.** In order to ensure the success of our students, a study hall elective is available for some grades, but only with approval by the parent and the guidance counselor. The following rules apply to all study hall periods:

- ★ Students are to study independently and without talking.
- ★ Students should bring enough schoolwork to remain productive for the entire study hall without returning to their locker.
- ★ Students will not be allowed to leave the study hall unless it is necessary, and will not be permitted to interrupt other classes or wander the building. When it is necessary, the study hall teacher will provide the student with a completed hall pass.
- ★ Any student wishing to go to another teacher's classroom must have a pre-signed pass from the receiving teacher.
- ★ A student may request permission to receive help from another student as long as the conversation stays on task and does not disturb the rest of the class.
- ★ In order to work with a partner or in a small group on assignment, a pre-signed pass is needed from the teacher who assigned the group work, detailing those

who are authorized to work together. (This does not require the study hall teacher to allow the group to work together if they do not see fit.)

- ★ No food or drinks (other than clear water).
- ★ Any tech devices (other than a calculator) must be used for academic purposes only, with permission of the teacher. The study hall teacher must be able to see the screen the entire time it is in use.

### **Scheduling: Course Selections and Changes to Student Schedules**

Secondary students sign up for elective classes yearly. Students have the opportunity to make changes to the schedule during the first two weeks of the semester. During this two-week period, drops will only be allowed if another acceptable class is available in the student's schedule and room is available in the desired class. After this time has passed, students can only withdraw from a class with approval of the guidance counselor and principal. When a student drops the class after the add/drop period, a "W" will be entered on the transcript to indicate the withdrawal. Once class schedules are distributed to students, all changes must be approved by both the guidance counselor and the parent (or legal guardian).

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICIES**

All parts of Grace Christian School's program are designed as learning experiences. We are each part of a world that is the creation of a sovereign God; everyone has a master, and it is the staff's privilege and responsibility to help the student to adjust his or her behavior to that which is appropriate for a biblical Christian. It is our desire to develop responsible, self-disciplined students who respect the sovereignty of God, the authority of parents and staff, the rights of others, and the property of the school. Students are expected to display both attitude and behavior that is honoring to the Lord and Grace Christian.

The GCS staff desires to ensure consistent biblical discipline at Grace Christian School. The kind and amount of discipline will be determined by the teachers, and if necessary, the principal. Discipline will be administered in light of the individual student's behavior, attitude, and frequency of occurrence. Secondary students will sign a code of conduct contract during the first week of school.

School behavioral policies also apply to extracurricular events such as athletic events and student council sponsored activities, both on our campus and off. Students may be

subject to school discipline for serious misconduct that runs counter to standards and values of Grace Christian School that occurs after school hours.

If a student commits a serious act and administration deems it necessary, more severe consequences such as suspension or expulsion may be imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct could include: bullying of any kind, physical violence or the threat of violence against another with the intent to inflict harm, vandalism, violations of civil law, or immoral behavior in clear contradiction to Scripture commands.

**Detention.** Detention will be on Thursdays, beginning at 3:15. If a student skips an assigned detention, they will have to serve double the time or two detentions. If they skip detention a second time, the student and their parent(s) will need to meet with the principal to discuss a plan of action. Parents may not excuse students from serving detention. Sports or other extracurricular activities will not excuse students from serving detention. During detention, students are to study independently and without talking. Students should bring enough schoolwork to remain productive for the entire detention, without returning to their locker. If a student does not have homework that day, they will bring a book to read. No cell phones, food, drinks (other than clear water), tech devices (other than a calculator), or napping will be permitted during detention.

**Suspension.** The principal has the authority to suspend any student for serious or persistent misbehavior. This could be in the form of an in-school suspension (ISS) or a traditional out of school suspension.

In-School Suspension: During an ISS, the student is removed from all contact with classmates, specials/elective classes, special activities, etc. Rather, the student will be placed with a monitor who will oversee their time throughout the day. Students are expected to remain in the ISS room at all times, and will complete their regular class assignments during the ISS. Lunch will be eaten in the ISS room, and bathroom breaks will be allowed as necessary.

During this time the student is excluded from all school activities. The student is responsible for completing all work and activities assigned during their absence, and understands that such material will be on future activities, quizzes, tests, or exams. They will be expected to be prepared to rejoin their classes and activities upon their return.

Detailed ISS guidelines will be given to the student upon assignment of an ISS. These are to be read and signed by both the student and the parent and presented to the principal when reporting on the day of the ISS.

**Hall passes.** Students are required to be in the classroom on time in order to benefit from instructional activities. Students are allowed to be out of the classroom only during specific pre-approved times: before school starts, lunchtime, passing periods between classes, and after school. Students should use these times to take care of personal business such as bathroom breaks. Interruption of instructional time must be avoided as much as possible. Students will not be allowed to leave class unless it is necessary, but will not be permitted to interrupt other classes or wander the building.

In the event that a student is required to leave the classroom during class, the following policies must be enforced:

- ★ Students will carry a valid hall pass from the teacher and go ONLY to the location for which they were given permission
- ★ Students are not allowed to use cell phones while using a hall pass.

All staff are responsible for reporting students who are outside of class without a valid pass or truant during the instructional time by notifying the office. If found to be skipping or avoiding class, “truancy” policies will be followed. Additional consequences will be given for repeat offenses as determined by the principal.

**Food and Beverages.** All food and beverages must be consumed in the cafeteria/tiled area. No food or drinks other than clear water and translucent bottles will be allowed in the hallways, commons, or classrooms at any time. Any food or drink containers in student lockers must be sealed. Students are not allowed to chew gum in the building at any time, including athletic events and other after school activities. Students found violating this rule will serve a detention for each offense.

## **DRESS CODE**

Grace Christian School has carefully considered and applied the following biblical principles in the establishment of the dress code policy for all GCS students. Everything we do is an expression of our relationship with God, and in His Word, God makes it clear that we are to be modest and treat our bodies with the utmost respect. Student’s attire and appearance should reflect the Christian value of encouraging the focus on the inner self, not the outer self.

A key reason for students to follow the guidelines listed within the dress code policy is the principle of submission to authority (Romans 13:1-5). God has placed the leaders of GCS in the lives of students as those who have the responsibility to make such guidelines, and to expect adherence to them. This charge is not taken lightly and has exercised with a goal of seeing young people grow toward maturity in Jesus Christ.

It is also important to note that what is in style may not always be in accordance with the standards we seek to reflect, so GCS may make future adjustments to these guidelines.

**Dress code principles:**

- ★ Student attire should be God honoring: I Corinthians 10:31 “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”.
- ★ Student attire should be modest: I Corinthians 6:19 & 20, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”
- ★ Student attire should take student safety into account: I Corinthians 13:7 “Love always protects...”
- ★ Student attire should be non-distracting in the classroom, and promote a higher level of learning excellence: Romans 14:19, 21 “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.”

**Partnership with parents:**

- ★ Parents should work with and guide their children to make good choices in the area of appropriate clothing and good grooming. We expect clothing and appearance decisions to be handled at home to ensure compliance with GCS standards.
- ★ Parents should review and familiarize themselves with the dress code policy on a regular basis.
- ★ Should your student’s attire be deemed inappropriate, parents should expect to receive a call from the school and be prepared to bring or facilitate a change of clothing. Repeat offenders will be asked to sit in the office until they are able to change and return to class. All classwork missed during this time will be unexcused.
- ★ Proverbs 6:20, “My son, keep your father’s commands and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”
- ★ Ephesians 6:4 “And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

## **Dress code policy guidelines.**

Clothing should be neat, modest, and appropriate. Clothing should be appropriately sized - not too small/tight and not too large/baggy. A student should not be dressed in such a way as to draw attention to his or her body, but to respect and honor God, themselves and others.

Parents and students have the primary responsibility to understand and adhere to the dress code. In all circumstances, GCS administration retains the final authority to determine, at its discretion, whether a student is in compliance with the dress code.

Cross gender dressing will not be allowed under any circumstances. The administration reserves the right to amend the dress code as needed to address new fads and styles.

Knowing how to present oneself properly within the school community prepares students for future professional environments. Our desire is to partner with families to instill this important life skill.

## **General Guidelines**

### Acceptable:

- Piercings - ears only
  - Boys may wear studs - no dangling earrings permitted
- Facial hair must be neat and trimmed
- Shorts are allowed from April 1 to November 1. Shorts must be at least to the top of the knee when standing. Spandex or tight athletic shorts are not permitted.
- Flip-flops and slides are allowed from April 1 to November 1; however, elementary students may not wear these outside for recess.
- Leggings are permissible only when worn with dresses (not shirts) that are at least knee length.
- Distressed jeans with MILD fraying that does not result in skin showing through.
- Lightweight fleece jackets; thin vests; etc.
- Girls' hats that are an accessory to an outfit (not ballcaps, etc.)

### Unacceptable:

- Hats, bandanas or hoods worn in the building or classroom
- Exposed tattoos
- Nail polish or makeup worn by boys

- Tight or baggy clothing
- See-through or revealing clothing
- Costumes, slippers or pajamas worn as clothing
- Gloves or mittens worn in the building
- Torn, frayed, worn clothing or clothing with holes that show the skin
- Pants/shirts that have excessive shredding, bleach stains, etc.
- Shirts that have cut outs on the arms, shoulders, back, etc.
- Body piercings other than earrings
- Outerwear such as coats or blankets in the classroom
- Shirts which promote bands or musical events, both secular and sacred
- Skirts/dresses that do not come at least to the knee
- Sweats, athletic pants, leisure wear, spandex leggings, etc.
  - *Because they are more active in the classroom and on the playground, elementary students may wear track/athletic pants. This does NOT include spandex, leggings, or tight fitting pants that fall into the “athletic” category.*
- Students may not write on their skin with ink, marker, temporary tattoos, etc.

### **Physical education or sports teams dress code**

#### Acceptable:

- Athletic shorts which reach the at least the middle of the thigh
- Loose fitting athletic style long pants
- Sleeveless shirts - not tank tops
- Athletic shoes with non-marking soles

#### Unacceptable:

- School clothes
- Denim shorts and cut offs
- Tank tops
- School sports uniforms
- Pants or shorts with words on the back side
- Spandex or tight athletic leggings or shorts are not permitted
- Flip-flops/slides/boots

**Enforcement.** Staff documenting the violation will make the student aware of the error and fill out a purple “Dress Code Violation” slip. These will be given to the principal, who will keep a record. The principal will decide if the student needs to change immediately or be issued a warning. For repeat offenders, this will be counted as an unexcused absence from class and a secondary student will not be allowed to make up any work



missed due to this infraction. Each infraction will be handled as a disciplinary matter and formally documented. After two dress code warnings, students will receive a one hour detention for each subsequent violation. Repeated infractions will be considered as defiance; therefore, three documented infractions will result in administrative action. Final determination and interpretation of the dress code is at the discretion of administration.

**Dress standards for field trips and formal events.** For field trips, special events, and school activities in which a student is a participant (sports banquets, award ceremonies, sports trips, etc.), the students must abide by the principles and guidelines of the dress code specific to that environment unless the supervising teacher/coach and principal approve other expectations.

**GCS Best.** From time to time, students will be asked to dress in GCS best (banquets, special programs, award ceremonies, etc.). While our typical school dress code is not in effect at special events, the principle of our clothing being God-honoring and modest remains the guiding standard for dress at these events.

- ★ For girls, this includes selecting a dress that is appropriate in length, has two straps, is not shorter than the middle of the knee (including slits), covers the bra entirely, and that provides appropriate coverage (no cleavage; the back of the dress cannot be lower than the bra line). In addition, the dress should be free from skin revealing cutouts; any dress insert intended to accomplish the standard of modesty must be opaque (not see-through).
- ★ For boys, dress shirts must be worn, tucked in and a belt worn. When a tie is worn, it should be worn properly (must cover the top button).

## **TECHNOLOGY**

**Technology usage guidelines.** Much of technology can be a distraction in the educational setting unless there is a clear reason why it will enhance learning. Any electronic device must be approved by each classroom teacher before it is brought into the classroom. The use of technology (before, during, and after school) at Grace Christian school is an opportunity extended to the students, faculty, and staff to enhance learning, productivity, and information processing. Any computer hardware/software used at Grace Christian School shall be used solely for educational purposes in support of education.

**Technology Code of Ethics.** Students are responsible to:

- ★ **Only use a computer while a Grace Christian staff member is present in the room.**
- ★ Utilize information technology only for educational purposes, including, but not limited to the attainment of outcomes, goals, and objectives specified in curriculum documents of Grace Christian School or otherwise delineated by teachers, administrators, and the Board of Education.
- ★ Adhere to the rules, including, but not limited to, those posted in classrooms or computer labs or otherwise specified by school employees, for the use of hardware, software, labs, and networks in the school.
- ★ Obtain permission from a computer teacher before bringing in their own software and using it in school equipment.
- ★ Keep hardware and software from being relocated, removed from school premises, or modified without permission.
- ★ Maintain the privacy of passwords and thus are prohibited from publishing or discussing passwords.
- ★ Adhere to the law pertaining to copyright and privacy rights in the use of hardware and software and in the transmission or copying of texts or files including photos and videos.
- ★ Review the appropriateness of all material received from sources outside of Grace Christian School including the internet.
- ★ Avoid the malicious use of information technology to disrupt the use of technology of others, to harass or discriminate against others, or to infiltrate unauthorized computer systems.
- ★ Save all documents to a USB flash drive or to personal Google Drive only. Saving to the hard drive is prohibited
- ★ The use of proxy sites to bypass the Internet Filter Program will not be tolerated.
- ★ Absolutely no email (other than your GCS email for school projects), instant messages, social site, or music sites are allowed on GCS computers.

**Students who cannot adhere to these guidelines will not be permitted to use GCS computers. If any member of GCS staff sees a personal device being used for a purpose other than that for which it was approved, the student will lose the device for the remainder of the school day. The staff member will confiscate the device and deliver it to the main office, which will pass it on to the appropriate designee to determine if the student will lose the privilege for the remainder of the year.**

**Cell Phones.** Engaging in positive, face-to-face social interactions is an important part of a student's development and building a school community; consequently, GCS does not permit the use of cell phones at all during the day, unless instructed by a teacher. Cell phones are to be kept in student lockers and may not be on their person or in backpacks/purses that are carried to class. Cell phone use during tests or exams will be considered cheating. Lost and stolen cell phones or electronic items are not the responsibility of the school.

Cell phone use will be permitted before school from 7:30-7:45 and during after care only, the use of which is at the discretion of the staff on duty. **Violations of the rules or misuse of the device will result in a student no longer being allowed to bring their device to school** (or they will need to leave it in the office during the school day for the rest of the year) as well as serve a detention for each offense.

Students may use the office phone, with permission from the office staff, should the need arise. To protect our students' learning, we request that parents not ask for a student to be removed from class to receive a phone call unless it is an emergency.

You can help us enforce this policy by not texting your student during the school day. Parents may get messages to students by calling the school office, which will make sure that messages related to non-emergency issues will be forwarded to the appropriate students.

Students may not photograph or take videos of staff members without their consent.

**Smart Watches.** For primarily the same reasons as those of cell phones, smart watches will also be under restrictions during the school day. Students will be closely monitored, and may be asked to remove smart watches during tests, quizzes, bathroom requests, etc. Any student who is caught inappropriately using their smart watch during the school day will have it confiscated until after school.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES**

**Head Lice & Pink Eye.** The office will do individual checks as needed. If a student is found to have pink eye or lice/nits (lice eggs), the parents will be notified and the student will need to be picked up immediately and may not return to school until the issue is completely resolved. Upon returning to school, parents will need to bring the student to the office to be checked before returning to the classroom.

**Illness.** If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted to arrange pickup as soon as possible. In consideration of the health of others, it is our policy that a student must stay home with:

- ★ Fever. (*Must be **fever free and symptom-free** for a full 24 hours, without the use of medication, before returning to school. Please note that this time does not begin when your child is picked up, but rather when the fever breaks and symptoms subside*)
- ★ Vomiting (24 hours free)
- ★ Strep throat
- ★ Flu symptoms
- ★ Diarrhea (24 hours free)
- ★ Chicken pox
- ★ Other contagious illnesses

**Medication Distribution & Consumption.** Policies and Guidelines for Administering Medications to Pupils at Grace Christian School:

The following definition of medication is adopted for use at Grace Christian School: Medications include prescription, non-prescription, and herbal medications, and includes those taken by mouth, by inhaler, those that are injectable, and those applied as drops to eyes, nose, or medications applied to the skin.

Non-prescription medications may be given to students by the school office with permission from a parent. Prescription medications may be given with permission from a parent *and* a doctor's signature. Forms are given to parents to fill out and submit to the school. Medications will not be given without a signed parental permission form. Students are not permitted to keep medications (including antacid, cough drops, Tylenol/ibuprofen, etc.) in their pockets, desks, bags, or lockers unless deemed medically necessary by the office (i.e. EpiPen's, emergency insulin, etc.)

- ★ Medications need to be brought to the school office by the pupil's parent or legal guardian.
- ★ All medication must be in its original container or parents may provide documentation from the doctor showing the prescription details.
- ★ Written instructions from a physician, which includes the name of the pupil, name of the medication, dosage of the medication, route of administration, and time the medication is to be administered to the pupil shall accompany the request and be kept on record by the school.

- ★ Oral medication must be provided in the exact dosage prescribed so that the individual administering medications is not responsible for dividing/splitting pills.
- ★ No changes to medication dosage or time of administration will be made except by instruction from a physician.
- ★ Parental or guardian request/permission and a physician's instruction for administration of medications shall be removed every school year, and will need to be renewed every school year.
- ★ The school office will check expiration dates of the school's stock of prescription medication, EpiPen's, and inhalers at least twice each school year. Parents are responsible to check the expiration dates of their child's medication at the school.
- ★ Medication left over at the end of the school year, or after a pupil has left the school, shall be picked up by the parent/legal guardian. If this is not done, the individual who administers the medication will dispose of the medication and record this disposal on the medication log. This procedure shall be witnessed and initialed by a second adult.

***Please note: We have a severe cherry allergy on campus. Please avoid sending cherry flavored cough drops/medications if at all possible.***

**Substance Abuse.** Grace Christian School expects its students to abstain from any use of alcohol, e-cigarettes, mood- or mind-altering chemicals, performance enhancing drugs (PEDs), tobacco, vaping products, and any other illegal substances. Possession or use of any prohibited substance at any time on the school property, buses, at school-related activities, or while traveling for school-related activities is not allowed. Offenses, including pictures posted on social media websites which indicate usage or possession, may result in suspension and the temporary loss of privileges including, but not limited to, participation in extracurricular activities and/or other school-sponsored activities. Additionally, a student who has violated these expectations may be required to participate in mental health or substance abuse counseling at the student's, parent's, or guardian's expense. Repeat offenses may result in additional disciplinary measures including, but not limited to, expulsion.

Grace Christian School reserves the right to search personal property, including, but not limited to, students' apparel and backpacks, lockers, and vehicles upon reasonable suspicion. Furthermore, Grace Christian School reserves the right to consult with local law enforcement agencies or employ a private detection company to assist in determining the presence of prohibited or illegal substances on campus. Students are expected to fully cooperate with searches of personal property, lockers, and vehicles. When tobacco, illegal substances, weapons, or other prohibited items are found, the driver of the car, owner of the book bag, or student assigned to the locker will be held

responsible for being in possession of the item. Students involved in alcohol or substance abuse offenses at any time, day or night, in any place (on or off campus) year round will be restricted in their participation in school functions requiring a high level of responsibility, including, but not limited to, athletic participation, field trips, Senior Trip, etc. The level of restrictions will depend on the offense and the reaction of the student and will be determined by the school administration and parent/guardian input.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

**General Conduct.** Upholding GCS standards of moral and social conduct is expected of all students. This includes (but is not limited to):

### **Acceptable:**

- ★ Christlike actions and attitudes
- ★ Respect shown
- ★ Honesty
- ★ Cheerful obedience
- ★ Positive school spirit
- ★ School pride ownership of our building grounds
- ★ Inclusive behavior towards peers

### **Unacceptable:**

- ★ Disrespect
- ★ Profanity; misusing the name of God; suggestive innuendo, images, or gestures
- ★ Any disruption of class
- ★ Mistreatment of school property or the property of others
- ★ Excluding peers and/or bullying
- ★ Participating in, observing, or encouraging social media challenges

Both elementary school and secondary students share the school. It is courteous that each respects the needs and rights of the other. We expect the older, more mature students to take the lead in avoiding conflict and displaying a respectful example to others.

GCS considers the spiritual life of students and faculty a vital part of Christian education. When attending chapel, students are expected to bring their Bibles,

participate in worship, listen attentively to speakers, and refrain from distracting behavior (which includes sleeping, reclining, whispering, homework, studying, etc).

Areas off-limits to students include: the teacher's lounge, storage closets, teachers' desks and personal belongings, office work areas, the balcony, and other students' lockers/personal belongings. Students should not be in the locker rooms and/or weight room except for P.E. class and/or sports practice. Students should only disrupt the office staff for specific needs.

**Student Relationships.** It is the desire of the administration and staff at GCS to see students develop relationships that are wholesome and biblical. Dating rules and practices are, in general, subject to the rules of the parents. Students are urged to continue to pursue a wide range of friendships and not separate themselves from the student body. Romantic expressions of affection (both physical and verbal) are not allowed.

While universal displays of friendship (such as hugs) are encouraged, students should refrain from reclining on one another, extended embraces, etc. when on school grounds.

**Music Standards.** Teachers have the right to monitor a student's listening choices while on campus. Teachers have the discretion to determine the type of music playing while students are on campus. A student may only wear headphones/earpods while actively listening to their own device in before/aftercare and not during the school day, unless used for a foreign language or independent study. Headphones/earpods may not be shared with another student.

**Bullying.** Grace Christian School will not tolerate any physical, verbal, or written/taped threats or intimidation. This includes name calling, insults, and continuing any action after a request has been made that a specific behavior be stopped. Students found to be bullying other students will be dealt with immediately, which may include: detention, suspension, or expulsion from school - the length of which is at the discretion of the principal. Students who are being bullied (threatened or harassed) or witness this behavior may report the bullying to a GCS faculty/staff member.

Bullying that occurs outside of school through such means as text, email, or social networking can be addressed by the school as well, if the principal feels that it is affecting school life in any negative manner. If the principal becomes aware of cyber bullying or other inappropriate content used by the students on social media sites or via

cell phone, GCS will investigate and follow up appropriately. If student conduct is deemed to be of an appropriate serious nature, the principal may determine that local authorities should be notified. If the problem persists the school will move forward with appropriate disciplinary actions.

**Social Media Conduct.** Misconduct online carries serious consequences. Students are expected to uphold the signed Standard of Conduct at all times during the year, even when not on campus. Students whose conduct and behavior outside of school reflects poorly on accepted Christian values may be subject to school probation or loss of enrollment. This includes the improper use of the Internet and other forms of electronic social media.

Students must use appropriate language and model honorable behavior, such as respect, integrity, honesty, and excellence. Profanity or suggestive language (innuendo) or jokes are inappropriate, regardless whether it occurs face-to-face, over the Internet, or by any other means. Social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, personal blogs, etc.) is a powerful communications tool. Grace Christian school expects all staff and students to abide by its social media policy in all their communications on any social media site.

All communications must be appropriate. **Profanity, suggestive language (innuendo) or jokes, images of a sexual nature, or similar communications involving adult topics, drugs, alcohol or public support of these or other unbiblical principles including those listed in the Standard of Conduct are never appropriate, no matter if they occur in person, in an email or text message, or on a social media site.**

If GCS becomes aware of inappropriate conduct by students on social media sites or via cell phone or computer, GCS will investigate and follow up appropriately. If the problem persists the school will move forward with appropriate disciplinary actions.

**Spectator behavior.** Students are encouraged to attend and support the GCS family at any extracurricular event. Students attending school assemblies or public performance events as spectators are **expected to behave in a respectful manner**. Any student being disrespectful through language or actions, causing an interruption in the activity, or doing anything illegal will be removed from the event with further discipline to follow as determined by the principal.



**Lockers.** All lockers are the property of Grace Christian School. Each secondary student is assigned a locker at the beginning of the year. Each student should use this locker as a place to keep their belongings during the day. Students or parents should never be in another student's locker for any reason. The student is responsible for keeping the locker neat and clean. Never stand on the platform of your locker! Any food or drink containers in student lockers must be sealed. Students should never be eating at their locker. Each student is responsible to maintain the area around their locker.

All books, coats, and book bags must be placed inside the lockers. Any cell phones in the locker must be turned off or on silent at all times during the school day. Nothing can be placed in front of or next to the lockers as this is a fire code violation. Items left in the hallways or outside of lockers will be collected and placed in the lost and found. Band instruments should be taken to the designated storage space upon arrival to school in the morning.

Students may hang decorations inside the lockers (with magnets, NOT TAPE) but all decorations must be consistent with a Christian mission of the school. No decorations or writing are permitted on the exterior of the locker unless approved by the administration. Locker identification placed by the school is to remain in place and unaltered all year. Signs identifying members of a sports team must be removed after the season is over.

As all lockers are the property of Grace Christian school, GCS may authorize the opening of a student locker at any time. Students do not have the right to be present at such inspections. Any suspected locker abuse will be cause for an unannounced locker check.

The school has a limited number of locks that are available. If a student chooses to place a lock on his or her locker, the school office must have a copy of the combination or key.

**Personal Property.** All possessions should be marked with the student's name. Toys brought from home may be used before and after school and during recess as long as they do not become a distraction. The school is not responsible for personal belongings brought to the school that get lost. The school recommends valuables not to be brought to school.

**Playground.** The playground is a wonderful place for our elementary school students to get a break from classes and expand excess energy. However, supervision and safety are our primary concerns. Therefore, students are not to leave the playground without

permission from the teacher on duty. Students are to follow all of the safety rules given to them by the adult in charge. Students disobeying the rules will be given appropriate consequences, which may include walking laps, being sent to stand at the wall, or missing part of the next recess.

The following are NOT acceptable playground behaviors:

- ★ Roughhousing (this includes tackling and fighting)
- ★ King of the Mountain on snow or tires
- ★ Games of Keep Away
- ★ Throwing rocks/pebbles
- ★ Walking on the wall of the GaGa pit
- ★ Standing on swings, jumping on swings, twisting self or others on swings
- ★ Climbing swing poles or up the slide
- ★ Playing by school building windows
- ★ Students not using age-appropriate playgrounds

The following guidelines should also be observed:

- ★ Students should not use swings, slides or other playground equipment in a manner other than its intended purpose.
- ★ Students are not to go into any of the wooded areas without adult supervision
- ★ Skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, and roller shoes are not allowed on the playground or elsewhere on campus
- ★ Staff will signal students with one whistle blow to give a warning if any student is in jeopardy of breaking a playground rule. Three consecutive whistle blows indicates that all students need to line up quickly and orderly.

**Lunchroom conduct.** During lunch all students are to stay in the cafeteria but are allowed to go use the restrooms in the gym hallway. Students are not to use restrooms in the locker rooms. No more than two students are permitted to go to the restroom at one time. Students may not go outside, to their lockers, a classroom, or the computer lab during lunch without a previously signed pass from the appropriate teacher.

### **BIBLICAL MORALITY LIFESTYLE STATEMENT FOR GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen. 1:26-27). 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. (I 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 (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt. 15:18-20; I Cor. 6; 9-10) We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Christian School as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Grace Christian School members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Grace Christian School in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; I Thess. 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; I 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 and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Grace Christian School.

Parents and legal guardians who choose to enroll their children at GCS acknowledge our position and belief in these basic biblical values derived from historical Christianity. Parents and/or legal guardians understand and agree that GCS will teach these principles and biblical values.

### **FINAL AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF BELIEF AND CONDUCT STATEMENT**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Grace Christian School's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our School Board is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## **MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

**Security cameras.** Security cameras are used on our campus.

**Field trips.** Field trips are a part of our educational program and are for enrolled students of GCS only. Parents will be notified of all trips, including information about the destination, travel times, objectives of the activity, appropriate dress, and transportation. Students and chaperones for field trips must dress neatly and appropriately. Per Michigan State Law, all children under eight years old or under 4'9" tall must be in an approved booster or car seat at all times while traveling. Please plan to leave these at school with your child's name on it for field trips in which chaperones will be transporting your child.

Parents who accompany students on field trips are expected to help chaperone and enforce teacher expectations of student behavior while on the trip.

**Student Photo Media.** From time to time, photos will be taken of students, student activities, etc. The school reserves the right to use these photos for news releases, the school's social media, school website, class website, yearbook, school paper, school related presentations, marketing purposes, etc. The school may allow members of the media to take pictures of students, athletic events, and other school activities for publication. The school feels that these are legitimate opportunities for students to be in the "limelight" and to promote the school. If a parent prefers photos of their children not to be used or published, they must notify the school office in writing by the second week of school. GCS is not responsible for photos taken by individuals and posted on their personal social media.

**Student Drivers.** Any student who possesses a valid Michigan driver's license may drive to school. However, students must annually complete a student driving permit form attained in the main office. A copy of the student's driver's license, registration and proof of insurance must be submitted. Vehicles driven by students must display a GCS parking pass when parked on school property.

Any student who demonstrates careless or reckless driving habits will be asked to forfeit the privilege of driving to school. When students arrive at school in a car driven by a student driver, all must leave the car and go to the designated waiting areas. Students will park in the parking lot and will remain parked until the end of the school day. If a vehicle is parked inappropriately, Grace Christian School can have the vehicle towed at the owner's expense.

Students must receive permission from the front office to go to their vehicle during the school day if they have forgotten an item needed for the school day. No other students are to be transported by the student driver unless written parental permission for both the driver and passenger has been given in advance to the office.

**Junior/Senior Banquet.** Each year the juniors host a school sponsored banquet for the seniors. The banquet must follow these guidelines:

- ★ The banquet is to have a spiritual emphasis (a tone for the whole evening; includes mealtime, program, etc.; not limited to a theme only).
- ★ Appropriate dress is required (see *GCS Best dress code section*).
- ★ Any guests to the event must be no younger than 10th grade and no older than 20 years old.
- ★ Any non-GCS guests must complete and turn in the guest form to the principal by the date on the form and are expected to follow all GCS policies pertaining to the event.
- ★ Adult representation is to be in the neighborhood of one adult per 10 students.
- ★ The banquet and its program will not last longer than midnight. Students/parents may choose to plan an after party. This will not be sanctioned or staffed by GCS. The after party should reflect GCS standards and values.
- ★ Adult representation may be altered by administration dependent on numbers in attendance.
- ★ The junior class is to plan the banquet under the supervision of the class sponsor and it will be financed from their own class funds.
- ★ The following school personnel are to be invited:
  - the junior class sponsor and spouse
  - the senior class sponsor and spouse
  - the principal and spouse or a board representative and spouse

**Transcript Requests.** Grace Christian School transcripts (official and unofficial) are available to all students by written request. A transcript request form is available in the main office. **High School students** receive three complementary unofficial transcripts per year. After three, a \$5 fee will be required per request. Because official transcripts involve a great deal of preparation, the charge will be \$7.50 per request. Transcripts will be available for mailing two weeks after the completed signed form is received at Grace Christian School unless the school is notified that it is needed sooner when the form is received. If official transcripts are needed sooner than the two week processing time required, an additional \$20 will be assessed. All financial obligations to the school need to be met before transcripts or grade reports will be released. You can obtain

information concerning outstanding account balances and payments through the business office.

## **FEDERAL REGULATIONS INFORMATION**

**FERPA Regulations.** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students".

This law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the US Department of Education. Parochial and private schools do not generally receive such funding and therefore are not subject to FERPA. The statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the Department regulations are found at 34 CFR part 99. You may contact our principal with questions.

**Asbestos Regulations.** Asbestos reports are kept on file in our main office in a folder separate from the MSD (material safety data) sheets. If you have a question see the facilities manager.

**Pesticides Regulations.** In the event pesticides have to be used on the school grounds, notification will be posted at each entrance of the building. State law says posting must be done up to 48 hours after application. The area affected will be thoroughly cleaned and rinsed down.

## **STATE REGULATIONS INFORMATION**

**Laws Regulating Child Services.** Grace Christian School understands that child abuse/neglect is against the law and will not tolerate any activities that could be deemed as abusive or neglectful of any child. Staff members who have acted in any way that is abusive or neglectful toward children will be reported to the state authorities and removed from employment or position as a volunteer.

**Any employee or volunteer who has a reasonable suspicion of child abuse neglect is required by law to:**

- ★ Report suspected abuse to Centralized Intake (CI) at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) immediately.

- ★ Reports can be made by telephone (855-444-3911) or through the online reporting system ([mandated reporter link](#)).
- ★ Within 72 hours after making an oral report by telephone, the reporting person shall file a written report (DHS-3200). If the immediate report has been made using the online reporting system, no additional written report is required.

**School policy also dictates that the administration also be notified.**

**Elastic Clause.** The school administration will establish fair and reasonable rules and expectations for circumstances that may arise requiring action that is not covered in the Handbook and/or student Code of Conduct. In all cases, rules, expectations, and consequences shall be as consistent as possible with previously established incidents. Matters omitted from this handbook should not be interpreted as a limitation to the scope of the school's responsibility and therefore, the school's authority in dealing with any type of misbehavior that may not be in the best interest of the safety and welfare of students.

These rules and policies apply to any student who is on school property, who is in attendance at school or any school sponsored activity, who is using school telecommunication networks, accounts or other services and whose behavior at any time or place directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school, students and staff.