



2018-2019
Parent & Student
Handbook

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PHILOSOPHIES AND GOALS

HISTORY

In 1973, a group of families from what was then known as Evangelical Methodist Church (later Grace Community) saw the need for a community school where God would be worshipped and glorified, and that would serve the educational and spiritual needs of their children. They began Grace Community School with an enrollment of 60 students in grades 2 through 12 in a small building. The school was organized under the vision of Van Graham. Horace Johnson and Jerry Burgess also served as past school heads.

The school moved to the building on Old Jacksonville Road which now houses the elementary school. In the mid-1980s, the oil bust and resulting recession led to the closure of the high school. Grace continued on from kindergarten through eighth grade. In the early 90's, Grace Community purchased the building which now houses the junior high, and moved the upper grades in. As the mid-90s approached, Grace families felt called by God to add a high school. Grace completed the high school building in 1996, and graduated its first class in the new high school in 1999. In 2009, Grace completed a \$7M building project, including football/soccer field and track, junior high gym, renovations to the junior high, and new elementary and high school classrooms. In 2017, Grace Community Classical School opened to serve the home school community. GCCS is considered a "school within a school" and as such shares the same policies described in this handbook. The curriculum is Christian Classical and is designed to be compatible with the curriculum of GCS.

Grace has grown to its current size of approximately 980 students. Today, the school exists as a kindergarten through 12th grade, coeducational, college-preparatory day school with selective admissions. The curriculum is rigorous and presented from a Christian worldview.

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The educational philosophy of Grace Community School is based on a God-centered view that all truth is God's truth (John 17:17; II Cor. 13:8), and that the Bible is the inspired and only infallible authoritative Word of God which contains this truth (II Pet. 2:20-21). It is further based on the belief that God is the creator and sustainer of all things and that mankind's greatest need is to be in a right relationship with Him. We acknowledge that man is a sinner by nature and choice and possessing a fallen intellect cannot, of himself, know God or please Him. This is only possible by choosing to accept the free gift of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ, thereby committing one's life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (John 6:40).

We desire for the Word of God to permeate all areas of our curriculum, and not just be a separate subject taught on a purely intellectual basis (Rom. 10:2-3, I Cor. 2:10-16). It is from this view of the spiritual needs of the students that we approach the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of the whole child.

Intellectually, it is God's desire for His people to learn to love Him with all their minds and be transformed through the renewing of their minds to see all of life and learning from His perspective (Matt. 22:37; Rom. 12:2). Since God has revealed Himself to us, not only through His Word but also through His Creation, a God-focused, thoughtful study of His Creation reveals to us His glory and aspects of His righteous character (Gen. 1; Ps. 19:1; Isa. 6:3; 1Ti. 4:4). This

philosophy causes us to diligently study God's Creation and pursue high academic standards as a means of equipping students to become credible, effective, Christ-like leaders in every sphere of influence God has prepared for them (II Tim. 2:21, Phil. 2:15).

Socially, God has created us to live in community (Ps. 133:1) and to function as salt and light in human society (Matt. 5:13, 16). We, therefore, need to provide opportunities for appropriate interaction within the community of believers characterized by purity, forgiveness, and mutual respect, as well as teaching the skills to successfully impact society with mercy, justice and truth. (Gal. 6:10, I Pet. 3:15)

Emotionally, since God desires relationship with us that is genuine and exuberant (II Sam. 6:5; Mark 14:6-9) and relationships with others marked by humility and selflessness (Phil. 2:3-4), the school must provide emotional coaching and a safe environment through enforcement of discipline policies.

Physically, because we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14), we must be intentional about using PE, athletics, health, nutrition, and instruction about purity to ensure that we teach good stewardship of our bodies. (II Cor. 6:16)

We further believe that God has instituted the family as the major arena of teaching for children. We, therefore, seek to be of assistance to families by providing a message to students that is consistent with that given in the Christian home and church. We recognize the authority of the parents and do not seek to replace them in authority but to assist only (Eph. 6:1-2). We desire to cooperate closely with parents in every phase of the development of the students within the framework of our stated purposes.

In summary, Grace Community School exists to be a biblically-based (Prov. 1:7), academically excellent (Prov. 4:7), affordable assistance (I John 3:17) to Christian families (Deut. 6:7) who want to equip their children to influence the world for Christ and develop leaders with well-trained intellects subject to righteous character (Prov. 4:5, 18).

The following objectives are established in order to implement this philosophy:

1. To teach that the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God and our guide for faith and practice (II Pet. 2:20-21).
2. To teach that faith in Jesus Christ alone is the only way to have fellowship with God and be assured of salvation (John 6:40).
3. To encourage students to develop godly character traits (Matt. 12:35).
4. To teach students to be transformed by the renewing of their minds by developing in them a biblical worldview (Matt. 22:37; Rom. 12:2).
5. To teach students to develop self-discipline and responsibility from God's perspective (Gal. 6:9; Prov. 24:10).
6. To teach students a right response to authority from God's perspective (I Pet. 2:13-17).
7. To give students a godly basis for thinking by memorization of Scripture (Ps. 19:9-11).
8. To teach students to articulate and defend their faith and to identify and analyze contrasting worldviews (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20).
9. To teach students to cooperate with their peers and develop good relationships (Rom. 14:19; Rom. 12:17-18).

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10. To encourage physical development by providing opportunities for athletic and recreational activities (I Cor. 3:16-17).
 11. To prepare students for higher learning and the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge by teaching them the basic building blocks of learning (Prov. 4:1-9).
 12. To instill in students a heart for the lost and for service (John 15:12; Gal. 5:14).
 13. To limit enrollment to children of parents who profess Christ in accordance with the Statement of Faith; and in the case of the high school, to students who profess faith in Christ (Eph. 4:11-14).

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Grace Community School is to provide a high quality education from a Christian worldview. We desire to work with Christian parents to develop students into dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ, so that He will be glorified and His kingdom will be furthered through the next generation.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of Grace Community School is, first and foremost, that God may be glorified in all things through His Son, Jesus Christ. *Our mission is to assist Christian families in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ.*

In order to accomplish this in an educational setting, we will first provide a Christ-centered education for the children of the Tyler area without distinction to race, gender, color, national or ethnic origin. Our aim is to provide an education:

1. That is in accord with the Word of God, the Old and New Testament, which we believe to be the inspired, infallible and inerrant rule of faith and practice;
2. That possesses academic excellence, spiritual depth and moral integrity;
3. That will prepare students for godly participation in society;
4. That trains students in the knowledge of and obedience to the Word of God and promotes loyalty to God and country.

Grace Community School exists as a co-educational day school that encompasses grades Junior Kindergarten through 12th. It is operated as a non-profit, non-denominational educational ministry of Grace Community Church of Tyler, Texas, and is governed by a school board with authority from the Elder Council of Grace Community Church.

Grace Community School acknowledges the trust placed in the school by its parents, and holds in high regard the authority of the home and church to teach those distinctive doctrines held in esteem by a family's own local church. Grace Community School does not assume such authority in the school setting and endeavors to teach those fundamentals of the Christian faith which are held common to all in Christ's church.

The goal of the school is, however, to lead each student to a voluntary commitment of his life to the lordship of Christ and to develop his God-given abilities to his fullest potential so that he might influence the world for Christ.

CORE VALUES

Redemptive community. We serve a God who exists in eternal relationship. The Triune God has always existed in community- as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As image-bearers of God, we

are also made for community. We thrive in it; we can only function to the truest extent of who we are when we live together, work together, and do life together. Education is an inherently relational process. It is a form of discipleship, and like all discipleship, the closer and more trusting the relationship, the more effective the educational process. At Grace, we believe that teachers must love and care for their students. When students sense that caring and concern, they respond to it and genuine learning can take place. Teachers work best in an environment where there are strong relationships among the adults in the building.

Redemptive community, community that is God-glorifying and Spirit-breathed, is the catalyst, the medium through which great Christian education happens, through which great living happens. But, it does not JUST happen. It must be fought for, prayed over, contended for, struggled with, celebrated in, reconciled with, unified together, forgiven for, repented over--it is a LOT of hard work; however, it is good, life-giving work.

Educational sanctification. “Sanctification” captures the idea of holiness, to be set apart, completely other from the world. It also connotes the idea of a Holy Spirit-led, continuous process of moving forward, of becoming more in the image of Christ: better, purer, and more holy than we once were. Educational sanctification is the idea that God's Word- the written, revealed Word and the Word made flesh through Jesus Christ- is the foundation of everything that we do as a school. Our policies, our procedures, our practices, our curriculum, our ways of dealing with each other, and everything must proceed from the gospel. Teachers and administrators must see all of life and learning through the eyes of our Father, and must guide our students in the transformation, the renewal of their minds. The goal is for students to understand God's Word and His perspective on all of life and all of creation. We believe that only through this transformation are we able to fully glorify God and enjoy Him forever to the greatest extent He created us to do so.

Educational sanctification is also the idea that we will be continually seeking to be better than we once were, by the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We will ask ourselves the hard questions, challenge the status quo, and be lifetime learners. We will model a passion for learning to our students by reflecting it in our own lives. We will not assume that something is better simply because it is new, but neither will we so assume simply because that's the way we've always done it. If we make mistakes or if we've been slow to change, we'll seek forgiveness and move forward, never being afraid to engage in this continuous process of becoming better than we once were.

Educational sanctification means offering an outstanding academic course of study. While the course is challenging, the school works to provide the support necessary so that students can be successful to the greatest extent that God has wired their minds. “Curriculum” is defined as everything the school does, and school teachers and coaches work just as hard to provide an outstanding array of athletics, fine arts, and other activities that develop all of the aspects of learners made in the image of Christ. All of the school's curriculum is biblically integrated, and God's Word and His Truth is the foundation of everything the school does.

“Life as worship.” This value captures the idea set forth by Paul in Romans 12:1, when he encourages Christians to “present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God; because this is your spiritual act of worship.” As followers of Christ, we are called to be God-worshippers, to be restored to that rightful state of being in pure, good, and holy relationship with God. As a school, we will continuously and constantly submit everything that we do-

whether it be a student's performance on the field, a teacher's lesson in the classroom, or a difficult conversation between principal and parent- to our God as an act of worship. As a school, we will declare the worthiness of God to be praised, and acknowledge His place as the Lord of our lives and the center of the universe. This school, our studies, our performances, our gifts, talents, and resources, are our sacrifices that we will lay daily before Him, for His use and His purposes. Our entire lives and this entire school are entirely at His disposal.

Human beings are created to worship, and if we are not worshiping God, we will worship something else. Anything, whether it be high grades, strong athletic or fine arts performances, good looks, a great sense of humor, can become an idol if we or our students look to these things as our source of identity. Accordingly, every conversation, presentation, chapel service, teachers' conference, parent seminar, newsletter or update is an opportunity to focus our hearts and minds, our identity, on our relationship with Christ. The school works hard to reinforce this truth by communicating it, and through its faculty and administrators modeling it for our families and students.

STATEMENT OF FAITH - WE BELIEVE:

1. Complete Inspiration of Scripture – In The Verbal and Complete Inspiration Of The Old And New Testaments And Hold Them To Be The Inerrant Word Of God, The Supreme And Final Authority. Matthew 5:17-18, II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:20-21, Luke 1:1-3, Luke 16:17, John 10:35, Genesis 3:4-5 This is fun – this
2. Father, Son & Holy Spirit – In One God, Creator Of All Things, Eternally Existing In Three Persons: Father, Son And Holy Spirit. *Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, Isaiah 45:5, Mark 12:29-32, Psalm 90:3, I Corinthians 13:12, John 1:1-20, John 6:27, Acts 5:3-4*
3. Jesus Christ - True God, True Man – That Jesus Christ Was Conceived By The Holy Spirit, Born Of The Virgin Mary, And Is True God And True Man. He Lived A Sinless Life And Died For Our Sins According To The Scriptures – As A Representative, Substitutionary And Complete Sacrifice. He Arose Bodily From The Dead, Ascended Into Heaven And Is Today Our High Priest And Advocate. *John 1:14, I Corinthians 15:3-4, John 1:1, John 14:8, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38, Luke 24: 23-40, Isaiah 7:14, I Corinthians 15:22, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 5:1-10, Hebrews 13:5, Hebrews 7:25, I John 3:5, Romans 5:1-11, Romans 10:9-10, II Corinthians 5:17, Acts 1:1-11, I Peter 3:22*
4. The Holy Spirit - Helper, Teacher, Guide – In The Holy Spirit Who Came Forth From The Father And Son To Convict The World Of Sin, Of Righteousness, And Of Judgment – To Regenerate, Sanctify, Baptize, And Empower All Who Believe In Jesus Christ. He Indwells Every Believer In Christ, And Is An Abiding Helper, Teacher And Guide. *Ephesians 1:13-14, John 3:5-7, John 14:16-17, John 16:7-11, John 13, Matthew 28:19, II Thessalonians 2:7, I Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 5:18, Romans 8:26-27*
5. His Sovereign Mercy & Grace – That Man Was Created In The Image Of God, That He Sinned And Thereby Incurred Not Only Physical Death, But Spiritual Death, Which Is Separation From God; And That All Human Beings Are Born With A Sinful Nature, Lost, Without Hope, Except In His Sovereign Mercy And Grace. *Genesis 1:27, Romans 6:23, Genesis 5:1, I Corinthians 11:7*
6. Sin Has Devastated Mankind – That Sin is the condition that all of Mankind finds itself facing. Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve and affects everyone. It leaves men and women separated from God and facing condemnation and judgment with no

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- ability to remedy the situation on their own. *Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:8,9*
7. Salvation By Faith Alone – That Salvation Is Received By Faith Alone In The Lord Jesus Christ. All Who Trust In Him Alone Are Justified And Assured Of Eternal Life By His Shed Blood. *Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:7, I John 3:1-2, Romans 3:14-17*
 8. Live A Holy Life – That Christians Are Called To Live A Holy Life Of Service And Testimony For The Glory Of God And The Well-Being Of Their Fellow Man. *I Peter 1:15-16, John 12:25-26, Acts 1:8, I Corinthians 3:12-15*
 9. Community Of Believers – The Universal Church Embraces All True Believers. It Is The Body And Bride Of Christ, Formed By The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit. The Local Church Consists Of A Community Of Believers In Jesus Christ, Baptized On A Credible Profession Of Faith And Associated For Worship, Work And Fellowship. *Ephesians 1:22-23, I Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 4:11-16, Ephesians 5:24 & 30, I Corinthians 12: 13 & 27, Hebrews 10:24-25*
 10. His Worldwide Kingdom On The Earth – In The Imminent Coming Of Christ For His Church And The Visible And Personal Coming Of Our Lord And Savior Jesus Christ To Establish His Worldwide Kingdom On The Earth. *Titus 2:13, Matthew 24:30, I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18, 5:4-10, Matthew 24:21 & 29, Matthew 25:31 & 46, Revelation 3:10, Revelation 20:11-15*
 11. The Bodily Resurrection Of All – In The Bodily Resurrection Of The Righteous And The Unrighteous; The Righteous To Everlasting Communion With God – The Unrighteous To Everlasting Separation From God. *John 5:28-29, I Thessalonians 4:15-18, II Thessalonians 1:6-10, Luke 16:22-28, Revelation 20:11-15*
 12. Satan Is Actively Attempting To Destroy The Power & Work Of Christ – That Satan And His Demons Are About The Business Of Attempting To Destroy The Power And Work Of Christ, And The Authority Of The Word Of God. *I Peter 5:8, Isaiah 14:12-15, Revelation 14:11, 19:20, Revelation 20:10*
 13. Baptism & The Lords Table – The Ordinances Of The Church, Given By Our Lord, Are Baptism And The Lord's Table. *Acts 2:38, Matthew 26:26-29, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:12, Acts 12, Acts 13, Acts 36, Acts 41, Romans 6:3-4*
 14. The Great Mission Of The Church – In The Great Commission Our Lord Gave To His Church, Which Is To Evangelize And Make Disciples Of All Nations, And That This Is The Great Mission Of The Church. *Mark 16:15, John 20:21, Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:44-49, John 12:24-26, Acts 1:8, Acts 36-37, I Peter 3:15-16*

GCS POSITION ON FAITH AND SCIENCE

Humbly acknowledging the infinite complexity of God and the limitations of human knowledge (Isaiah 55:8-9), concerning secondary doctrine not explicit in the Gospel, we intentionally teach and engage in loving, thoughtful, discussion, and we robustly present different defensible views, modeling Christian unity as we "agree to disagree" Our desire is to equip our students to "pursue wisdom by valuing and practicing intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, seeking to influence their world for Christ as they engage in open, honest, and humble exchange of ideas in the public marketplace" (from Portrait of a GCS graduate).

POSITION ON MARRIAGE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

This position statement constitutes the official position of Grace Community of Tyler and all of her attendant ministries: Grace Community Church, Grace Community School, and Grace Community Early Education Center.

God exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and has for all eternity, John 1:1. God is, therefore, a relational God, and He creates human beings for relationship. God created man and woman in His image, and each reflect aspects of God's nature and character, Gen. 1:26. God blesses the creation of male and female as separate, physical beings as a creational good, Gen 1:31. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and one's sexual identity is a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman. Gender is given by God, and humans are not free to choose or to change their sexual identity.

God views marriage as a covenantal relationship created and entered into by God and a man and a woman, Gen 2. He views the consummation of heterosexual marriage with sexual intercourse as creating a binding of the two, a "one flesh" union between man and woman, Gen 2:24. This creational order has given rise to the Church's traditionally high view of marriage, and negative stance toward divorce, I Tim. 4:15. Historically, the Church has affirmed the marriage between one individual of each gender as the established norm. This standard has served purposes of biological reproduction, and is viewed as supported by Scripture as optimal for nurturing children, Gen. 1 and 2, providing pleasure within the marital context, Prov. 5: 15-20, and gratifying the basic human sex drive, I Cor. 7:1-9. This marital relationship is also metaphorical, in that throughout Scripture it represents, "a profound mystery," Christ's love for His Church, as well as God's love for Israel.

For millennia, the traditional sexual ethic of both the Christian church and the Hebrew people is that God commends and prescribes chastity, for married people through the exclusivity of sex with one's spouse in marriage, and for unmarried people through celibacy. This view is based upon both commendations of marriage in Scripture (Matt. 19:4-6; Gen. 2:24, Eph. 5:30-33), and prohibitions in both the Old and New Testament of adultery, incest, rape, fornication, homosexual sex, and lust (Ex. 20:14; I Cor. 6:12-20; Heb.13:4; Lev. 18:22; Rom 1:26-27). Sexual sin is a sin like others in Scripture, but Christians are further called to sexual purity and urged to flee sexual immorality.

Christ, the Apostle Paul, and others in Scripture practiced celibacy. Paul cautions against viewing sexual intimacy as a basic necessity to achieve full humanity, I Cor. 7. Thus, sexual behavior or orientation, while something that man does, is not declared by God to be a part of his identity.

Grace Community of Tyler adopts and ascribes to the traditional interpretation of marriage and human sexuality, as set forth above, and as recognized by the Scriptures and the great weight of Church tradition for over two millennia. Grace Community of Tyler will teach according to these God-ordained beliefs, and will employ those who believe and practice according to these beliefs to the greatest extent permitted by the laws of God and man.

GCS LIFESTYLE STATEMENT

Grace Community School's biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to become Christlike. This involves the church's and school's understanding and belief of what Scripture teaches are the qualities and characteristics that exemplify a Christlike life. These beliefs include scriptural teachings that mankind is created in the image of God; that men and women are created separately, and as a separate creation; that God gave sexual union as a gift, and intended it to be celebrated within the sole context of a man and a woman, joined together in marriage; that God calls us as Christians to holiness, to live according to His design and purposes; and as a church and school, we are called to model and live this holiness.

As a voluntary community associated under a common belief in Christ, Grace Community of Tyler, including the school believes that the full and biblically-sanctioned expression of human sexuality is in the context of marriage between one man and one woman. The community depends upon all of its members living according to common principles, in order to inculcate these values in the lives of our children. By enrolling their children in the school, school family members agree to conduct themselves in accordance with these teachings, not engaging in conduct or practice that contradicts or goes outside this biblically-ordained context of sexual intimacy. School family members understand that his or her continued conduct in accordance with these provisions is a condition of ongoing enrollment in the school.

The school reserves the right, within its sole discretion, to refuse the admission of an applicant or discontinue enrollment of a student if the atmosphere or conduct within a particular home or the activities of the student are counter to or are in opposition to the biblical lifestyle the school teaches. The school also reserves the right, as a church ministry, to employ only those employees who commit to lives of holiness consistent with biblical holiness, as reflected in the lifestyle statement and the Grace position on marriage and human sexuality.

PORTRAIT OF A GCS GRADUATE

At GCS, “Teaching Jesus” means by faith using every resource at our disposal to equip students to “Learn Jesus” as exemplified by the following descriptors tied to the GCS core values of Redemptive Community, Educational Sanctification, and Life as Worship. A GCS student who is “learning Jesus” will make progress to:

Life as Worship

1. Understand and commit to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, submitting to God’s Word and empowered by the Holy Spirit, pursuing a Gospel-driven life of worship, mission, faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.
2. Understand that one’s worth comes from Christ alone, and that he/she is a uniquely designed reflection of His glory, practicing responsible stewardship of all of God’s Creation, including gifts and talents, bodies, finances, time (including discretionary time), digital devices, and community resources.
3. Believe that the “good life” cannot be purchased, but must be cultivated through the discipline and habits of biblical virtue.
4. Understand that work has dignity as an expression of the nature of God and as an act of worship, expecting, accepting, and learning humility from occasional failure and disappointment.

Educational Sanctification

1. Be well prepared in all academic disciplines, including;
 - a. Proficiency in communication skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and digital applications);
 - b. A knowledge and understanding of science, its epistemological limitations, and an understanding of a naturalistic worldview and how it contrasts with a biblical worldview;
 - c. A knowledge of the people, events and movements in history, including church history,
 - d. A facility with and appreciation for the language of mathematics.

2. Appreciate the visual and performing arts, athletics, and other co-curricular activities; and understand how they express and shape beliefs and values.
3. Use biblical discernment in utilizing resources, including technology, to find, analyze, and evaluate information.
4. Understand, articulate, and defend a biblical worldview while having a basic understanding of opposing worldviews.
5. Understand the Bible for its historical, literary, inspirational, transformational, and theological value, acknowledging that only the Holy Spirit can apply truth to the human heart.

Redemptive community

1. Embrace and practice justice, mercy, integrity, courtesy, self-discipline, and peacemaking infused with the Gospel in personal and virtual relationships.
2. Apply spiritual principles of gratitude, humility, forgiveness, submission, other-centeredness, and love.
3. Pursue wisdom by valuing and practicing intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, seeking to influence their world for Christ as they engage in open, honest, and humble exchange of ideas in the public marketplace.
4. Understand the Great Commission as commanded by Christ and develop a desire to respond to that commission locally and globally in a culturally-relevant manner.
5. Understand the worth of every human being as created in the image of God by having a critical appreciation of languages and cultures of other peoples, dispelling prejudice, promoting unity and diversity, and encouraging biblical hospitality for the alien or stranger.
6. Be actively involved in a church community, serving God and others with humility.

Portrait of an Elementary Graduate

At GCS, “Teaching Jesus” means by faith using every resource at our disposal to equip students to “Learn Jesus” as exemplified by the following descriptors tied to the GCS core values of Redemptive Community, Educational Sanctification, and Life as Worship. A GCS elementary student who is “learning Jesus” will make progress to:

Life as Worship

1. Begin to understand the fall of man and his/her individual need for a Savior. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Romans 3:23
2. Begin to understand that a right relationship with God can only be accomplished through Jesus. *“But God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Romans 5:8
3. Begin to understand that one’s love for God and the authority He has placed over his or her life is demonstrated through obedience to His commands. *“This is love for God to obey his commands, and his commands are not burdensome.”* I John 5:3
4. Begin to develop a thirst for God’s Word and commit His Word to memory. *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”* Psalm 119:11
5. Begin to understand that actions and words are an overflow of hearts. *“A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”* Luke 6:35

Educational Sanctification

1. Begin to understand that learning is a way to love God with the mind. Mark 12:30 *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”*
2. Be prepared for Junior High in all academic and co-curricular disciplines including:
 - a. Proficiency in language skills (spelling, sentence structure, grammar, reading, and technology applications)
 - b. Knowledge of and mastery over basic math facts, concepts, and procedures (+,-,x, /)
 - c. Knowledge of people, events, and movements in history from a biblical worldview
 - d. Understand that the study of God’s creation (its order and design), which leads to greater understanding of God’s sovereignty.
 - e. Appreciate the visual and performing arts as well as understand the importance of keeping one’s body healthy through regular physical activity.
3. Begin to understand the Bible for its historical, literary, inspirational, and transformational value acknowledging that only the Holy Spirit can apply truth to the human heart.
4. Begin to understand that all things should be done heartily as unto the Lord to bring Him honor and glory; including academic work, musical programs, art work, technology, or physical fitness. *“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,”* Colossians 3:23

Redemptive Community

1. Begin to understand that a right relationship with Jesus is the foundation for other relationships. *“We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”* I John 4:19-21
2. Begin to understand that actions and words affect others so one must learn to be others-centered and treat others the way one desires to be treated. *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,”* Philippians 2:3-5 *“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”* John 7:12
3. Begin to grow as peacemakers and caretakers. *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”* Matthew 5:9 *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* I Peter 4:10
4. Begin to grow in awareness of the needs of others and respond to opportunities to serve others in our school, community, and world. (Servant Leaders, Kairos Ministry, Pastors’ Appreciation, Veterans Day, Salvation Army, Operation Christmas Child) *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”* I Peter 4:10
5. Begin to demonstrate the GCS core character qualities: respect, honesty, gratitude, obedience, responsibility, and self-control. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”* Galatians 5:22-26

AFFILIATIONS

Grace Community School is a ministry of Grace Community Church of Tyler, Texas. Our school is an accredited member school of the Association of Christian Schools International and AdvancEd. ACSI provides leadership seminars, teacher conferences, and represents Christian schools in state and national issues concerning Christian education. Grace is also a charter member and is certified through the Council on Educational Standards and Accountability (CESA). Grace Community High School also is a member of TAPPS, the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools.

PHILOSOPHY OF CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

The course of study at Grace Community School is designed to be biblically integrated, developmentally appropriate and rigorous. The word *curriculum* is derived from the Latin for “running a course” and is composed of WHAT we teach. Curriculum at Grace is defined as everything we do as a school, whether academic, athletic, fine arts, or other pursuits. Pedagogy means “teaching children” and refers to HOW we teach the curriculum. The course we run at GCS is designed to contribute to the Portrait of a GCS Graduate by restoring and fostering relational wholeness in Christ, who holds all things together.

Indeed, God is a god of relationship, of community. He lived in community with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, completely and perfectly, before time began. He created us in His image to have and enjoy community with Him and with each other, to be whole and complete within ourselves, and to live in harmony with Creation as its perfect caretaker. Through sin, each of these relationships has been fractured and distorted. Christ’s redeeming work on the Cross makes it possible for us to be redeemed and restored in these relationships. We are living in the “now, not yet” of God’s redemptive process, whereby through Christ we can begin and travel the journey of full restoration, a journey that will be culminated and consummated through Christ’s return and the establishment of the New Heaven, the New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. The educational process is a means by which we facilitate the restoration of these relationships in ourselves, in our students, in our families, and in the world.

In short, Grace exists to *teach Jesus*. Teaching Jesus in the context of relationships is the lens through which we view our entire pedagogy and curriculum. We do those things which best allow us to teach Jesus, and we do not do those things which do not best allow us to do so.

Grades Junior Kindergarten-5

With our youngest JrK students, our goal is to provide an age-appropriate balance of classroom structure with a gentle, consistent environment which fosters an excitement about learning. Academically, beginning with phonemic awareness in JrK, we select great children’s literature to help elementary students progress through phonics and reading fluency, always including vocabulary and comprehension skills. Students learn cursive handwriting and practice composition skills. Math instruction emphasizes a solid mastery of facts and procedures while also teaching concepts and application. Science and history receive increasing attention with older students; and enrichment opportunities abound in library, computer, P.E., art, music, Spanish, Latin, speech, and missions/service projects. In all grades, every day begins with Bible and every subject is naturally integrated with biblical truth. The discipline system is part of this curriculum and is designed to reinforce family training in other-centeredness and self-control, teaching the need for Christ and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Grades 6-8

Building on the foundation of the lower grades, junior high students continue to hone skills in grammar, composition, Latin, and math while addressing more challenging content in Bible, literary analysis, science (physical, earth and life), history (world, Texas, and American), computer and logic. More intensive involvement in art, band, orchestra, drama, or choir begins in 6th grade, competitive athletics begin in 7th grade. An emphasis on character training and a reasoned biblical worldview continue.

Grades 9-12

A biblical humanities approach integrates the disciplines of Bible, history, and English; and humanities questions about the relationships among God, man, and creation serve as the unifying framework for the disciplines of math, science, technology, engineering, foreign language, fine arts, and athletics. Dual Credit and Advanced Placement courses are taught by GCS faculty and are also biblically integrated. Bible is a required 4 year subject and includes Old and New Testament study, Bible study methods, apologetics, worldview, and doctrine. Spiritual formation is promoted through chapel, regular small group meetings, mentoring relationships with teachers, and community service.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME

Communication between school and home is vital to the success of students at GCS. Central to this communication are both email and two websites: RenWeb ParentsWeb, the family link to our school management system, www.RenWeb.com and. Email is our number one communication tool; it is imperative that the office have the most current email address on file for parents. Students in grade 8-12 have a gracetyler.org email account. Both students and parents are encouraged to check email often. ParentsWeb provides information about grades, assignments, attendance, discipline, hot lunches and includes family billing and other helpful information. The GCS website provides information about upcoming events, changes, opportunities, and news. In addition, phone calls, notes, and email may be used to communicate throughout the year.

PHILOSOPHY ON DIVERSITY, UNITY AND THE *IMAGO DEI*

As it pertains to Grace, promoting diversity within the school is a worthy and biblically-necessary goal, regardless of whether it is immediately obvious to our constituents, or makes the school more attractive or marketable in the short term. Fred Smith of The Gathering has said, “Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first, it is ridiculed, in the second it is opposed, in the third it is regarded as self-evident. It may be that making the world safe for diversity is the most dangerous, foolhardy and yet heroic task in the world.”

Adequately meeting the needs of diverse students allows the school to fulfill the following goals, deeply rooted in the mission of Grace: 1) to better and more fully reflect the *imago Dei*, the image of God, as a school; 2) to testify to the unifying power of the gospel; 3) to create a vibrant, rich educational culture that meets the needs of all students, equipping them to live redemptively in an increasingly-multicultural society and to preserve the unity of the Body of Christ; 4) to celebrate the aesthetic of a creator God who made us different in order to reflect His beauty and to teach us to love; and 5) to align our hearts and minds with our Lord as a school community—for those things and people to matter to us who matter to Him. Additionally, promoting diversity

is a long-term economic sustainability strategy for the school, giving the increasingly diverse local and national culture.

The Grace philosophy is to celebrate diversity through the unity that the Church enjoys in Christ. God has designed human beings to look, think, and act differently across cultures, and different cultures reflect the *imago Dei* differently. For example, and speaking broadly, Western European culture (influenced by the Greeks) is rooted in the life of the mind, a rational, thoughtful expression of God's nature and character. Conversely, most African cultures generally place heavy emphasis on the life of the spirit. In those cultures, the spirit realm, the work of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual warfare are more typically deeply understood and reflected than in Western cultures. These two broad cultural themes, blended with the manifestations from other cultures, more fully reveal and reflect God's nature and character. The same can be said for cultural themes of every cultural group. Therefore, diversity is to be appreciated and celebrated, as various tiles in the beautiful mosaic that comprise the *imago Dei*.

At the same time, followers of Christ are called to be a new nation, a unified people. We are adopted brothers and sisters, joined into one family by our Father's calling, Christ's blood, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The unity that the Church enjoys in Christ transcends all differences and binds us one to another. It truly captures what is also the American ideal, reflected on our nation's currency: *E Pluribus Unum*- "out of many, one." Therefore, a biblical philosophy of diversity must encompass the idea of celebrating and respecting diversity as glorifying God more fully, all the while promoting unity and love within the Body as a new culture that both encompasses and transcends the multi-culture.

A Culture that Reflects and Respects the Philosophy

In "The Dimensions of Multicultural Education," James Banks advocates examining cultures and social structures within the school to ensure alignment with principles of diversity. (Banks, 2010). Grace administrators and faculty must continually seek to examine what underlying assumptions or subconscious practices may be inconsistent with the underlying, biblical theme of unity in diversity. What grouping or testing practices, norms concerning sports, fine arts, or club participation, subtle messages, unexamined assumptions, or "territories and turfs" are conspiring to send signals contrary to those that respect and celebrate diversity, and that promote unity? As these things are considered, it is imperative that we address a common misconception. Diversity is not about having the pendulum swing in the opposite direction or suppressing the culture of those currently in our school family. Rather, diversity is about bringing together multiple cultures in a Christ honoring way that leads to each culture feeling valued, celebrated, embraced, and respected. The school family seeks to engage in healthy, loving, and measured dialogue among teachers, administrators, school families and students to identify contrary messages and deal with them as a necessary precursor to promoting a unifying message.

At the same time, discussion and deep communication among those same stakeholders to understand cultural differences is crucial. What patterns of communication, social values (the dos and don'ts of behavior), preferred ways of learning and values of knowledge, philosophies of child-raising, and outward displays of culture are valuable expressions of each culture represented within the school that should be celebrated, enjoyed, and understood? Communication and teacher training in what is important and what is praiseworthy must underlie the "what" that is taught.

Implications for Explicit Curriculum

At Grace, curriculum is defined broadly, to include “all of the educative experiences learners have in an educational program,” whether considered traditionally curricular or co-curricular. Curriculum that embraces diversity and unity examines content integration, as well as other aspects. As Banks describes, there are several other dimensions of multicultural education for schools to consider, including knowledge construction processes, prejudice reduction, and equity pedagogy. (Banks, 2010). Grace leaders must contemplate and align each of these dimensions not only with the theme of unity in diversity, but with the school’s biblical philosophy of curriculum and pedagogy.

The first area to consider is content integration. The school’s traditionally strong liberal arts focus, with emphasis on “great works” of literature, includes works that are primarily western in origin. Great works of literature are important, but so are great *ideas*. In the humanities, attention should be given to ideas and values that are written on the human heart and that span cultural boundaries. For example, teachers could use works from different cultures that capture the cross-cultural concept of the hero who brings redemption, to deliver his people out of darkness. Or, the school could emphasize multiethnic works that capture ideals of love and integrity, of loyalty and honor; ideals that may be manifested differently among different cultures, but that are prized by all.

If the *imago Dei* is truly manifested differently in different cultures, yet more fully among all, curriculum leaders should seek out those learning experiences and opportunities that capture and celebrate those differences. For example, a social studies lesson or unit on death, demonstrating European-American expressions of grief versus African expressions of celebration, demonstrating how both are necessary and important to what God teaches mankind about the end of this life, could be used to capture this theme.

Grace teachers must be trained to understand how perceptions are formed and the manner in which cultural assumptions, frames of reference, and biases reflect the ways people interpret the same information differently based on personal context. Teachers’ understanding should be coupled with an appreciation for the ways that the Holy Spirit uses a shared biblical framework for interpreting revealed knowledge to unify a community of diverse Christians. Teaching students to understand backgrounds and perspectives of writers and thinkers, and their purposes for writing or thinking, should be compared and contrasted both with those of other cultures, and with a biblical perspective. A biblical perspective is preeminently important, because it allows students not only to examine and celebrate their own culture and those of others, but also to be “appreciative critics” of those cultures. A perspective rooted in absolute truth serves as a reference point allowing students to differentiate what is praiseworthy and what is worthy of criticism within one’s own culture, as when examining the European ethnocentricity of historical concepts such as, “the New World” and the “discovery” of America.

Prejudice reduction is another dimension for Grace curriculum leaders to review and consider. Grace students should continue being taught from the unifying force of the gospel and its message of love and reconciliation. They have taught that racism and prejudice are sinful, and that when man decries what God creates as good, it hurts the heart of the God we love. This has been an effective way to reduce prejudice in Grace students. Additionally, other types of experiences or materials, such as multiethnic readers, controlled experiments in experiencing

discrimination, and exposure to the food, art, folk dances, and music of constituent cultures within the school may be considered to foster and eliminate prejudice among students.

Finally, Grace teachers should be trained in equity pedagogy, in identifying those pedagogical techniques and methods of instruction that are most culturally relevant and helpful for students of different cultures. Here again, in keeping with the idea of unity in diversity, it is important to differentiate at times, but also to underscore the importance for all students of all cultures to learn to work with varied types and methods of instruction.

Conclusion

Thinking through these various curricular implications of multicultural learning is extremely helpful. At the end of the day, helping students, and adults for that matter, to respect and celebrate the differences that God has woven into each of us, while simultaneously enjoying the oneness we enjoy as children of God, is one of the greatest ways our school can prepare its students to appreciate their Creator, and to live in and to impact this increasingly-diverse, multicultural world for Christ.

References: Banks, J. (2010). The Dimensions of Multicultural Education. In *Curriculum Leadership* (9th ed., pp. 88-102). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

PHILOSOPHY ON LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Standard 3.12 “The school provides and coordinates learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of students.”

We are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139), with innumerable unique manifestations of that image; and each individual is operating with unique gifts and unique challenges. Given the limited resources of any educational system, it is not possible to address every learning difference in a classroom setting – and no one solution fits every individual. A healthy tension between teaching the academic content and teaching the individual child will always exist and needs to be prayerfully managed.

We believe that a *variety* of gifts and abilities - not just academic gifts - are useful in the Kingdom for the glory of God. Therefore, we want to honor, encourage and value those who possess both academic *and* non-academic gifts, and work with them to develop those gifts to God’s glory. That being said, we *are* a school and it is our job, delegated by Christian parents, to equip students academically.

We further believe that a rigorous, biblically integrated ***“Humanities + STEM”** curriculum will benefit any student – academically gifted or not – to be blessed by the joy of learning and equipped to influence the world for Christ. We desire for every GCS student to become a literate, discerning lifetime-learning lover of Jesus.

Grades

Grades are used to describe progress toward an academic standard, supply accountability, communicate to parents, and accurately report progress toward the standard to the next grade level. Our challenge is to attempt to meet the individual student where he is *and* accurately report progress in learning the content and skills of the curriculum *at the same time*. Some students may need additional academic support (study skills, organizational help, tutorials,

guided study halls, support, interventions), and those services are available as needed. Some students will benefit from greater academic challenge, and those opportunities are available as well (pre-AP and AP courses, electives, TAPPS competitions, test prep). All students should be encouraged to develop areas of strength and improve in areas of weakness. All students and their parents need to be willing to celebrate the rich, biblically integrated “Humanities +” foundation even though the grade they earn may not be “A”. It is our desire for students to confidently and victoriously receive worth from their identity in Christ and their unique purpose in bringing Him glory in His Kingdom.

*”Humanities +” means that all disciplines, including the STEM disciplines, are biblically integrated with the same essential questions for biblical humanities.

Support

At the Elementary, the Academic Support Center provides early intervention with Search and Teach for Kindergarten and 1st grade students; as well as managing student “Grace Plans” and conducting reading labs for those with diagnosed learning differences. Therapy for students diagnosed with dyslexia is available during school hours and changes may be prescribed during the intervention. Long-term after-school support and instruction would benefit those diagnosed with attention regulation difficulties. Classroom aides enable teachers to plan more differentiated learning opportunities for students who have no diagnosis but who need specific short-term help.

At the Upper Campus, the Academic Support Center (ASC) offers support for parents and academic assistance for students 6-12 through the Learning Lab Program (reteaching content and developing study skills) and the Grace Plan Program (providing accommodations for those with diagnosed learning differences). Diagnostic screening, therapy and one-on-one tutoring is also available upon request.

Definitions and Protocols

Changes in academic environment, which enable the student to show what he knows.

These are significant changes documented on a Grace Plan in response to a recent diagnosis. Examples are scribing, testing location, fewer items at a time on a test, or extra time on activities for which the target skill is not speed. Classroom level changes or differentiation like preferential seating, movement, tutoring, temporary scaffolding, or options for presentation do not require a Grace Plan.

Changes in academic expectations.

These are changes in content or skill documented on a Grace Plan in response to a recent diagnosis. Examples are use of audio-books while learning to read, decreased number of spelling words or AR points, significantly reduced reading level, going “non-graded” in a particular subject during an intervention period, extra time on any activity for which time is a target skill, decreased content or changes in regular assignments and assessments.

All significant changes in content, skill, or environment necessary for student learning are documented on a Grace Plan. If implemented in the classroom, they are noted on the elementary report card with the comment “**receiving academic support for learning**”, but the primary method of documentation and communication is the Grace Plan.

Examples:

1. On a 20 word spelling test, 10 words on Thursday and 10 words on Friday would be a change in environment, but testing on 10 total words would be a change in content.
2. Extra time on a math or history test would be a change in environment. Extra time on a speed drill or “Read and Think” would be a change in skill.
3. Reminding of test taking skills, clarifying a test question, or giving a test one section at a time would be a change in environment. Cuing with content information during a test or reviewing between sections of a test is a change in content.
4. Scribing or typing verbatim from dictation on a student writing assignment would be a change in environment. Writing or typing while composing, coaching, or wordsmithing a writing assignment would be a change in skill and content.

If a student is pulled out of a class, the class listed on the report card will say, “Individualized _____”.

Referral for Academic Support

A teacher, a parent, a student, or a principal may initiate a referral for academic support or the development of a Grace Plan. The director of the ASC or the campus principal will arrange a meeting with all parties to suggest a plan for intervention or support. A Grace Plan requires recent (within 3-5 years for colleges, depending on the diagnosis) psychoeducational testing from a battery of specific tests from a licensed diagnostician. At the elementary, any change in academic expectations requires enrollment in academic support.

ASC Testing Protocol

- The ASC is available for testing if a student has a diagnosed learning difference or psychoeducational evaluation which indicates an accommodation or modification which has been documented on a Grace Plan.
- Students may also occasionally test in the ASC *at the discretion of the classroom teacher if it is deemed an appropriate accommodation and is arranged in advance* (i.e. if a student has an injury or illness which requires a short term accommodation, is a new student, is making up work due to absences, or is experiencing test anxiety). Frequent testing in the ASC indicates the need for diagnostic testing and the development of a Grace Plan.
- Enrollment in a Learning Lab (guided study hall) does not mean that the student is expected to test in the ASC.
- Extended time is normally time and a half. If extended time is desired for standardized testing, it must be supported by a full battery of diagnostic testing and documented in a Grace Plan. Enrollment in a Learning Lab or testing in the ASC does not automatically qualify a student for extended time on standardized tests.
- Additional *instruction* on test-taking strategies, on how to understand certain types of questions, or on actual content may occur before or after, but not during, the test.
- The ASC teacher may assist by reading aloud or clarifying a question; by reminding a student to reread and follow directions or to check over for completion; and by reminding a student of test-taking strategies (i.e. “Skip and mark this now to come back to, and read the rest of the test to see if anything there jogs your memory”. or “Remember what we reviewed”).)
- The ASC teacher may only review immediately before the test with explicit permission from the classroom teacher, and may not review within sections of the test unless

prescribed by the Grace Plan. Review may be from notes, books, and other review materials, but never from the test itself.

- The ASC teacher may suggest that students “data dump” memorized information (i.e. “Dump the formulae you memorized for area” or “Dump your conjugations”).
- Tests given orally will be taken in isolation, and the tester will scribe oral answers verbatim.
- Tests will be administered one page at a time in case they cannot be completed in the allotted 50 minutes.

The above-referenced guidelines are not exclusive; efforts will be made to creatively design a plan that accommodates the learner’s differences within the professional discretion and judgment of GCS staff and the school’s overall mission. In implementing this philosophy, GCS hopes to teach each child in the manner that they are fearfully and wonderfully made by God to the greatest extent He has resourced the school to do so.

PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY

“Teaching Jesus” in the context of technology requires that we equip our students to discipline their hearts and minds to use new technologies, and particularly digital technologies, in redemptive and effective ways. Teachers are called and expected to use digital applications to support and enhance learning when they are the most pedagogically effective means of instruction or assessment, and students are called and expected to use digital applications for learning, organization, creation, and presentation.

Given the vast and well-heralded potential for digital technologies to be used in ways that are not edifying, and even damaging, students must be taught to use them well. For the health of their own souls and for the sake of the gospel, Christian students must employ technologies to glorify God, to accomplish His purposes, and to promote human flourishing. Students need explicit instruction, self-awareness, discussion, adult modeling, and practical opportunities to guide them in practicing self-discipline, wisdom, discernment, and moderation in using digital technology. GCS will provide those resources and training necessary to equip students to be wise stewards of the technologies God has given for their edification and enjoyment, and for His good purposes. Teaching and practicing the redemptive use of technology, whether a lapboard or a laptop, is a core component of the school’s mission.

GCS will also assess and employ those technologies which support its mission, not only in the classroom, but in the school’s administrative and financial functions.

At Grace Community School, we believe that the weight of Scripture compels us to consider the use of any prospective technology, including, but not limited to, digital technology, through the following four guiding questions:

1. Does the technology under consideration for our school promote incarnational community? More simply, does it detract from or enhance the relationship between teacher and student?
2. Does the technology enhance or detract from student learning?
3. Does the technology aid in teaching the redemptive uses of technology?
4. Does the investment in the technology comport with principles of good stewardship?

In the end, whether it’s the 21st century or the first or, if the Lord tarries, the 31st, great education is about what it’s always been about—great teachers, well-trained and equipped, passionate

about what they're teaching and who they're teaching, lovingly pouring their lives and their well-developed minds into students who, though prone to wander, are drawn by the power of relationship into engaged learning, all in a strong learning community where *shalom* reigns supreme. The Christian school is mankind's best hope for education that promotes human flourishing, and any technology that provides means to that noble and God-breathed end should be prayerfully and thoughtfully considered.

GCS SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The Heart of this Philosophy Statement: This statement is the philosophy, the ideal of what we believe God is calling us to achieve through student discipline at Grace Community School (GCS). We at GCS realize that we are imperfect image-bearers of God, and we will periodically fail in our attempts to achieve these purposes. We realize that God's grace is sufficient to cover our imperfect attempts to discipline redemptively, and we call on His wisdom, mercy and grace daily.

The Big Idea: GCS's approach to discipline is *relational* in nature, not *rules-based*. It is an attempt to take a *pastoral*, rather than a *punitive* approach to disciplining the heart of the student. It always seeks to *restore*, because that is what *redemptive* disciplining should do.

Biblical philosophy underlying GCS's discipline approach: The ultimate goal of the GCS approach to discipline is to glorify God by seeking out the heart of the student and disciplining that heart toward the nature and character of God.

The Nature of the Student

Students are created in the image of God. As image-bearers, most of whom are redeemed by the blood of Christ, they are called to be God's stewards or co-regents over the earth. Part of the role of GCS is to equip students to serve in that capacity in a wise and godly manner. GCS is called to appeal to the responsible aspect of their nature. As such, we do not primarily rely on imposing rules and regulations, coercing or enticing students through threats of punishment or promise of reward, or using carefully devised and executed systems of control. The school's job is not primarily to control behavior for its own sake, but to treat students as free, responsible, creative, rational co-rulers of His creation.

Students are also fallen as a result of sin. Apart from Christ, God's Word, and His Spirit, students will inevitably live out that image in ways that do not honor God and hurt others. GCS neither assumes that in all cases the freedom that students are given will be used responsibly, or that they will always make the right choices. GCS strives to intervene in students' lives as incarnations of God's Truth, not to control students but to nurture, love, and discipline them in the midst of their fallen nature.

God's Word is the foundation for all attempts to set policy, to enforce it, to change it when necessary, and to set it aside when appropriate. Boundaries are necessary for students because they provide security. Teachers deal with misconduct because students need to be loved.

The Nature of the Teacher and Administrator

Teachers are also image-bearers of God, fallen in sin, and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Teachers treat students as God treats them, fallen and hopeless apart from His grace, but who are to be dealt with according to what He created them to be.

Teachers are pastoral, operating as prophets, priests and kings in the lives of their students. As prophets, they speak God's Truth, comfort and assurance. They lovingly and purposefully confront when words and actions do not conform to the character of God. They affirm and encourage. Their words and actions suggest that they love the students no matter how they behave.

Teachers act as kings to correct students when they are creating trouble for others or themselves. Once students know and trust the teacher and have learned that they care for them, a mere word of warning or gentle rebuke is usually enough to turn them from folly. If not, further consequences (in whatever form) are used to make known in no uncertain terms that students must not go further to harm.

Teachers act as priests to comfort their students, and to guide students on the correct path. This may be accomplished through words of encouragement, a hand on the shoulder, engagement in the student's life outside the classroom, or whatever appropriate means create a mentoring relationship between the student and the teacher.

Teachers' authority comes from God. They affirm that authority in the hearts of students when teachers treat students with the love and respect due image-bearers of God. Teachers do not seek to fight for or demand authority, nor are they afraid they will lose it. Those who talk most about being respected very rarely are. God is the source of their authority, and teachers trust in Him.

Teachers do not use their God-given authority to control students, to seek mere compliance with the rules. To do so would be to focus on the rules, rather than people. Rules and policies, which are essential for the smooth functioning of any group, are prayerfully and purposefully designed and enforced at GCS to promote habits of self-control, other-centeredness, and responsibility. Rules are enforced for the sake of the student(s) rather than for the sake of the rule, and always with a view to developing good habits and inner accountability. While rules exist so that the community of the school and the classroom will function better, they are never mechanically applied without consideration for the students themselves. People determine what will happen to people. Rules do not.

Teachers and students are called to act redemptively. The goal is always reconciliation, not mere compliance. Instead, the goal is obedience. Obedience is different from compliance. Compliance is yielding to external pressure applied to force someone to live up to expectations. Obedience is a loving response to an undeserved act of love from God. It is based in love, not fear. It is learning to live on the outside in a manner consistent with what God is doing on the inside. Those who obey Jesus are those who love Him. Love and obedience are inseparable. Teachers at GCS are committed to fostering obedience because they first offer love and forgiveness.

How This Philosophy Plays Out at GCS

Students are image-bearers of God, albeit fallen ones. Although most choose to do what is good and holy much of the time, students do make wrong choices and break the rules. Although there is not a heavy emphasis on the rules, they do exist and are chosen to reflect the character of God, the love that He has for us, and the love we are to have for each other.

Discipline is often a messy process, because teachers and administrators deal with an offender personally, not allowing the system to dictate the consequences for breaking the rules. Teachers

and administrators invest the time and energy to investigate the circumstances of the offense, and the state of the heart of the student. Therefore, acts of youthful immaturity are treated differently from acts of a rebellious heart. Teachers and administrators get their hands dirty, because a shepherd's hands will smell like sheep. They seek to allow the consequences to follow as naturally as possible the offense committed. They seek to model the character of Christ in correcting and chastising, praying earnestly and attempting to strike an appropriate balance of justice and mercy, manifesting consequences, grace, restitution, reconciliation, redemption, and restoration. They seek always to act with a spirit of love and a desire and goal of drawing the student back into a right relationship with God and others.

Only God knows the heart, and the only outward evidence of true repentance is a changed life. Only God perfectly balances justice and mercy; humans will always do so imperfectly, no matter how diligent and prayerful the attempt. Teachers and administrators know that they might do the wrong thing or end up being abused by a student who persists in doing wrong despite being offered grace. They know they might be misunderstood by the community, who does not and cannot know all the facts and sees only the action taken. Sometimes students are suspended or asked to leave for unacceptable behavior, and sometimes they appear to the community to "get off scot-free." Despite the risk of being abused and misunderstood, our faculty and staff do it anyway, based upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, because they are modeling what God has done for them. They trust in God's affirmation of their authority, and His grace to be sufficient where they fall short.

Consequences naturally flowing from bad choices are not withheld, but forgiveness is always freely given. Forgiveness is an independent act of obedience to God by the party wronged, not a payment earned by the works or sorrow of the offender. While trust must be earned, forgiveness is not withheld until the student deserves it, nor is love withheld until the student earns it.

Teachers and administrators seek not to control students, but to prayerfully help students to learn to control themselves. They always treat students with love and respect, never seeking to shame or embarrass, to undermine the dignity or to deny the image of God in their students. While they are entitled to respect by virtue of their God-given authority, they don't demand it or waste time talking about how they should have it. Instead, they seek to earn it by modeling it, showing respect and love for their students and a recognition of their worth as image-bearers of God. In so doing, they seek to foster obedience in the hearts of their students.

Students fail at GCS. When they do, they are not shamed. Affirmation, love and acceptance are not based upon good behavior; they are based upon students' positions as children of God.

A Note About Age-Appropriateness

This approach to discipline carries throughout our school, but is manifested in age-appropriate ways. For example, rules that exist in the high school are more influenced by student input than rules that exist in the elementary school. This is so because, while elementary school students are also image-bearers of Christ, they are less physically, intellectually, and socially mature, and less equipped at their young age to exercise that responsible aspect of their nature. As a student becomes older, he is given more responsibility and input into the process.

Many of the concepts identified in this statement are taken from Don Graham's *Teaching Redemptively*, Purposeful Design Publications, Colorado Springs, CO, 2003.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Parents are expected to support and uphold school policies. Without this cooperation and confirmation from the parents, a double standard exists between the home and school which is counterproductive to the student's development and the school's effectiveness.

If at any time, misunderstandings develop between the school and the home, it becomes the obligation of both to resolve these in a biblical fashion (Matt. 18): that of going directly to the parties involved for clarification and explanation. Only after first meeting with the individual with whom a dispute exists should the aggrieved party go to the individual's supervisor. For example: if a parent or student has a dispute with a teacher, the correct order of dispute resolution is as follows:

1. A meeting with the teacher at issue
2. If attempts to resolve the dispute are unsuccessful, a meeting with the principal of the school at issue
3. A meeting with the head of school

The school confesses that although all teachers and staff are chosen for their Christian commitment and high ideals, this does not make them immune from error. All suggestions and comments from parents will be examined fully and are welcomed and encouraged for the overall strengthening of the school. Any parent who openly demonstrates to students or other parents a lack of support for school policies is undermining the school's positive intent and thereby hindering its effectiveness.

The school agrees to work closely with the parents in the education of their child(ren). This includes provision of competent teachers, a full and balanced curriculum, regular reporting, proper student supervision, and communication with the home. In full cooperation with the school, parents are expected to attend school meetings and actively support other school-sponsored activities, knowing that parental participation is critical to the health and well-being of the school.

SCHOOL COLORS AND MASCOT

The school colors are royal blue and white. Gray and black are often used as accent colors. The school mascot is the cougar.

ADMISSION

NONDISCRIMINATORY STUDENT POLICY

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

ADMISSION POLICIES

The objective of the admissions procedure is to identify and admit mission-appropriate students. Grace Community School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, or ethnic

origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholastic programs, athletics, and other school programs.

Admission is considered as spaces are available based on the following schedule of priorities:

1. Children of full-time church and school employees, and children of teachers
 - a. Current employees- employment must be confirmed at the time the application is processed. Applications must be submitted no later than January 31 to be given priority consideration.
 - b. Newly hired employees- Priority for admissions will be given provided spaces are available at that time and all other admission qualifications have been met. When spaces are not available, staff children will be placed at the top of the waiting list.
2. Children of families with other students already enrolled
 - a. Application must be submitted no later than December 31 to be given priority consideration.
3. Former students and children of former students
 - a. Former students must have been in good standing (financial, discipline, and academic) at the time they left Grace to be given priority consideration.
 - b. Former students must have attended Grace for at least one full year.
 - c. Applications must be submitted no later than December 31 to receive alumni priority.
4. Children of Grace Community Church members/current Grace Early Education Center (EEC) children.
 - a. Church status/day care enrollment is determined at the time application is submitted and must be confirmed at the time application is processed.
 - b. Application must be submitted no later than December 31 to be entitled to church member/day care children priority.
5. Others (Applications for the Fall of one year are accepted no earlier than the first day of school the previous year.)

In harmony with our purpose of serving Christian families with the education and nurture of their children, the following criteria are applied to admissions:

1. One or both parents of a student, or the student's legal guardian, profess to be born-again Christians and are actively involved in a local church.
2. Parents or guardian agree with the purposes of the school and will agree to work in cooperation with the school to achieve the stated goals and responsibilities of parent and school, as reflected in the parent-school agreement and Parent/Student Handbook.
3. Parents will agree to fulfill their financial responsibilities to the school.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

1. Visit our website (www.gracetyler.org) or call the Admissions Office for information. 903.566.5678, ext. 114.
2. Complete online application (www.gracetyler.org) and submit the application. (Applications are valid for only one school year.)
3. Contact the Admissions Office to schedule a tour of the school.
4. Submit all requested information including required paperwork and fees.
5. Testing must be completed and properly evaluated.
6. Transcripts and records from preceding schools must be obtained, where applicable.
7. Immunization records must be on file and up-to-date.
8. A personal interview with the principal will be scheduled when spaces are available.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All applications are evaluated on the following criteria:

1. Parent and student application forms
2. Recommendations from: family's pastor or church staff member, present academic teacher(s) or counselor, and principal
3. Previous academic records
4. Entrance exam
5. Personal interviews with principal

All new students are accepted on probation and the school reserves the right to transfer students to the grade level at which they are performing. The school also reserves the right to release students on the basis of poor academic grades or conduct.

An official immunization record, from the child's doctor or issued by the Health Department, is required before the enrollment process is complete. All immunization records must be kept up-to-date to ensure continued enrollment in the school.

Requirements for Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten

1. JrK applicant must be four by September 1.
2. K applicant must be five by September 1.
3. One or both parents of a student, or the student's legal guardian, profess to be born-again Christians and are actively involved in a local church.
4. Applicant must have a satisfactory conduct record.
5. Applicant must have satisfactory recommendations from current principal, teacher, and pastor or church staff member.
6. Applicant must make a satisfactory score on the school entrance test.
7. Parents must interview with the principal.

Requirements for Grades 1-5

1. 1st grade applicant must be six by September 1.
2. One or both parents of a student, or the student's legal guardian, profess to be born-again Christians and are actively involved in a local church.
3. Applicant must provide a report card and achievement test results for the current year and previous two years.
4. Applicant must have satisfactory grades and conduct record.
5. Applicant must have satisfactory recommendations from current principal, teacher, and pastor or church staff member.
6. Applicant must make a satisfactory score on the school entrance test.
7. Parents must interview with the principal.

Requirements for Grades 6-8

1. One or both parents of a student, or the student's legal guardian, profess to be born-again Christians and are actively involved in a local church.
2. One or both parents of an applicant, or the applicant's legal guardian, must provide a report card and achievement test results for the current year and previous two years.
3. Applicant must have satisfactory grades and conduct record.
4. Applicant must have satisfactory recommendations from current principal, teacher, and pastor or church staff member.

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5. Applicant must make a satisfactory score on the school entrance test.
 6. Parents and applicant must interview with the principal.

Requirements for Grades 9-12

The students who are considered for enrollment are people who:

1. Have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and come from a home where one or both of their legal guardians is a Christian.
2. Along with their parents, are actively involved in a local church whose doctrinal position supports the Grace Community High School statement of faith.
3. Have demonstrated on a standardized test that they are adequately prepared to achieve well in high school.
4. Have a satisfactory citizenship record in the school they are presently attending.
5. Are achieving an average of a "B" grade in the present school year and have satisfactory academic performance with no failing marks.
6. Desire to attend Grace Community High School and are willing to comply with the school and the Admission Office standards as printed in the handbook.

Continuous Enrollment

At the time of enrollment, new families pay the enrollment fee and sign a Continuous Enrollment Agreement which states the following, "I understand that Grace will make staffing decisions based upon my representation that my children will be at Grace next year. I further understand that it is vital that I meet my financial commitments to Grace through the timely payment of tuition and fees, so that Grace can continue its mission and pay its teachers. I understand that tuition for the school year is due in full on July 1. I further understand that I may choose to pay tuition in 11 monthly payments. *I further understand that the intent of this agreement is to provide for continuous enrollment at Grace. I understand that my child(ren) will be automatically enrolled from year to year, unless I give written notice during the designated annual enrollment period that we will not be returning to school the following year.* I agree to meet this financial commitment in whole. If for some reason I willingly choose to withdraw my child from Grace **outside of the designated annual enrollment period**, I understand and agree to be legally and morally bound to pay the remainder of outstanding tuition for the full school year. (Romans 13:6-8; I Cor. 9:7-12)"

Students will be continuously enrolled until graduation from Grace Community School.

TUITION

Grace Community School is committed to providing for its students the most superior education while demonstrating careful fiscal responsibility in its operation. A list of the current tuition rates is available under the Admissions tab on our website, www.gracetyler.org, and in the Admissions and Business Offices. The Admissions Office can be contacted at (903)566-5678 ext.129 and the Business Office can be contacted at (903)566-5661 ext.159.

Annual tuition is due by July 1. As an option, parents can elect to pay in eleven monthly installments, beginning on July 1st and ending on May 1st. Parents will forfeit placement for their child(ren) if tuition is not paid when due. All payments are due on the first of the month and are considered late after the tenth of the month unless other arrangements have been made with the Business Office. A late fee of twenty-five dollars will be assessed if tuition is more than ten days late. If the tenth of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, late fees will be assessed on

the next business day. A charge of twenty-five dollars will be assessed on any returned payments. Students who are enrolled after the start of school will pay an annual tuition amount based on a pro-rated payment schedule which is available in the Admissions and Business Offices. Tuition payments are non-refundable and non-transferable.

An automatic payment plan via ACH bank draft is available for monthly tuition payments. We encourage families to utilize this method of payment which results in the greatest cost-savings to the school. ACH bank draft authorization forms are available in the Business Office.

Students may be refused admittance to class if tuition is more than one month in arrears. Parents are expected to be diligent in meeting their financial obligations to the school. Parents should contact the Business Office when circumstances dictate any changes in normal payment procedures.

Parents withdrawing their student from the school at any point during the school year remain legally and morally bound to pay all outstanding tuition for the full school year.

Student's official transcript/academic record will not be released to parents, another school or university until all financial obligations have been met. Graduating seniors must have all financial obligations paid in full two weeks prior to graduation in order to participate in commencement ceremonies.

FINANCIAL AID

A limited amount of financial aid is awarded through a fund set aside for that purpose. Financial aid is needs-based and intended for qualified parents with financial needs that would otherwise prevent enrollment of their child(ren). Decisions for financial aid are made by the School Board based on the recommendations of an independent consulting firm. Financial aid will not be considered for parents whose financial accounts are in arrears. The link to apply for financial aid is found under the Admissions tab on our website, www.gracetyler.org. The application period is February 1st – April 15th.

FEES

All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable and family discounts do not apply.

Parents pay an application fee for each student when submitting their application online. Parents pay an enrollment fee per student at the time they are accepted to the school. Enrolled students may incur additional fees for extracurricular activities, electives, optional lunches, etc. based on participation. ParentsWeb will be used to bill and pay fees.

Payments for the Academic Support Center services are due on the first of the month and are considered late after the tenth of the month unless other arrangements have been made with the Business Office. A late fee of twenty-five dollars will be assessed if tuition is more than ten days late. If the tenth of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, late fees will be assessed on the next business day. A charge of twenty-five dollars will be assessed on any returned payments.

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. for grades JrK through fifth grade. Doors are unlocked at 7:30 a.m.

The school day ends at 1:00 p.m. for half day JrK and Kindergarten students, 2:50 p.m. for full-day JrK and K students, 3:00 p.m. for grades 1-2, 3:10 p.m. for grades 3-4, and 3:20 p.m. for 5th grade. Students should be picked up promptly in the designated pick-up areas. Fridays have an early dismissal schedule beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Before School

Upon arriving at school, students should go directly to their classrooms and get ready for the school day. Students should wait for the teacher to arrive to get permission to leave the classroom for any reason. Students are not permitted to leave the campus during the school day unless accompanied by a parent. When the teacher arrives in class or at 7:45 students should be seated and stop talking, following normal class procedures.

After School

Each student will wait seated safely away from traffic with his own class in the designated pick up area where his teacher will be there to supervise and may not leave the area without a teacher's permission.

***Parents with children in multiple pick up locations may find it more convenient to park in the upper lot and walk, rather than to drive through each pick-up line.**

****No one other than a designated pick-up person may pick up a student unless a note giving permission is sent to school by the parent. The person coming to pick up must provide valid photo ID and be listed on the student's emergency procedure card.**

NOTE: Children are to be picked up immediately after the time of their dismissal. Parents of students remaining after 3:35 p.m. Monday-Thursday will be assessed a late fee of \$10.00. Students remaining after 1:50 p.m. on Fridays will be assessed a \$10.00 fee. This late fee must be paid in the office at the time the student is picked up. Parents of half day JrK and K students will be assessed the late fee if their children are not picked up by 1:30 p.m. **Due to classroom responsibilities a teacher may not have time to check or respond to an email before the end of the school day. Please communicate time-sensitive information regarding carpool arrangements via note to the teacher or a call to the office.**

Drivers should not be on cell phones in the drop-off or pick-up line.

ATTENDANCE AND MAKE-UP WORK

Responsibility and other-centeredness are part of the image of God imprinted on each of us, and opportunities to develop those qualities exist in the areas of school attendance and student accountability for schoolwork.

Because arriving late or leaving early are difficult for the student, disruptive to the class, and create hardship for the teacher, we ask parents to please make every effort to see that their child is at school **on time and all day**. A student is considered tardy if he is not in his classroom when the bell rings at 8:00 a.m. **If a student is tardy, he must be signed in by the parent in the office**. If a student leaves before the final dismissal bell, he must be **signed out by the parent in the office**, where the office staff will call him from the classroom. Both tardies and early check-outs will show up on the report card as “Days Tardy”. After a student has accumulated a total of ten tardies or early check-outs, each third occurrence will be counted as an absence, and parents will be notified. Excessive absences (twenty or more) may result in a student failing for the year.

If a child is absent, parents should call the school **by 9:00 a.m.** to report it and to request make-up work, which may then be picked up **after 2:00 p.m.** in the office or from the lockers in 5th grade. Calls after 9:00am may delay make-up work pick-up until the following day.

Because make-up work can become a burden on both students & teachers, it is preferable that family vacations during the school year be limited to the holiday breaks. However, if families anticipate an absence, work must be requested early in the week **before** the absence and is due **before** or **on** the first day back from the absence (including tests). Late work could receive a penalty.

For unanticipated absences, students will have two days for each day absent to make up work before incurring a late penalty.

Please keep in mind that when a student misses class, he/she is also missing classroom instruction and discussion that cannot be made up by normal homework assignments or within the regular school day. Therefore, it is quite possible that a student’s grades may be lower after an absence. In addition, to help a student get caught up, a teacher may require before- or after-school tutoring. (A tutoring fee may be assessed.)

Because of the disruption caused in the classroom, students will not be excused from class to attend siblings' class parties, field trips, or other events. Students may be excused for graduation exercises and Kindergarten Special Kid activities if accompanied by a parent.

Perfect attendance awards are given at the end of the school year to all students who have been present each day. A student must be in school half of the day to be counted present. To be awarded perfect attendance a student must not have any absences that resulted from an accumulation of tardies or early checkouts that converted to an absence. In addition, new students must have attended GCS for the entire second semester to be eligible.

Please be sensitive to the burden placed on the teacher as a result of frequent absences and tardies.

Lesson plans are posted on RenWeb as a courtesy to parents, but are, of course, subject to change.

Because it is the responsibility of the student to actively engage in learning, teachers may hold students accountable for information clearly and thoroughly covered in class, whether or not the information was sent home.

MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents will be asked to fill out an emergency procedure card upon registration in the school. In case of a medical emergency, the school nurse or office personnel will follow the procedures outlined on the card. First aid will be administered until action by the parent or physician is taken.

Illness

If a child shows signs of illness (fever of 100⁰ or higher, vomiting or diarrhea) do not bring him to school. **A child must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before he returns to school.** Children with a contagious condition should be kept at home until there is no danger of passing the condition on to others. If a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be called to pick up the child at the nurse's office. He will remain in the nurse's office until the parent arrives.

Medication Policy

Students should not bring any medication to school unless it is absolutely necessary. No student may at **any time** give medication to another student.

All medications **MUST** be administered by the school nurse and **MUST**:

- Be sent to the nurse as the student arrives to school
- Have written parental permission before it will be given
- Have the pharmacy label attached (if a prescription)
- Be in the original packaging - loose or bagged pills will not be accepted or administered

Personal inhalers may be kept by students at the discretion of the nurse and parents. The nurse must be notified of all inhalers on campus. Other, regular medication will be kept by the school nurse and secured in the nurse's office.

VISITOR TAGS AND BUILDING ACCESS

All parents and visitors must wear a visitor identification tag. Those who do not have one may secure one from the school office. After morning drop-off and before afternoon pick-up, all visitors will be required to access the building through the door adjacent to the school office.

SCHOOL PARENT PARTNERSHIP

The mission of our school is to **assist Christian families** in educating, equipping, and encouraging their children to influence the world for Christ. The school **cannot** substitute for a godly Christian home where parents are faithfully exercising their God-given responsibility to train their children in such a way as to encourage in them hearts that fear the Lord. We assume that each parent is taking initiative to continually cultivate his own relationship with Christ through regular Bible study, prayer, and active participation in a local church body.

In any given day, there are dozens of questions and concerns fielded by our administrative staff. Please see "Conflict Resolution" under the "Philosophies and Goals" section of this handbook for guidance as to how to resolve such questions and concerns.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged at any time during the school year, and may be initiated by the teacher or parent. Parent-teacher class meetings will be conducted at various times during the school year. Both parents are urged to attend. Also, parents may opt to observe

their child's class at least once during the school year to get a first-hand view of the benefits of their child's instruction.

CAMPUS PROCEDURES

In the classroom:

1. Talking is permitted only with the permission of the teacher. A student should raise his hand and wait for permission to speak.
2. Students should stay seated unless given permission to get up.
3. Students are expected to give their respectful attention to the teacher or other speaker.
4. Students are responsible for knowing and completing all assignments and having necessary supplies.
5. Students are responsible for making up all missed assignments.
6. Late papers, including late make-up work, will incur a grade penalty. Excessive late or incomplete work will be cause for disciplinary action.
7. Students may not write or pass notes in school.
8. Chewing gum and eating candy is not allowed.
9. Students should not bring cell phones to school.
10. Electronic devices (including electronic readers and tablets), toys, games, trading cards, magazines, and comic books should not be brought to school without permission.
11. The penalty for cheating is a "0" on the work. Cheating includes copying, forging signatures, and giving answers.
12. Throwing objects that can cause harm or disruption is not allowed.
13. Unkind words or actions, stealing, lying, profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures are not allowed.
14. Live animals may be brought to school only at the teacher's initiation.
15. Playing and socializing is not allowed in the restrooms.
16. Students sit with their class in chapel.

Note: It is GCS policy that siblings not accompany parents on field trips or to class parties.

In the lunchroom:

1. Classroom procedures also apply in the lunchroom and good table manners are expected.
2. Students are expected to eat quietly for the first ten minutes of the lunch period. Music or a movie is played during this time.
3. Students are responsible for properly disposing of all their trash and for cleaning their place at the table for the next class.
4. Students may eat at the parent lunch table only if their parent or a family member is present. Students are permitted to eat lunch with their parents or a family member at the picnic tables outside the lunchroom. Since lunchtime is so short, if you are bringing lunch to your child, please make sure you arrive at the beginning of the lunch period.
5. Students who forget to bring lunch may charge a hot lunch, but the price increases with frequency of charges.

On the playground:

1. Students are expected to play safely on all playground equipment, e.g., one child per swing, no jumping from the swing, no standing in the swings, always sliding feet first, sliding one at a time, no standing or climbing up the slide, etc.
2. Students are expected to be good stewards of the playground and playground equipment.
3. Climbing fences and trees is not allowed.
4. Rocks and sticks are to be left on the ground.
5. Students must have permission to enter the school building during recess.
6. Students may not go outside the fence without permission.

STANDARDS FOR DRESS

At, GCS, dress is used to teach students about the nature and character of God, and how we reflect that nature as image-bearers of God. Allowing students to choose what they wear within the bounds of the dress code adds color and variety to the school and celebrates God's good creation of beauty, variety, and color in His world. The dress code provides students with a context for living out biblical principles of modesty, attitude, character, and creates opportunities for "teachable moments" between parents and children, and teachers and students about what is right, pure, and godly. The dress code teaches students to be thoughtful of others, being aware that their clothing choices can offend or cause others to stumble, and prepares students for making responsible, God-honoring choices about dress as a reflection of their position as one who bears God's image.

Standards for JrK through 5TH Grade

Students are asked to dress in a **modest** and **neat** fashion that will help maintain a safe and orderly atmosphere. Parents are asked to assist students in choosing appropriate school clothes and shoes that follow the guidelines below. Parents are also asked to model the same appropriate dress while at school.

- Clothing with inappropriate or disrespectful writing or pictures; or clothing with distracting lights or sounds is not permitted. No pants or shorts with writing across the seat.
- Caps, hats, or bandanas may be worn only on designated days.
- Shoes should fit securely on the foot having closed toes, closed heels, and rubber soles, because students participate in recess every day. No sandals, flip flops, or Crocs. Socks must always be worn with tennis shoes. Tennis shoes must be worn on P.E. days.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no shorter than three inches above the knee. Shorts or tights must be worn under skirts or dresses for the playground.
- Khaki, denim, cotton, or twill shorts are allowed. Mesh and/or lighter-weight athletic shorts are allowed for JrK and K students ONLY (since it is difficult for younger students to button and/or snap).
- Loose fitting sweatpants and track pants are acceptable.
- Leggings or legging-style pants (not thin tights) or capri leggings (meeting the length requirement for shorts) are also acceptable if they are worn with shirts/tops that are mid-thigh length or longer in the front and back. Shirts should be at least finger-tip length.
- Necklines should be modest. Midriffs and backs should be covered.
- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, camisole-style or halters may only be worn with a t-shirt underneath or a sweater on top.

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- Unusual or distracting hair colors and styles are not allowed. Hair should be clean. Student's eyes must be clearly seen at all times.
 - Body paintings and piercings are not allowed, except pierced ears for girls. Face painting may be allowed on designated days.

*Determination of whether a student's dress or grooming is a distraction to the orderly atmosphere of a classroom can be a difficult decision. With input from the teachers, the principal and assistant principal reserve the right to make final decisions regarding dress code matters. If a child is in violation of the dress code, parents may be called to bring a change of clothes or shoes to school. Continued violations may result in disciplinary action.

GRADING AND REPORTS TO PARENTS

Grace Community School uses a skill based report card for JrK; and uses a combination of numerical and letter grades for report cards in grades K through 5th grade. Report cards are issued four times a year. A grade in a course of study represents the teacher's best judgment of a student's academic achievement. Various components of course work, such as class participation, responsibility, projects, reports, homework, daily work, tests, quizzes, etc. may be assigned different weights by individual teachers.

HONOR ROLL

Fourth and fifth grade students are eligible for A honor roll by earning all A's and all S's each nine weeks. Students must be enrolled the last two nine weeks to be eligible for the A Honor Roll.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

Elementary students are promoted based on successful completion of the year's work and when, in the opinion of the teacher, they are ready to move to the next grade. Retention of a student in elementary would occur when the teacher and administration agree that it would best serve the needs of the student to repeat a grade.

In classes where numerical grades are kept, an average of 70 is the minimum grade considered passing. A composite grade below 70 in two or more core subjects could result in retention.

DISCIPLINE

The goal of our discipline is to train the hearts of students in respect, other centeredness & self-control and to maintain the order necessary for academic and social growth. Partnership with parents is essential to this training.

We seek to hold students accountable for displaying behavior such as:

1. Actions that disrupt the class or interfere with the learning process of the child or of his classmates.
2. Actions that could possibly cause physical or emotional harm to the child or his classmates.
3. Actions in direct violation of a well-explained school or classroom rule.
4. A pattern of repeated offenses.
5. Willful disrespect or continued disobedience.
6. Use of profane or unwholesome language.

Most correction will be handled by the teacher through a verbal reminder, exhortation, or by restricting the child's freedom or privileges. Parents will be notified if problems persist. In cases

where a problem persists and there is no behavioral change, a child will be sent to see the assistant principal to discuss the remaining options. If no progress is made after visiting with the assistant principal, the parent will be called to the school to administer a spanking. Students who consistently fail to respond to efforts of correction may be suspended or finally expelled. Much care is taken to ensure that correction is handled properly and without anger.

FIGHTING

Students are prohibited from knowingly, recklessly or intentionally causing bodily harm or threatening to cause bodily harm to any student during, before or after school hours. Students who violate this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action and/or expulsion.

WEAPONS

No guns, knives, mace, chemical weapons, electric shock devices or other weapons are permitted on the school campus. Any such items found on the campus will become the property of the school and the student in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students should not damage or deface any property belonging to the school, church, or neighbors. Students shall be responsible for the care and return of textbooks and library books and may be charged for damage to, or replacement of, books.

FIELD TRIPS

In order to keep our students safe and secure, parents are prohibited from posting any field trip information or pictures to any social media site, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, until students are safely returned to the school campus.

JUNIOR HIGH CAMPUS PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. for junior high students. Students may be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. Upon arrival, students must remain in their 1st period classroom. The school day ends at 3:25 p.m. for junior high students on Monday through Thursday and 1:00 on Friday. Sixth graders and their siblings should be picked up in the front of the junior high building; seventh and eighth graders should be picked up behind the junior high building. Unless attending a scheduled school activity, students should be picked up no later than 3:55 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on Fridays). After this time, students should be picked up from the junior high office where a late fee of \$10 will be due.

BEFORE SCHOOL

Junior high doors will be opened at 7:30 a.m. Upon arriving at school, junior high school students should prepare for the first period. When the teacher arrives in class, students should be seated and stop talking, following normal class procedures.

AFTER SCHOOL

Students will wait for their rides in the designated areas (6th grade in the front and 7th/8th grade in the back). Junior high students may only be released to persons specified on the emergency procedure card and only **AT THEIR REGULAR PICK-UP LOCATION**. Junior high students will not be released unsupervised to wait at the high school. Teachers will be in designated JH areas to supervise. Students should refrain from running or throwing things during this time due to the danger of traffic. Students should not leave the area without a teacher's permission. Students who wait for rides in other areas of the school after the scheduled pick-up time to avoid the late fee will be disciplined.

OFFICE

The Grace Community Junior High School office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. If a parent intends to pick up their student prior to school dismissal and have not made prior arrangements with the student, he may call the office and a message will be given to the student. If there is a change in pick-up or transportation plans, please try to let the office know before 1:15 p.m. All students must be picked up by 3:55 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on Fridays) unless they are attending a scheduled extracurricular activity with school supervision. Due to classroom responsibilities, a teacher may not have time to check or respond to an email so if you have time sensitive circumstances, please call the office.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for success as a student. Absences interrupt the smooth and complete process of learning. Students should be absent only when absolutely necessary. When an absence occurs, the student is responsible for class work missed and must arrange with the teacher to make up assignments, tests, and quizzes. Parents should contact the office as soon as possible if their child is absent.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

Students will be released only to parents or others listed on the Emergency Procedure Card. Siblings who drive must be listed on the Emergency Procedure Card in order to be able to pick-

up their sibling(s) during the school day. Written permission is required if a student leaves with someone who is not on their pick-up list.

TYPES OF ABSENCES

Excused - Illness, family emergencies (funerals, etc.), and doctor's appointments that cannot be scheduled after school are considered excused absences. Work missed for these reasons may be made up within the allotted time frames without penalty. Students bear the responsibility for knowing and completing their assignments on time after an absence.

Unexcused - Other absences than those listed above will be considered unexcused. Missed homework may be turned in the day the student returns, but will incur the late penalty of a 25 point reduction. There are special circumstances when it is made clear to the students that no make-up will be allowed or late papers accepted. Family vacations during the school year should be limited to scheduled holiday breaks. If, however, a situation should dictate otherwise, parents should check with their child's teachers before making final plans to assure that any work missed can be made up. A "Request for Student Absences" form must be filled out if a student is out for more than one day for family trips. These forms are available in the office.

TARDY POLICY

It is important that students are punctual. Self-discipline in this area is not only important for proper academic achievement, it is also essential for the development of good habits which are characteristic of success and good citizenship in every walk of life. Tardiness is defined as not being in your seat when the bell rings. **Students arriving late for first period must get a tardy slip from the office before being allowed to enter class. Students tardy for more than ten minutes in first period will not be allowed to disrupt the class but will wait in the office until second period begins.** Students who are late to school in the morning ten times per semester will receive a detention. Additional tardiness will lead to further disciplinary action. Students tardy between classes must fill out a tardy slip in class or get a tardy slip from the office.

Parents should encourage prompt and regular attendance. Medical appointments and family vacations should affect attendance as little as possible. **PLEASE NOTE: EXCESSIVE ABSENCES (20 OR MORE) MAY RESULT IN A STUDENT FAILING THE COURSE FOR THE YEAR. This excludes absences for extracurricular activities. In case of an extended illness, parents may submit an appeal in writing to the principal requesting a waiver of this penalty.**

A note should be sent with the student when he/she returns to school. The note should contain the dates of absences and specific reason for the absence.

MAKE-UP PROCEDURE

When a student misses classes because of an absence, the student is also missing valuable classroom instruction and discussion that cannot be made up by normal homework assignments. Therefore, teachers will hold students accountable for adequate make-up work to cover the missed instruction. Failure to complete the make-up assignments will affect the grade.

Students are responsible for making up all missed assignments due to excused absences from class. Normally, students will have one day to make up work for every day missed. Late make-up work will be treated the same as incomplete assignments.

Students who have been truant or suspended will be assigned a penalty by the principal.

All long-term projects, book reports, term papers, etc., must be turned in on the assigned date even if the student is absent on that day. Failure to do so will subject the project to late grading penalties. Students should arrange to have the project delivered to school on the due date. If the absence has been due to illness or some special emergency and, therefore, has legitimately prevented the student from having the opportunity to complete an assignment or preparing for a test, the parents should submit in writing to the principal a request for special consideration.

INCOMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments not turned in completed and on time are considered incomplete assignments and will receive the following penalties: Day 1 -25 points, Day 2 -50 points, Day 3 -75 points, Day 4 -100 points. Students with late or incomplete work will be assigned Homework Lunch. Parents will be contacted that Homework Lunch was earned by their child. Students must turn in late work the following morning to the teacher or the office and the work will be put in the teacher's mailbox. Test re-takes are normally not allowed, but may be allowed at teacher discretion on an individual basis for extenuating circumstances of if it is determined that the whole class needs re-testing.

MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents will be asked to fill out an emergency procedure card upon registration in the school. In case of a medical emergency, office personnel will follow the procedures outlined on the card. First aid will be administered by the school nurse until action by the parent or physician is taken.

Illness

If the student shows signs of illness (fever of 100 degrees or higher without the use of Advil or Tylenol, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), he should not come to school. The student must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before he returns to school. Students with a contagious condition should be kept at home until there is no danger of passing the condition on to others. If the student becomes ill at school, the parent will be called to pick up the student. Students will remain in the school office until parents arrive.

Medication Policy

Junior high students should not bring any medication to school unless it is absolutely necessary. Students need to turn in all medication to the nurse to be administered there. No student may at any time give medication to another student. Medications must be in original packaging with pharmacy label attached. Loose pills in other containers or Ziplocs will not be accepted or administered. Personal inhalers may be kept by student.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged at any time during the school year and may be initiated by the teacher or parent. Parent-teacher class meetings may be conducted as needed during the school year.

CAMPUS PROCEDURES

In the classroom:

1. Talking in class is only permitted with the permission of the teacher. Students should respond quickly to the teacher's directions for quiet in class.
2. Students must receive permission from the teacher before getting out of their seat or leaving the classroom.
3. Students are expected to give their full attention to the teacher when he/she is speaking. Sleeping in class is not permitted. Students who do so may be asked to go to the office and will receive an unexcused absence from class.
4. Students are responsible for taking the initiative to make up all missed assignments due to excused absences. (See "Make-Up Work" section)
5. Students are responsible for knowing and completing all assignments given by the teacher.
6. Students are responsible for bringing everything they need for each class.
7. Students may not write or pass notes in class.
8. Eating candy or other food, or drinking beverages other than water is only permitted in class on special occasions with the teacher's permission.
9. Magazines and other non-school related items are not to be brought to school.
10. iPods, MP3's, other music players, and any other electronic entertainment equipment should not be brought to school. Such devices will be taken up and kept by the principal until they are satisfied the student will comply with the rule. Phones with music/video capability may not be used with headphones on the school premises during class time.
11. Toys, cards, and games may not be brought to school. If these items appear at school, they will be taken up and will not be returned.
12. Students may not enter or tamper with another student's locker without his/her permission. Adhesive stickers or tape should not be used. The administration reserves the right to inspect the contents of student lockers. Students may use a lock on their locker if a key or combination is provided to the office. No markings may be made on school lockers, even with erasable markers.
13. Breaks between classes are five minutes long. This is enough time to get supplies from the locker, travel to the next class, and use the restroom. The break between 2nd and 3rd period is 10 minutes to allow for snack time and/or a bathroom break. If a student realizes he/she will not have enough time to complete all that needs to be done without being tardy, he/she should go to the teacher and ask permission to be late.
14. Students should not leave personal items in the restrooms, in the hallway, or gym lockers if they do not use the lock provided. Backpacks that will not fit in the locker should not be brought to school.
15. Students may not bring backpacks to class.

During passing times:

1. Students should go about their business at breaks quietly without loud talking or slamming of locker doors. Courtesy and other-awareness will be encouraged.
2. Students should use the breaks to get ready for the next class and use the restroom.
3. Restrooms should not be used as a place to visit. Horseplay of any kind is not allowed in the restrooms.

During lunch break:

1. Students are expected to clean up their own lunch trash. Students will be assigned clean-up duty during the school year and a duty roster will be posted.
2. Students may not leave campus for lunch unless they are picked up by their **own** parent or grandparent (**with parent's permission or someone included on the emergency procedure card**).
3. Students are not allowed to call in orders for lunch to be delivered to school. Food may be delivered to students provided parents call in the order and pay for it in advance.
4. Students are expected to use good manners and show common courtesy during lunch. Throwing anything during lunch is a detention offense.
5. All students are required to eat in the lunchroom unless a specific teacher or coach has requested to meet with a group of students. The teacher or coach will assume responsibility for those students.
6. A student who forgets his lunch may purchase one when extras are available.

MUSIC AND DANCING

Grace recognizes music, dance, and art have been given to us by God to help us express our creative nature, to use for our enjoyment and His ultimate glory. Music and dance should be evaluated in the same manner that we evaluate other art forms. They have the potential to reflect either the beauty of God's creation or the fallen nature of man. Dance which accentuates the nature of fallen man, which appeals to the physical appetite, or is sexually suggestive, does not reveal the image of God created in us and is not acceptable. Likewise, we believe music that promotes violence, sexual perversity, disrespect for authority, promiscuity, vulgarity, suicide, or satanic activity is not an acceptable form of entertainment. Students who do listen to such music or have in their possession songs, magazines, tee-shirts, notebooks, or other personal items that promote this type of music will be counseled not to bring those items to school. If the items return to school, they will be confiscated and will be returned to the parents. The third time, they will be confiscated until the end of the school year.

STANDARDS FOR DRESS

Clothes and how one wears them are very much a matter of personal taste and make a strong statement about a person's attitudes and interests. One's dress also greatly influences the impression an individual makes on others. In the same manner, the way our students appear at school makes an impression and establishes our reputation with parents' peers, neighbors, and business people in this community. Since we are a Christian school, we have a special responsibility to be sure that our dress reflects our Christian standards.

It is our desire that students should dress attractively and appropriately. We do caution against extreme fads because they often conflict with our dress standards. Also, a student should not dress in such an unusual manner that undue attention is drawn to him or her or that the academic atmosphere is disrupted.

Modesty, neatness, cleanliness, appropriateness and safety are the basic premises upon which the dress code has been developed. It is not meant to imply that certain clothes are good or bad, but that some styles are appropriate for Grace and others are not.

When students do not meet our dress standards, they will be required to correct the offense. A phone call will be made to a family member to bring appropriate clothing. A demerit may be given for a dress code violation.

General Guidelines for Boys and Girls

1. Shirts or tops with unwholesome pictures, slogans, or advertisements may not be worn to school. Pro sports teams and college apparel is allowed.
2. **All shirts must have a complete sleeve.**
3. Pants or shorts should have no writing on them.
4. **Pants/jeans should be clean, neat, and hemmed, not frayed or torn.**
5. Students should not wear oversized or excessively baggy clothing.
6. Excessive jewelry accessories such as chains should not be worn.
7. "Body piercing" of any kind is not allowed except for girls' earrings.
8. Students may not wear caps or hats to school except with specific permission from the principal for a special event.
9. Fleece sweatpants, warm-ups and wind pants intended for athletic wear are not appropriate for the classroom.

Girls' Dress Code

Girls should take care that they appear neat and well-groomed. **Clothes should be modest**, meaning that they should fit well and not be provocative or revealing. These are guidelines for school and school-sponsored activities.

1. Dresses, skirts, shorts, and pants should not be excessively tight. Dresses, skirts, and shorts **MUST** be no shorter than three inches above the knee when standing.
2. **Tops, blouses, and shirts should have a complete sleeve.** Sleeveless shirts, shirts that hang off the shoulder where straps of undergarments (including sports bras) are showing are not allowed. Shirts that have hollowed-out shoulders are not allowed. Neck-lines should be modest, and midriffs should be covered when standing or bending. Tops should not be excessively tight. A sheer shirt must have a full body tank (no crops) underneath it. Tank tops worn underneath a sheer shirt must have straps wide enough to cover bra straps. No spaghetti straps, tube tops or camisoles can be worn underneath sheer shirts.
3. Hair styles must be natural and practical, not extreme. Hair should not be dyed in unnatural hair colors.
4. Extremely tight pants, leggings or jeggings are not proper for wear on campus or at any school function, unless they are covered by a shirt, sweater or dress which is no more than three inches above the knee.
5. **Jeans with holes in them or frayed jeans where the skin shows (either above or below the knee) are not appropriate.**
6. Shoes are to be worn at all times. Sandals are acceptable. At no time are bare feet permitted on campus (including after school hours). Cleated shoes may not be worn in the building.
7. Capri pants are acceptable provided they meet all guidelines for pants, except length.

Boys' Dress Code

Boys should take care that they appear neat and well-groomed. These guidelines are for school and school-sponsored activities.

1. Regular style shoes or tennis shoes are generally the best shoe to wear to school. Sandals are acceptable. At no time are bare feet permitted on campus (including after school hours). Cleated shoes may not be worn in the buildings.
2. The general principles of neatness and simplicity should govern hair styles. Hair should be clean, natural and practical, not extreme. It should be kept trimmed and combed. Hair should be of conservative length (not over the eyes, in a pony-tail or longer than the collar of a shirt.)
3. **Jeans with holes in them (above or below the knee), or frayed jeans, are not appropriate.**
4. Long dress shorts (trouser shorts) or loose-fitting hemmed denim shorts that include pockets and zipper are permissible. Shorts **MUST** be no more than three inches above the knee when standing. Sport shorts, wind shorts (Umbros, Adidas, Nikes, etc.), biking shorts, boxer shorts, athletic shorts, and baggy shorts are not appropriate during the academic day.
5. Fleece sweat pants, wind pants, tights, and baggy cotton warm-ups intended for athletic wear are also not appropriate school attire.

CELL PHONES/COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Cell phones or electronic communication devices are for emergency situations only and not for casual, personal communication during the school day. Cell phones must be turned off during the school day. The school reserves the right to inspect phones at any time for inappropriate content, such as, explicit photos, photos of tests, and the like. If a student brings his/her cell phone to school they will need to leave it turned off and stored in their locker or in the office during the day.

It is against policy for your child to send you a text or receive a text from you between 8:00 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. The office phone is available to students who need to contact their parents.

Parents should know that such devices are capable of being used for cheating and serve as a huge disruption to and distraction from the normal school day. Please assist our efforts and help reinforce the proper use of your child's cell phone while they are on campus during school.

Students whose phones are turned on, go off during class, who are observed using their phones during school hours, or who have their phone on their person will have them taken up and turned into the office. Phones that are taken up by a teacher will cost the student \$15 to reclaim. Repeated abuse of this privilege will result in our keeping the phone and not returning it until the end of the school year. If necessary, additional disciplinary action will be taken.

GRADING AND REPORTS TO PARENTS

Grace Community School uses numerical grades for achievement on report cards. Report cards are issued four times a year. A grade in a course of study represents the teacher's best judgment of a student's academic achievement. Various components of course work, such as class participation, projects, reports, homework assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. may be assigned different weights by individual teachers. In junior high school, the following scale is used in determining letter grades: 90-100: A, 80-89: B, 70-79: C, below 70: F.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

Junior high students are promoted based on their successful completion of the year's work.

All junior high students must pass English and math for the year AND for the second semester. Students who fail either of these subjects must attend summer school. In addition, science or history must be passed to be eligible for promotion. In classes where numerical grades are kept, an average of 70 is the minimum grade considered passing.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The purpose of our school is to provide students with a quality education which, while upholding high standards of scholastic excellence, is grounded in the Word of God and fosters vital Christian living. These standards can best be achieved in an environment that promotes cooperation and Christian conduct among students. Students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner and strive to be a good example of Christian men and women to the community both on and off the campus.

Students are expected to maintain high biblical standards off campus, as well. As a student of Grace, each is not only an ambassador of Christ, but a representative of Grace to the community. For this reason, Grace reserves the right to work with parents to take disciplinary action when off-campus activities violate these standards.

General Guidelines

The goal of our discipline is to direct students toward acceptable behavior which helps develop self-control and to maintain the order necessary to accomplish the academic and social growth required to flourish at Grace. We do not see discipline as punishment, but rather as correction. Grace will work with parents to help students learn and grow from mistakes, if and when they are made. Students may be corrected for displaying behavior such as:

1. Actions that disrupt the class or interfere with the learning process of the child or of his classmates.
2. Actions that could cause physical or emotional harm to the student or his classmates.
3. Actions in direct violation of a well-explained school or classroom rule.
4. Disrespect toward the teacher or a classmate.
5. Inappropriate activity with members of the opposite sex.
6. Actions or attitudes which are spiritually detrimental to the school.

Most correction will be handled by the teacher through a verbal reminder, exhortation, by the giving of demerits, or by restricting the student's freedom or privileges. Parents will be notified if problems persist. In cases where a problem persists and there is no behavior change, a student will be sent to see the principal to discuss the remaining options. If no progress is made after visiting with the principal, the parent will be called to visit with the principal and teachers to determine an action plan. Students who consistently fail to respond to efforts of correction may be suspended or expelled. Much care is taken to ensure that correction is handled properly and without anger. We do not expect perfection from our students but reasonable cooperation.

Specific Guidelines for Discipline

The following offenses are considered serious discipline offenses. Each situation will be reviewed and consequences will be assigned by the principal. These offences include:

1. **Cheating:** Copying another's work, giving one's work to be copied, or using outside resource materials in an inappropriate manner.
2. **Stealing, vandalism, or destruction of property.**

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3. **Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures, “sexting” or cyberbullying.**
 4. **Fighting:** Knowingly or intentionally causing bodily harm or threatening to cause bodily harm to any student during, before or after school hours.
 5. **Tobacco, electronic cigarettes, alcohol or drugs:** Possession, use, or transmission of tobacco or tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, alcoholic or intoxicating beverages, controlled substances, prescription, or dangerous drugs.
 6. **Firearms or other weapons:** Possession on campus or at school events.

These offenses may result in immediate expulsion. If a criminal offense has occurred, police will be notified.

Note: The school administration reserves the right to impose discipline for off campus/non-school standards violations under the following circumstances:

1. If the action of the student is in violation of the law (excluding non-alcohol or drug-related moving violations).
2. If the action of the student is a blatant violation of the moral standards required of a follower of Christ.
3. If, by determination of school administration, the action of the student has a negative impact on the morale and spirit of the student body.

Detention

There are two categories for which a student may be assigned detention. The first is an accumulation of demerits for which teachers call a student down for misbehavior or for unexcused tardiness to class. This would include, but not be limited to, behavior such as excessive talking, throwing things in class, roughhousing, or other foolishness. Students who get a total of five demerits against them will have to serve detention.

The second category is for more blatant behavior such as talking back to teachers, disrespect or direct disobedience, fighting, lying to a teacher, cheating, bad language, class disruption, etc. These students will be given a detention notice by the teacher or principal.

Any student who earns detention three times during the school year will receive an in-school suspension on the third occasion. A fourth detention will result in a one-day suspension from school. A student receiving a demerit after being suspended could be a candidate for expulsion.

After five demerits or unexcused tardies are received, and a detention assigned, the count will begin again.

In-School Suspension

Students assigned to in-school suspension are required to spend their school day in isolation while they do their assignments from each class. They are not allowed to share regular breaks or lunch with their classmates, or participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities during that time. They are allowed to turn in their work and make up assignments.

Suspension

Suspension from school is a result of repeated minor infractions or a major infraction of the GCS community standards. The length of suspension will be determined by the administration. All work missed during the suspension is to be made up. Any assignment or work not completed and turned in the day following the suspension will receive a grade of zero. It is the student's responsibility to collect class work prior to the suspension. Suspended students are not allowed

to be on campus during their suspension without administrative approval, nor are they permitted to participate in or attend extra-curricular activities during that time. Students may be required to go through a restoration process prior to his or her return.

Expulsion

Students expelled for disciplinary reasons may not return to school or attend any school functions.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students should not damage or deface any property belonging to the school or church. Students shall be responsible for the care and return of textbooks and may be charged for damage to, or replacement of, textbooks.

FIELD TRIPS

In order to keep our students safe and secure, parents are prohibited from posting any field trip information or pictures to any social media site, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, until students are safely returned to the school campus.

HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS PROCEDURES

GENERAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Grace Community School exists to partner with families to provide students with a Bible-based, Christ-centered, academically-excellent education that will prepare them not only for college but will also promote a healthy relationship with Jesus Christ. Working together with our families, it is our hope to glorify the Lord, encourage parents, edify students, and train up our students to transform the world for Christ. To that end, Grace is excited that you have chosen us to team with you, and we look forward to working together to pursue God's standards with purpose and joy. The purpose of these policies is to work with parents and students to create reasonable expectations for our community and to uphold the values of honor and excellence upon which the school was founded on and respected for. Grace hopes to mirror the redemptive character of God in all of its policies and procedures, encompassing aspects of consequences, grace, restoration, and restitution as is appropriate.

SCHOOL HOURS, ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE AND COMMUNICATION

The Grace Community High School office is open Monday through Thursday from 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 P.M and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. If your child needs to leave early from school and is driving themselves, the office must be notified by the parent by phone call or written permission and student must sign out in the office. If you will be picking up your child early, you must come in the office and sign them out.

Students may be dropped off as early as 7:30a.m. Students should not be on campus, other than during school hours, unless they are involved with some organized school activity. The school day begins at 8:00a.m. for high school students. Juniors and seniors may receive permission to leave school during off periods with a special permission slip signed by parents, student and school office. Restrictions apply.

The telephones in the school offices, coaches' offices and other locations are not for casual student use. Students may use these phones with the permission of teacher, staff member, or administrator. Cell phones may be used by students between classes or during off times.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual attendance is a vital factor in determining one's success in any field of endeavor, including schoolwork. Regular attendance conveys commitment to the process of education. Students are expected to be on time and participating in class.

Parents need to notify the school office by 9:00 a.m. when a student will be absent. When a student has been absent from class, a phone call or email from a parent is required in order for the absence to be excused.

Excused Absences

In most cases, the following reasons constitute an excused absence:

- Doctor/dentist appointment (Please try to schedule these outside of class time; appointments should not be scheduled during test times.) Students should return promptly with a note from the doctor's office.

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- Personal illness: Parent should notify office on the first day of illness. A note from a doctor should be provided for absences due to illness lasting five or more consecutive school days
 - Sickness or death in the immediate family or family emergencies (parents should contact the school as soon as possible)
 - Car trouble, or extraordinary weather or road conditions making travel dangerous or impossible
 - College visits (only for juniors and seniors— see guidelines for college visits)
 - School related activity (game, competition, academic meet, etc.)
 - Obtaining a driver’s license

Work missed during an excused absence may be made up within a one-day-for-each-day-absent window without penalty. Students bear the responsibility of knowing and completing their assignments on time before or after an absence. **Unless the teacher grants an exemption**, all homework must be turned in before students leave for school-related activities.

**Students must attend all of their classes or a minimum of 4 periods of the school day to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities that day. If a student leaves school during the day due to illness they are not permitted to return to school to participate in after-school activities.

“Planned” Absences

Due to the importance of class attendance, excused “planned” absences (including, but not limited to, family trips, church-sponsored events, hunting trips, or any other event within the control of the family/student) are limited. **For the absence to be excused, a planned absence form must be signed by his/her parents, principal, and teachers prior to the planned absence.** It is the student’s responsibility to complete and return the form to the school office prior to the trip. These “pink” forms may be obtained in the school office.

Family Trips

Family trips are a valuable part of a student's education; unfortunately, they also place an administrative burden on teachers. In balancing these interests, the school will allow a maximum of five (5) days of excused absences per year for a student to attend a family trip(s). These absences must have prior approval of the principal. The student must obtain and complete a planned absence form before the trip. (Please note: the days missed will count toward the maximum number of days a student may be absent for the year.)

College Visit

Juniors and seniors are allowed two days of excused absences per year to visit a prospective college. In order to be excused, these absences must have prior approval by submitting a college visit form and must be verified with an official signature from the college or university. The days missed do not count toward the maximum number of days a student may be absent for the year or towards exam exemptions. If more days are needed due to travel requirements or other factors, students should contact a college guidance counselor to request additional days.

Excessive Student Absences

Since attendance is vital to school success, excessive absences can be a determining factor in a student passing a course or being promoted to the next grade level. If the number of absences

during a given school year exceeds seventeen (17) full days, the student may not be promoted. If a student misses one class seventeen (17) times, or nine (9) times in one semester, the student may not pass the course.

Special consideration may be given to students in the event of extended illness (requires documentation from a physician) or extenuating circumstances (resulting from unplanned or unique family situations.) These situations will require consultation and approval by the high school principal.

Unexcused Absences

Missing school, "skipping" or "cutting class" is defined as absence from class without a valid excuse from either a parent or school official. When a student has an unexcused absence, all daily work due and/or assigned will be recorded as a zero; however, the work must still be made up. Any major grade that is missed will be reduced by at least 50 points.

All students should check in and out with the office any time they miss class time. This will enable the front office to locate students when needed and to answer questions in an informed manner. Notification from the parent to the school office is required in order for this absence to be excused.

Tardy Policy

It is important that students at Grace Community School be on time and prepared. Self-discipline in this area is not only important for proper academic achievement and respect for classmates and teachers, but is also essential for the development of good habits, which are characteristic of success and good citizenship in every walk of life.

While it is important to arrive at school on time, unforeseen factors could make even a conscientious parent/student tardy to class. Students arriving late for a class must obtain a tardy slip from the office before going to class. ***Five unexcused tardies will equal an unexcused absence.*** In RenWeb, an excused tardy is noted in our attendance records as "ET". Unexcused tardies are noted as a "T". Students are permitted three tardies each nine-week grading period without consequence. After three tardies students will be subject to discipline, with the goal of emphasizing to the student and family the importance of being on time to class. Consequences may include any of the following: student conference with a principal, parent notification, parent conference, student work assignment, loss of off-campus privileges and strict probation.

Parents, we need your help in getting your children to school on time. Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's attendance and tardies through RenWeb.

Please note: weather, unusual traffic situations (not daily traffic) and other events, which may cause students to be late on any given day will be dealt with administratively and will not be reflected on a student's record. If the tardy is due to a teacher keeping a student late, a tardy slip from the appropriate teacher is required.

Perfect Attendance

Perfect attendance will be tracked during the student's high school career and those students with four years of perfect attendance will be recognized at the end of the senior year. Parents desiring a perfect attendance certificate for the freshman through junior years may contact the high school office and request one. Please note that five unexcused tardies equal an unexcused absence.

CELL PHONES/COMMUNICATION DEVICES

See “[Acceptable Use Policy.](#)”

OFF-CAMPUS PRIVILEGES

9th and 10th grade students are not permitted to leave the campus during the school day except with his/her parents or grandparents. Certain exceptions could apply with parent’s specific written permission. However, due to our rotating schedule, under the below circumstances upperclassmen are allowed to leave campus.

Permission for Upperclassmen to Leave Campus

At certain times, junior and senior students have the privilege of leaving campus during the breaks in their school day with a completed parental permission and authorization form. In order to address concerns over supervision, liability, and accountability of students, the following stipulations apply:

1. Parents must agree to assume all responsibility for their son or daughter when off campus.
2. Students risk losing off campus privileges when tardy to their next class.

GENERAL VEHICLE REGULATIONS

We have an obligation to our neighbors and ourselves to drive carefully, courteously, and safely at all times. In addition to the Texas Motor Safety Code, the following regulations apply to driving:

- Drive slowly at all times in the parking lot. Drive at appropriate speed at all times on streets around our campus. No reckless or fast driving on the campus will be tolerated.
- Spinning of wheels, squealing tires, speeding, or any form of reckless driving is not permitted on or around campus.
- Horns are not to be used to attract attention nor in a careless manner.
- Car sound systems must be kept at a reasonable volume.
- Students are to be seated in the vehicle while in motion. At no time are students allowed to ride outside the car or in the pickup bed.
- Violations of the above regulations may result in the loss of driving privileges.

Parking Regulations

- Cars will not occupy more than one space.
- Stickers, emblems, decals, buttons, etc. identified with groups or movements contrary to Christians' biblical standards are not to be displayed on autos.
- Students may not "shoe polish," "paint" or otherwise tamper with cars at school. A loss of driving privileges may result.
- Violations of driving or parking regulations will be treated as a discipline issue, and can result in loss of driving privileges on campus and/or suspension.

Student Vehicle Regulations

- All drivers must be licensed and covered by insurance. Students who drive without a valid driver’s license will have their key confiscated and may have the vehicle towed. This action may also result in discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

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- Students who drive to school must register their vehicle with the high school office by the end of the second week of school or immediately upon receiving their license or driving a different car. Students who drive themselves to school must also have a “Permission to Drive” form on file in the HS office.
 - Students may park only in approved, marked parking areas. If there is a question, do not park there.
 - The speed limit is 10 mph on school property. Reckless or careless driving will not be tolerated.

It is considered a privilege to drive and park on school grounds. Suspension of driving privileges may result when students operate their cars in an unsafe or inconsiderate manner.

MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents will be asked to fill out an emergency procedure card upon registration in the school. In case of a medical emergency, office personnel will follow the procedures outlined on the card. First aid will be administered by the school nurse until action by the parent or physician is taken.

Illness

If the student shows signs of illness (fever of 100 degrees or higher without the use of Advil or Tylenol, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), he should not come to school. The student must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before he returns to school. Students with a contagious condition should be kept at home until there is no danger of passing the condition on to others. If the student becomes ill at school, the parent will be called to pick up the student. Students will remain with the nurse or in the school office until parents arrive.

Medication Policy

High school students should not bring any medication to school unless it is absolutely necessary. Students need to turn in all prescription medication to the nurse to be administered there. No student may at any time give medication to another student. Medications must be in original packaging with pharmacy label attached. Loose pills in other containers or Ziplocs will not be accepted or administered. Personal inhalers may be kept by student.

CAMPUS PROCEDURES

Student Classroom Responsibilities

Each teacher has his or her own classroom guidelines that are designed to promote respect and an environment conducive to maximum student learning. The following are general guidelines for all classrooms:

1. The classroom teacher is the one placed in authority over the individual classroom. Students should respect his or her authority. Students should respond quickly to the teacher's directions for quiet in the class. Conduct that is disrespectful to the teacher is not permitted.
2. Students are allowed to bring bottled water to class. All chewing gum must be disposed of properly.
3. Personal electronic devices are permitted if not used inappropriately. Such devices used inappropriately will be taken up and kept by a teacher or principal until he/she is satisfied the student understands the expectations and will comply with the rule.

General Common Area Responsibilities:

1. Students may not enter or tamper with another student's locker without his/her permission. Adhesive stickers or tape should not be used in lockers. The administration reserves the right to inspect the contents of student lockers.
2. Breaks between classes are usually five minutes long. This is usually enough time for retrieving needed supplies from the locker, to travel to the next class, and to use the restroom. If a student realizes he/she will not have enough time to complete all that needs to be done without becoming tardy, he/she should go to the teacher and ask permission to be late.
3. Students should not leave personal items in the restrooms or in the hallway.
4. There should be no hand holding, no kissing, nor any other public displays of affection. Couples should not be alone or away from the group at school.

ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS POLICY

Assignments and assessments (i.e. quizzes and tests) are a regular part of school life, increase with rigor as the student progresses through high school, and have as their primary purposes to reinforce course content and to give the student opportunity to demonstrate understanding of that content. The amount of time a student spends on assignments depends in large part upon the student's organizational and study skills, use of time, home study environment, and grasp of content.

Students are expected to complete and submit all assignments and assessments when due. In the case of an excused absence, the student will have one day to submit assignments and complete assessments for every day missed; the exception being long-term projects, major papers, etc. that must be turned in on the due date even if the student is absent on that day. Submitting incomplete or late work, or not taking an assessment on time, will result in a 25% grade reduction each day.

If a student knows he or she is going to miss a class for any reason, and especially a class that has an assignment or assessment due, then he or she is required to have a conversation with his or her teacher(s) prior to missing class in order to know when the assignments or assessments are due. Failure to comply will result in a 25% grade reduction each day on those assignments or assessments.

Unless otherwise assigned, all assignments and assessments are expected to be the individual work of the student. Copying and plagiarism is a form of cheating, such work will not be accepted and further disciplinary action may result.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICIES: CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Academic dishonesty in *any* form is a rejection of biblical values, a breach of personal integrity, and a hindrance to positive student learning. Academic dishonesty is *broadly* defined as: *"Any attempt, whether successful or not, on the part of a student or parent, to falsely represent the student's level of achievement or mastery in a given course, with regard to any element of that course."*

This definition includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Claiming or indicating that the student has fulfilled any assignment or other academic responsibility, such as reading assigned texts, completing assigned work or engaging in assigned study, when in fact he/she has not done so.

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- Using any unauthorized assistance, including but not limited to copying the work of other students, in completing assigned class work or homework, in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations.
 - Using any unauthorized resources, including but not limited to solution manuals and teacher-edition textbooks to write papers, preparing reports or complete other course assignments.
 - Obtaining quizzes, tests, examinations, or other academic materials or evaluation instruments, in whole or in part, created by or belonging to an instructor, other staff member, or the school itself, including but not limited to such materials properly used and in the possession of students currently or previously enrolled in the course, without the teacher's explicit authorization.
 - Plagiarizing, including "the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment" and "the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency" which customarily sells or offers free of charge term papers or other academic materials.
 - Altering a graded paper or project for the purpose of misrepresenting the true earned grade or disputing the accuracy of grade.
 - Unauthorized collaboration with another student or students during any quiz, test, or examination or in the fulfillment of any other academic assignment or responsibility.

For a first instance of cheating, a student will receive a zero on the assignment in question and the parent will be notified. The second time, the student will receive a zero and the student will be placed on strict probation for at least one week. Any additional offenses will result in zeros, parent conferences, strict probation and/or possible suspension or expulsion. Any student suspected of violating this policy is ineligible for all extra-curricular activities until the situation is resolved.

GRADING AND REPORTS TO PARENTS

1. Grades will be reported on a "running semester", where there is not an official quarter grade in order to alleviate the problems of artificial stopping points, too many tests in final week of quarter, too few grades in a category, etc. Grades at the published 9-week point intervals will be used to determine TAPPS eligibility (please refer to the next section titled Academic Probation for more complete information). Departments will determine weights per category as appropriate to the subject matter, possibly giving more weight to test grades as students get older to mimic college expectations.
2. Report cards will be posted on RenWeb at the end of each semester.
3. Grades are updated on RenWeb according to a schedule determined by the complexity of the assessment.
4. **RenWeb is used as the primary source of communicating academic information, including e-mails from teachers and administrators, progress reports and report cards. Parents who do not have home access are invited to use computers in the school library.**
5. Students must achieve an average of 70% or higher in their course work for each semester to earn credit.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

Our heart behind each step of this policy is two-fold. We desire to identify those students who are struggling academically (so they can receive extra help to avoid being placed on academic probation), and to provide extra study time to those students who are placed on academic probation (so they have the best opportunity possible to avoid failing a course at the end of the semester).

1. All high school students' course grades will be checked every sixth week during the academic year in order to identify those course grades that are close to a 70%. These students and their parents will be communicated with so an action plan can be developed in order to help the student avoid being placed on academic probation at the 9-week point.
2. A student who is failing two or more courses at the published 9-week points will be placed on academic probation. In order to provide the student the opportunity to give his or her full attention to their studies, a student placed on academic probation is ineligible to participate in co-curricular competition or performances including, but not limited to athletics, cheerleading, fine arts, student government, and school clubs for a period of two-weeks. Ineligibility will begin the next school day after the 9-week point; likewise, the student's eligibility will not be reinstated until the next school day after the 2-week period ends.
3. If, at the end of this two-week period the student is no longer failing two or more classes, then he or she will be eligible to participate once again in co-curricular competition or performances. Students who come off academic probation may immediately lose their eligibility again if administration determines their grades are beginning to drop significantly. If the student is again failing two or more courses, then he or she will remain ineligible to participate in co-curricular competition or performances for an additional two-week period.
4. While a student who fails two or more classes at the end of the first semester will be placed on academic probation and ineligible to participate in co-curricular competition or performances during the first two weeks of the second semester, a student who fails two or more classes at the end of the second semester will not be placed on academic probation at the beginning of the next school year. Please refer to the next section titled **Academic Failure/Repeating Failed Courses** for important information about the number of credits a high school student is allowed to make up.

ACADEMIC FAILURE/REPEATING FAILED COURSES

Students who have a final class average below 70 are considered to have failed that class. Students who have failed three or more classes during a school year will not be permitted to return to GCS. Students who fail core subjects, i.e., English and math, may be asked to withdraw from Grace. Students who have failed one or two classes, other than English, will make up these courses by re-taking them at Grace or doing credit recovery. Permission may not be granted to make up more than four credits during the four years of high school by re-taking the course at GCS or summer school course work. A grade of 70 is the highest that can be earned in credit recovery coursework. This 70 will take the place of the failing grade for GPA purposes. Seniors who fail one or more classes will not be permitted to participate in graduation exercises. A diploma will be issued as soon as the senior has successfully completed his/her summer school courses(s). The grade used for GPA purposes will be for the courses taken at Grace, rather than in summer school. A student may not repeat more than two classes per year.

NEW STUDENT ACADEMIC WATCH

All students newly-enrolled at GCS are placed on academic watch for at least 9 weeks in order to evaluate whether Grace is a good emotional, social, academic and spiritual match for them. If not, the administration may work with the student, the grade level teachers, and the parents to consider available options, up to administrative withdrawal of the student. Occasionally a student will be accepted to GCS on academic warning when reservations exist about the student's ability to perform well at GCS due to low test scores, poor past performance, or special learning issues.

TEXTBOOKS

The school issues most basic classroom textbooks to the students for use during the school year. These texts remain the property of GCS and should be treated as such. In some cases, students are encouraged to purchase books that will be used in their classes because having a personal copy may be of greater use in some classes. Every attempt should be made to protect textbooks from damage and abuse. If a book is damaged or destroyed, a student is responsible for the damage and fined according to the damage or replacement cost.

Students enrolled in dual-credit courses must purchase their own textbooks from the college bookstore, an online book seller, or any other source approved by their college professor.

iPAD POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

The purpose of the iPad pilot program at Grace Community School is to provide 21st century tools and resources that will equip our students to impact the world for Christ. Having a 1 to 1 iPad program gives students access to learn anywhere, anytime -- both in class and at home. We believe it is our responsibility to assist our families in teaching students how to use these tools well. See "[Acceptable Use Policy](#)."

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic support is available on two levels. General support is provided for all students through classroom differentiated instruction and teacher tutorials. The Academic Support Center provides additional intervention through a variety of individually tailored strategies. These include:

- Occasional support- before and after school
- Learning Lab Program- structured strategies and regular learning environment to practice specific study and test taking strategies, review content, strengthen skills, and cement knowledge. Labs are assigned to students in place of their study halls. (Fee based.)
- Grace Plan- providing accommodations for students with diagnosed learning differences.
- Grace Tutors- one-on-one tutorials with approved tutors. (Fee based)

Outside resources: Diagnostic services and other referrals

Contact Mary Dirksen: mdirksen@gracetyler.org

EXAM EXEMPTION POLICY

In preparing students for college and university level work it is important that students learn how to prepare and become proficient at taking exams. As a result, all 9th-12th grade students are required to take exams each semester. However, we also want to reward the consistent hard work of students. Therefore, those students who excel in high school level courses may be exempt from taking some exams. The following are guidelines concerning exam exemptions:

1. No student may be exempt from any Dual Credit course exam, nor Advanced Placement course exam.
2. Final projects, even if in place of a course exam, are not eligible for exemption.
3. A student may be eligible to be exempt from an exam if he or she earns a 93% or higher semester average.
4. One unexcused absence in any course during the semester automatically voids the student's possibility for exam exemption in all classes. Five unexcused tardies will equal an unexcused absence.
5. A student must take at least two (2) exams every semester. Therefore, if a student has earned a 93% or higher in each class, then he or she can choose which two exams they are going to take, and by default which exams they will be exempt from taking. Please note that all Dual Credit and Advanced Placement exams must be taken and count toward the two exam minimum required.

Except in extreme situations, and with instructor and administrative approval, taking exams early is not allowed since doing so requires the instructor to make an additional version of the exam.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

GCS offers two programs of study for high school students. The Required Program includes the minimum number of credits students must earn in order to graduate from GCS and corresponds to the Texas Foundation High School Program with a Multidisciplinary Studies Endorsement (formerly called the Recommended High School Program). The Distinguished Scholars Program requires additional courses and advanced measures for students pursuing a more rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum.

| Subject Area | Required Program | Distinguished Scholars Program |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bible | 1/year | 1/year |
| English | 4 | 4 |
| History | 4 | 4 |
| Math | 4 | 4 |
| Science | 4 | 4 |
| Foreign Language | 2 | 3 |
| Physical Education | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Fine Arts | 1 | 1 |
| Speech | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Elective | 1 | 1 |
| Total Credits | 26 | 27 (at least 4 advanced) |

Regarding the Distinguished Scholars Program:

- Valedictorian and Salutatorian will only be selected from among the Distinguished Scholars. While other students may rank high in their graduating class after completing only the required program, they will not be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian recognition.
- At least 4 of the 27 total credits must be earned in advanced courses, including all courses designated as AP (English 11, English 12, US History, US Government, Calculus, Physics, Spanish 4) and ADV (College Statistics, Cell Biology), along with Anatomy & Physiology-H and Advanced Art-H.

In the event that special circumstances prohibit a student from completing the Required Program, the high school principal may authorize a Minimum Program on an individual basis. Students or families should meet with the High School Principal or College Guidance Counselor to discuss any specific circumstances or needs.

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

Students and their parents may have access to a student's educational records. All others must provide a written authorization signed by the custodial parent or the student, provided that the student is eighteen years of age or older. Individuals with a subpoena or other court order may also have access to a student's files.

GRADING

Grace Community High School uses a numerical grading system. The cumulative grade average is determined by adding the numeric grades and dividing by the number of semester courses. Grade averages are computed on all subjects, grades 9 through 12 (and junior high algebra 1, if applicable). Only grades earned at GCS are computed in the grade average – transfer grades will appear on the student's transcript, but will not be averaged together with GCS grades. Some of the more rigorous high school courses receive a weighted grade by adding points to the earned numeric grade. All courses designated AP (Advanced Placement) and ADV (Advanced) receive an additional five points. All courses designated Pre-AP receive three additional points. Courses designated H (Honors) are recognized as challenging but do not receive a weighted grade.

CLASS RANK

In an attempt to increase students' opportunities for college admissions and scholarships, Grace Community School does not report class rank. In cases where individual students will benefit from reporting their rank, special arrangements will be made to provide it. Contact the guidance office for more information. For transfer students, only grades earned at GCS will be used to compute class rank.

GRADUATING HONORS

A cumulative average as shown qualifies the student for the following honors graduation levels:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Cum Laude | 93% or higher - signified at graduation by a white cord |
| Magna Cum Laude | 96% or higher - signified at graduation by royal blue & white cord |
| Summa Cum Laude | 98% or higher - signified at graduation by a royal blue, black & white cord |

ACADEMIC AWARDS ASSEMBLY

At the end of each year, students in grades 9-12 are presented with awards for Academic Honors during the High School Awards Assembly. During the Senior Recognition ceremony, graduating seniors are presented with college scholarship offers, National Merit and Valedictorian/Salutatorian recognition, or community program awards; all seniors are individually recognized for their achievement. Because both presentations are exciting for our community, students are required to attend and family members are invited. The **Legacy Awards** will be given to two senior male students and two senior female students each year. They will recognize these outstanding students by honoring the legacy of people who have helped to make Grace great and who reflected the mission and purpose of the school.

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- The **Jerry Burgess Leadership Award** will be in recognition of humble leadership, patience and perseverance, excellence in daily life, devotion to Christ, servant spirit and loyalty to those they serve.
 - The **Sue Johnson Leadership Award** will be in recognition of humble leadership, patience and perseverance, excellence in daily life, devotion to Christ, servant spirit and loyalty to those they serve.
 - The **Jeremy Kersh Excellence Award** will be in recognition of academic excellence, passion for learning, perseverance and hard work, humility, dedication to family, church and community.
 - The **Ashley Prothro Trant Excellence Award** will be in recognition of pursuit of excellence in all things, academic achievement, devotion to God, passionate about life and service, and dedication to family, church and community.

We encourage **academic diligence and academic excellence** recognition for deserving students within classes so they can get a deserved pat on the back from their peers with whom they worked. These academic diligence and excellence awards will be given by the teacher during the week before finals in each class section. Parents will be notified by the teacher concerning these awards.

VALEDICTORIAN AND SALUTATORIAN

The students in the senior class who are eligible according to the qualifications, below, and who have the highest and second highest numeric cumulative average at the end the senior year will be the valedictorian and salutatorian of the graduating class. To be considered for valedictorian or salutatorian honors, the student:

- Must have attended GCS the entire junior and senior year
- Must have completed the Distinguished Scholars Program

Valedictorian and salutatorian are honorary positions; the administration reserves the right to withhold this honor if the student's conduct is not consistent with the values for which Grace stands.

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY (NHS)

The National Honor Society and the Faculty Council (consisting of five people as appointed by the Principal in whom he or she places a high degree of trust to fulfill their responsibilities in the most professional and objective manner possible) endeavor to find students who exemplify the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Scholarship will be measured using current and previous academic performance. All of the qualities mentioned above will be evaluated by the Faculty Council. Students will provide a resume/application to assist the Faculty Council with their evaluation.

Students will be selected to be inducted into the NHS using a process in accordance with national standards. Inducted members are then required to maintain these minimum standards, or they may risk losing their membership. Students may be eligible for membership for more than one year. If a student is not inducted in one year, it is possible that induction could take place in a following year.

Induction into the NHS (for students in the 10th through 12th grades) takes place in the spring

semester. The criteria and procedure for selection to the NHS are as follows:

1. Cumulative average of a 93% or better.
2. Minimum of 20 hours of approved community service per semester.
3. Administration reserves the right to place a student on probation or remove a student from membership as a result of any behavioral incident occurring while a member of NHS.
4. If a NHS member's cumulative average drops below 93% then the student will be placed on probation. At the end of a semester, if any violations remain, then the member will be removed from NHS. If all violations have been cleared, then the member returns to "membership in good standing" and his or her probation is lifted.

Appeal Process In The Case of Non-selection to NHS

Parents and students must understand that no student has a right to be selected for membership into a Chapter of National Honor Society. The following appeal process has been established:

1. Appeals must be registered with the Chapter Advisor within 10 school days of notification of non-selection. If no appeal has been registered within this defined period of time, all records pertaining to the current round of selection will be destroyed.
2. Upon receiving the request for an appeal, the Advisor will review the summary notes from the Faculty Council session.
3. The Advisor will reconvene the Faculty Council and resubmit the student information for reconsideration.
4. The Advisor and/or Faculty Council will meet with the Principal regarding their decision-making process concerning the appeal.
5. Outcomes of the appeal can include:
 - a. Rejection of the appeal by the Faculty Council, sustaining their original decision;
 - b. A change in the decision by the Faculty Council, resulting in the selection of the student in question; or
 - c. An overturning of the Faculty Council's decision by the Principal.
6. If a non-selected student or his or her parents desire to appeal the Principal's decision, they should contact the Head of School within another 10 school days. The Head of School will meet with the Principal and Chapter Advisor to discuss the appeal procedure and either sustain or overturn the appeal decision of the Faculty Council and Principal. The decision of the Head of School in this appeal process is final and there is no appeal process to the School Board, the National Council of the National Honor Society, or the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The high school Student Government serves as a liaison between the student body and the administration; it also provides an opportunity for students to develop leadership skills within the student body. The Student Government plans, promotes, and executes school service projects and social events. The members also strive to encourage a Christ-honoring atmosphere among the student body. Qualifications for membership include an 80+ GPA, good Christian character, and a desire to serve others with a cheerful spirit.

The Student Government consists of four elected officers (president, vice-president of student affairs, student community service director, and student activities director), and a minimum of twelve elected representatives (three from each of the four classes). To run for office, a student

must first have served as a class representative. Student Government officers will be selected in late spring by a student body election and the representatives will be selected by student body vote in late August or early September.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Believing that service to our family, school, community, nation and the world is vitally important, GCS has implemented the following community service guidelines for graduation. This program helps students fulfill the Great Commandment to love one another, and gives them a vision of how they can be used by God to further His Kingdom.

GCS requires 160 community Service points during the four years of high school in order to graduate. Students should earn a minimum of 20 points per semester and can earn up to 60 points a year. Points must be earned in five different areas:

1. Student Activities – 20 points
2. School Service – 20 points
3. Church Service – 40 points
4. Community Service – 40 points
5. Nation/World Service – 40 points

After a student completes a particular service activity, he or she should complete a community service form and have it signed by their parents. Application and continued membership to National Honor Society (NHS) requires that a student complete at least 20 hours of community service for each semester of high school. Failure to stay on track will result in the possible probation/suspension from NHS.

The completed form should be turned in to the high school office for approval and filing in their student portfolio. The student is responsible for seeing that the appropriate paperwork is completed and filed in a timely fashion. Student portfolios will be reviewed and updated periodically. Students who have not completed their minimum requirements for the year by the end of school will have a conference with their parents and the assistant principal to develop a plan to reach the minimum requirements by July 1st of that year. Incoming students will need to complete the community service requirements in a prorated manner.

The following is a list of activities that qualify for community service. This list is not exhaustive. There are many possibilities for earning community service points. Points will be assigned based on the time, effort, and responsibility involved in the activity. Students will not be allowed to earn their points in only one area. To encourage broad involvement, we encourage that at least twenty of the community service points be earned in a cross-cultural setting. These points may be acquired through school, church, community and/or nation/world service. Cross-cultural work should be indicated on the completed service form.

GRACE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITY LIST:

Student Activities: Minimum of 20 points – representing and serving the school.

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Student Government | Worship Team | National Honor Society |
| Academic Team | Athletic Teams | Fine Art Teams |
| Cougar Ambassadors | Drama Productions | Techies |
| Shotgun Team | Yearbook | Debate |
| Chapel Team | Drum line | Managers |
| Video/Statisticians | Other approved activities | |

Generally, students will earn five points for every season, year, or production finished in good standing.

School Service: Minimum of 20 points – serving others through your school.

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Little Dribblers | Veteran’s Day | Auction |
| Grandparents Day | Mentoring Students | Concession Stand |
| Elementary Bible | Teacher’s Aide | Library Aide |
| Lunch Duty | Athletic Field Work | Bible Study Leader |
| Drama Camp | Summer Athletic Camps | |
| Book & Clock for JH games | Fearfully & Wonderfully Made Co. | |
| Little Dribblers JH Referee | Operation Christmas Child volunteer | |
| Special Olympic Basketball volunteer | | |
| Other approved activities | | |

Generally, students will earn one point per one hour up to approximately 20 hours per event/year/season. The goal is for students to develop a mindset/lifestyle of service not get all their hours done in one event and consider themselves “done”.

Church Service: Minimum of 40 points – serving in your church

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Youth Group Leadership | Ushering | Bible Study Leader |
| Choir Member | Nursery Worker | Sunday School Teacher |
| Church Work Project | Church Yard Work/Maintenance | |
| Working for a Church Activity | | |
| Unpaid work for a church family (babysitting, yard work, etc.) | | |
| Other approved activities | | |

Generally, students will earn one point per one hour up to approximately 20 hours per event/year/season. The goal is for students to develop a mindset/lifestyle of service not get all their hours done in one event and consider themselves “done”.

Community Service: Minimum of 40 points – serving our community

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| School Service Day | Salvation Army Soup Kitchen | Habitat for Humanity |
| East Texas Food Bank | Salvation Army Bell Ringing | Living Alternatives |
| East Texas Crisis Center | PATH/PATH Mentoring | Special Olympic Volunteer |
| Local Political Campaign | | |
| Volunteer at Sky Ranch, Pine Cove, or other organizations in the area | | |
| Other approved activities | | |

Generally, students will earn one point per one hour up to approximately 20 hours per event/year/season. The goal is for students to develop a mindset/lifestyle of service not get all their hours done in one event and consider themselves “done”.

Nation/World Service: Minimum of 40 points – serving our nation & world

| | | |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Mission Trip | Mercy Ships | Political Campaign |
| YWAM | Invisible Children | Teen Missions |
| Operation Christmas Child volunteer | | |
| Volunteer at other national/world organizations | | |
| Other pre-approved activities | | |

Generally, students will earn one point per one hour up to approximately 20 hours per event/year/season. The goal is for students to develop a mindset/lifestyle of service not get all their hours done in one event and consider themselves “done”.

Statement Regarding Missions: GCS seeks to strongly encourage students to participate in short-term missions both as a means of fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) and to foster the student’s spiritual growth. Therefore, students can earn all of their Nation/World Service points by participating in a church-sponsored or family mission trip taken during the four years they are in high school. In order to qualify, students must obtain approval of the trip by the high school principal or assistant principal.

Community Service portfolios will be kept in the assistant principal’s office.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM

Girls’ sports include cross-country, volleyball, spirit squad, cheerleading, drill team, swimming, basketball, soccer, softball, tennis, golf, and track. Boys’ sports include cross-country, football, soccer, basketball, swimming, baseball, tennis, golf, and track.

The athletic program has a separate handbook with applicable policies. The handbook is available on the school website, www.gracetyler.org.

STANDARDS FOR DRESS

At GCS dress is used to teach students about the nature and character of God, and how we reflect that nature as image-bearers of God. Allowing students to choose what they wear within the bounds of the dress code adds color and variety to the school and celebrates God’s good creation of beauty, variety, and color in His world. The dress code provides students with a context for living out biblical principles of modesty, attitude, character, and creates opportunities for “teachable moments” between parents and children, and teachers and students about what is right, pure, and godly. The dress code teaches students to be thoughtful of others, being aware that their clothing choices can offend or cause others to stumble, and prepares students for making responsible, God-honoring choices about dress as a reflection of their position as one who bears God’s image.

As we all know, the standards of dress in society are extremely varied. It is the desire of Grace Community School to maintain a standard that will promote the modesty to which we have been called by God and exemplify our identity in Christ. Equally important is maintaining an environment conducive to learning – low cut tops, short skirts, low riding pants, short shirts, low pants, etc. detract from a productive learning environment. Likewise, a dirty or unkempt appearance is a distraction and reflects poor stewardship over one’s body, which we are called to offer as a living sacrifice to God. The Grace dress code is based upon the following foundational principles:

- Modesty- As sons and daughters of God, we are called to dress in a manner that edifies each other and gives glory to our Lord. Biblically, modesty calls for an attitude of dress that does not flaunt the student's sexuality.
- Identity with Christ- As those who belong to the Lord, we are to dress in a manner that connects us outwardly (as inwardly) to Him. We are called to bear witness to His holiness through our inward and outward appearance.

Basic Guidelines

The following is a non-exhaustive list of standards/guidelines for what clothing high school students may wear that will assist them in making choices that are appropriate for a classroom setting while not flaunting their sexuality. These standards are in effect for all students in academic buildings during regular school hours.

1. Clothing that bears designs, slogans, names, etc. should honor Christ and edify others.
2. Hair (including facial hair) should be kept neat, clean, and well-trimmed.
3. All shirts/dresses should have wide straps over the shoulder (approximately 3" or wider). Care should be taken to wear tops that are neither too tight nor too low to reveal cleavage. Tops should be long enough to prevent skin from showing when arms are raised. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
4. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be longer than mid-thigh.
5. Athletic pants may be worn; however, sweatpants (e.g. fleece), pajama pants, and athletic shorts are too casual for our classrooms.
6. Pants should not have holes or frays where skin is visible higher than mid-thigh.
7. Footwear must be worn at all times (for safety reasons).
8. Caps or hats should only be worn outside unless specific permission has been given by a teacher or administrator.
9. Tattoos and body piercings (except for girl's earrings) should not be visible.

When students violate the dress code, they will be required to correct the violation before they are allowed to return to class (unless a test is being administered, in which case the student will be allowed to test in another location). If a student misses class for violating the dress code, they will receive an unexcused absence for all classes missed. If a student consistently violates the dress code, then additional action such as detention or, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion will result. The principals reserve the right to make final decisions in all dress code matters.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

GCS desires to support and assist families whose students may be struggling with substance use or abuse. The intent of the following policy is neither to entrap nor to discourage, but to foster good stewardship and accountability of our students' bodies and lives, allowing them to make those bodies "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." (Romans 12:1). For the welfare of GCS students and GCS and to promote GCS's role as an assistance to Christian parents, GCS reserves the right to require a student suspected of using illegal drugs or alcohol or of other substance abuse to be evaluated at any time by a physician or medical technician of GCS's choosing, including but not limited to, drug testing. GCS may also require random drug testing of its students to provide accountability, within the discretion of administration.

By execution of the re-enrollment agreement, and by being enrolled at GCS, students and parents agree that:

1. Students shall submit to any reasonable laboratory testing that within GCS's discretion is deemed necessary.
2. Students and their parents understand the purpose and reason for the tests, and give their consent thereto.
3. Students and their parents will hold harmless GCS and its employees, and any other professional agency or business that GCS deems necessary to carry out this policy.
4. Students and their parents waive any privilege of confidentiality that might exist, or come into existence with respect to said GCS-required testing, including, but not limited to, any doctor-patient relationship.

Community and Parental Responsibilities

For the welfare of students and GCS, and to promote and insist on a drug-free environment, the entire GCS community, including parents and guests, should not be in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs during any activity on GCS campus or at any student event, athletic or otherwise, at any other school campus. The cooperation of parents and guests is needed to promote and send a strong message to our student body with regard to GCS's position regarding drug and alcohol usage.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The conduct of a GCS student should be exemplary both on and off campus. The reputation and good name of the Lord Jesus Christ should be considered at all times. As members of the Grace community, we are all followers of Christ. As such, we are identified with His name. We are called to love each other as Christ loved the Church and to bear witness to His name. It is not Grace's intent to set forth herein all standards encompassed in God's Word, or to include a list of all prescribed and proscribed conduct at Grace. The handbook merely sets forth examples of standards for all students, while the "spirit" of the handbook is to incorporate a lifestyle that gives glory to God in our roles as those who bear His image and are redeemed by the blood of His Son. A student's enrollment at GCS signifies that the student agrees with and will abide by the school's policies.

A member of the Grace community enjoys practical discipline, including being a part of a community that has as its hallmarks the building of relationships, forming clear guidelines, modeling Christ-like behavior, showing unconditional love, spending time with community members, expressing personal convictions, expressing approval or disapproval of certain types of behavior, and group accountability.

Corrective discipline may be necessary when a student has stepped outside of stated guidelines and boundaries. It is the consequence of wrong actions. Types of corrective discipline at GCS include verbal reminders, exhortation, consultation/discussion, loss/restriction of privileges, work crew, physical training, and suspension, dismissal, or expulsion (for excessive behavioral problems and major infractions). Such measures are discussed in greater detail to follow. The method of discipline also depends on the attitude and teachable spirit of the student. The goal is never to punish, but to lovingly correct and restore.

Most discipline will be handled by the teacher. Parents will be notified if problems continue. If the situation warrants, a teacher may send a student directly to the assistant principal or principal.

In cases where a problem persists, and there is no behavior change, a student will be sent to the assistant principal or principal to discuss other options. If no progress is made after visiting with

one of the principals, the parent will be called to visit with the principal and/or teacher(s) to determine an action plan. Students who consistently fail to respond to efforts of correction may be suspended or expelled. Much care is taken to ensure that correction is handled properly and without anger. Perfection is not expected from GCS students; cooperation and a teachable spirit are expected.

Measures of Corrective Discipline

The purpose of this section is to set forth various means by which corrective discipline occurs at Grace. This is not an exhaustive list. Often, teachers and administrators will work with parents to design a plan specific to the student, with restoration and redemption always the goal.

- **Consultation/Discussion:** At times, students may need to simply be reminded of expected standards. A discussion with the teacher, assistant principal or principal may be the best method to deal with certain situations. This may be the only consequence needed to bring about a change in attitude and behavior. Students may also be required to complete a written assignment geared to the “heart” of the issue to demonstrate their understanding of what has occurred.
- **Loss of privileges:** A student may lose some or all of the following privileges: off-campus, off-periods, driving, break-time, lunch-time with classmates, or participation in extracurricular activities.
- **Work crew assignment:** Manual labor assigned and completed on the Upper Campus before or after school, monitored by the assistant principal or person assigned by the assistant principal.
- **Physical training:** Assigned and monitored by a coach or the assistant principal.
- **Suspension, Dismissal and Expulsion:** Suspension, dismissal, and/or expulsion of students involve consultation with parents and the student to carefully determine the best course of action. In all cases, even with dismissal or expulsion, the goal is to reach the student’s heart and bring about restoration and repentance.
 - **Suspension:** Suspension from school is a result of repeated minor infractions or a major infraction of the GCS community standards. The length of suspension will be determined by the administration. All work missed during the suspension is to be made up. Any assignment or work not completed and turned in the day following the suspension will receive a grade of zero. It is the student’s responsibility to collect class work prior to the suspension. Suspended students are not allowed to be on campus during their suspension without administrative approval, nor are they permitted to participate in or attend extra-curricular activities during that time. Students may be required to go through a restoration process prior to his or her return.
 - **Dismissal:** The goal of dismissal is to separate the school and student for an extended period of time, ranging up to one year. The purpose of dismissal is to facilitate the Holy Spirit’s work in the student to bring about:
 - A repentant heart
 - An interest in spiritual growth as evidenced by a discipling relationship with an appropriate spiritual leader; and a desire to seek forgiveness, restoration and restitution as is appropriate under the circumstances

- A genuine desire to return to GCS and a willingness to submit to the authority of the teachers and administrators
- Acceptable conduct and academic record from an established school

Once a previously dismissed student demonstrates a heart change he/she may reapply for admission. If allowed to return, the student will return on probation with a restoration plan tailored to that student.

- **Expulsion:** Attendance at Grace Community School is a *privilege*. Any student whose conduct or attitude in or out of school shows him/her to be in direct opposition to the basic principles and purposes of the school will be dismissed or asked to withdraw. A student may be expelled from school in the event that a serious breach of conduct and/or repeated problems with behavior or academic performance make it apparent that the school will be unable to meet the needs of a student, or that the student's behavior is harming the community.

Disciplinary Probation

Students who accumulate a series of minor infractions or commit a major infraction will be placed on disciplinary probation. While on probation, the student's behavior will be monitored by teachers and school administration. Disciplinary probation may include denial of privileges and participation in school activities. The length of the probation period and its terms will be determined by the administration. Parents will be informed of the probationary status. If a student on disciplinary probation is involved in any disciplinary infraction (major or minor), he/she may be subject to immediate suspension or dismissal at the discretion of the school administration.

There are two types of conduct probation:

1. **Disciplinary Probation:** Probation is a formal warning not to repeat the offense/behavior/attitude. It puts the student on a warned status to help motivate them to change their behavior/attitude. If the behavior/attitude continues the student will be placed on Strict Disciplinary Probation.
2. **Strict Disciplinary Probation:** When a student is placed on Strict Probation, all school privileges and activities are taken away for a period of time set by the administration. Students may only be on campus during the academic day. The goal is to help the student recognize the seriousness of the situation, to recognize it is a privilege to be a part of GCS and that there are high standards that must be kept.

Major Discipline Infraction

Seldom, but periodically, the school will have to deal with serious infractions. The following is a list of serious infractions that represent potential imminent harm to the community and may result in immediate removal, whether by suspension or removal, all at the discretion of the administration:

- Stealing, vandalism, or destruction of property
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures
- Fighting/harassment/bullying
- Tobacco, electronic cigarettes, alcohol or drug possession, use, or transmission
- Possession or transmission of firearms or other weapons

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- Sexual harassment, or possession or transmission of pornography

Public Notoriety

Students of GCS are representatives of their school, their parents, and their Lord at all times. Consequently, some guidelines go beyond the school setting. While not exhaustive, the following inappropriate activities constitute serious breaches of discipline and make the student subject to disciplinary review and disciplinary action even if the event occurred away from school:

- Stealing or shoplifting
- Drinking, drunkenness
- DUI, DWI, MIP
- Sexual immorality
- Smoking or possession of cigarettes
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs
- Vandalism
- Malicious prank against a school representative or another school
- Involvement in a felony crime
- Involvement with the occult
- Illegal possession or transmission of firearms or other weapons
- Sexually explicit, immoral or other inappropriate material on student blogs or social networking websites.

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES

CELL PHONES/COMMUNICATION DEVICES

See “[Acceptable Use Policy](#).”

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL COMPUTER USE

Computers are supplied by the school for academic use and are not to be used inappropriately. "Inappropriate Use" may be defined as, but not limited to the following:

- Accessing internet sites containing controversial material, sexually explicit material, destructive information, material inconsistent with the purpose of Grace Community School, material determined to be illegal.
- Downloading music, software, movies or any other copyrighted material.
- Game playing is not allowed on school computers, except as a formal component of an academic subject or through a school-sponsored event.
- Installation or use of peer to peer file sharing programs such as BitTorrent, are not permitted on computers connected to the school network.
- Any use that is not considered academic use.

Parents and students should be advised that internet access is filtered, but no filter is 100% effective. If a student unintentionally accesses a bad site, they MUST “back out” immediately or turn off the monitor and notify the teacher/school personnel without drawing another student's attention to the computer screen.

Grace Community School reserves the right to access and monitor e-mail, web sites, server logs, and electronic files, and any computer or electronic device connected to the school's network including personally owned equipment, should it determine that there is reason to do so. Such reasons would include, but not be limited to, suspected or reported breaches of this Acceptable Use policy, or breach of any policies of the school, or suspected breaches of the law.

The following guidelines are to be followed by students using school computers in the following venues:

Lower Campus

- **Internet Use-** Lower campus students may not access the internet unless specifically directed to do so by a teacher.
- **Library-** Library computers are made available to students for accessing the card catalog system under the supervision of the library staff. All other use is prohibited.
- **Classroom**
 - Most classrooms are equipped with a student computer for the purpose of taking Accelerated Reader quizzes. Any other use is prohibited without teacher permission.
 - Students are not permitted to use the teacher's computer under any circumstance.
- **ComputerLab**
 - Students may not alter any program or configuration in the computers or otherwise tamper with software or hardware.

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- Students must stay within the programs or activities assigned by the teacher and may not seek to gain entrance to other areas within the computer or network.
 - Students may not bring games or disks from home to use on school computers.
 - Students may not download anything onto the computers without the teacher's permission.
 - Causing the computers to display, record, or print material that is dishonoring to God, the school or other individuals is not allowed. Students doing so will be subject to serious disciplinary action.
 - **COMPUTER LAB COMPUTERS ARE MONITORED!**
 - **Tablets and E-Readers-** Tablets and electronic readers (such as Nook, Kindle, tablets or any device with Internet capability or a camera) may not be used at the Lower Campus or Jr. High. With permission from the building principal, E-readers without Internet connectivity may be used if extraordinary circumstances dictate and always at the Principal's discretion.

Upper Campus

- **Library**
 - Internet use in the library is for school related research. Using the internet without permission or accessing inappropriate sites as outlined above will result in discipline. All sites accessed are logged for review.
 - A printer and copier are provided and may be accessed only by school computers in the Media Center. There is no charge for the printer and/or copier by students for school related work.
 - Computers have word processing programs for students with assignments that need to be typewritten. Students who want to save their documents may do so in their Google Drive.
 - When in the library, students must follow the instructions of the media-center personnel.
 - A wireless network is available for student on school provided devices only. Students who bring their own equipment must use their own data plan and abide by all school rules regarding computer use.
 - **LIBRARY COMPUTERS ARE MONITORED!**
- **Computer Lab**
 - Each student shall be assigned an account, a password, and a computer for use in the computer lab during the student's scheduled class. Attempting to access any other computer without permission will result in a detention and possibly suspension or expulsion. Any expense incurred as a result of student tampering with the school's computers will be passed on to the student and/or parents of the student at fault.
 - Students may not alter any program or configuration in the computers or otherwise tamper with software or hardware without specific directions from the teacher.
 - Students must stay within the programs or activities assigned by the teacher and may not seek to gain entrance to other areas within the network.
 - Students may not bring games or disks from home to use on school computers without appropriate permission.
 - Students may not download anything onto the computers without the teacher's permission.

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- Causing the computers to display, record, or print material that is dishonoring to God, the school or other individuals is not allowed. Students doing so will be subject to serious disciplinary action.
 - **COMPUTER LAB COMPUTERS ARE MONITORED!**
 - **Classroom**
 - Student use of a teacher's computer is strictly forbidden. Any access will result in severe discipline.
 - Use of student-owned equipment for the purpose of taking notes or other classroom activities is allowed only with teacher permission. ASK FIRST or your equipment will be taken up.
 - Certain classrooms have been equipped with student access machines for specific tasks such as yearbook and newspaper production. This equipment is to be used only for the tasks provided. Any other use is prohibited and will be disciplined.
 - **School-Assigned iPads-** Students who are assigned an iPad must abide by all student guidelines contained in this handbook in order to maintain the privilege. In order to receive an iPad, the student must meet the following conditions:
 - View the iPad video and complete the accompanying form
 - Student and parent must agree to the iPad Acceptable Use Policy

MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Parents are required to fill out an emergency procedure card upon registration in the school. In case of a medical emergency, the office personnel will follow the procedures outlined on the card. First aid will be administered by office personnel or the school nurse until action by the parent or physician is taken.

Illness

If a student shows signs of illness (fever of 100 degrees or higher without the use of Advil or Tylenol, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), he should not come to school. The student must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before he returns to school. Students with a contagious condition should be kept at home until there is no danger of passing the condition on to others. If the student becomes ill at school, the parent will be called to pick up the student. Students will remain in the school office or nurse's office until parents arrive or until transportation can be arranged.

Medication Policy

Students should not bring any medication to school unless it is absolutely necessary. If a student must bring a non-prescribed medicine to school, the student should bring only enough for each day. High school students may be responsible for taking their own over the counter medication. Students may ask the school nurse to hold medications for them until needed but they must be in the original packaging. No student may at any time give medication to another student.

Personal inhalers may be kept by students at the discretion of the nurse and parents. The nurse must be notified of all inhalers on campus.

VISITOR TAGS

All visitors must check in with the office staff upon arriving on campus. All parents and visitors must wear a visitor identification tag. Those individuals who do not have one may secure one from the school office.

LOCKERS

Lockers are assigned on a random basis prior to open house. Lockers cannot be traded without prior approval by the assistant principal. The school reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time. Cubbies can be used for items such as coats, backpacks, bags, and lunch boxes. They are not to be used to store books and notebooks that can fit in student lockers.

LOST & FOUND

Lost and found items are located in the school office of each school campus. To discourage students from leaving their belongings in the hallway, items left in the hall during the day, before or after school will be placed in lost and found.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged at any time during the school year and may be initiated by the teacher or parent.

CHAPEL/COUGAR FORUMS

Chapel and cougar forums are a part of the philosophy and curriculum of Grace Community School. While planning and directing these programs students are provided opportunities for developing organizational and leadership skills. The chapel time provides opportunities for students and faculty members to experience worship, praise, teaching and fellowship together. Cougar Forum provides a venue for our students to hear from people within our own community about “marketplace-life” issues –most will be presented from a Christian worldview. Occasionally, we will have presenters that come from a different point of view. This will provide our students opportunity to engage with a variety of challenges and perspectives.

All students are expected to be present and attentive at both chapel and Cougar Forums meetings. Tardiness or absences will result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, dismissal, or expulsion.

OFF-CAMPUS TRIPS

Class trips and field trips are designed to enrich curriculum, promote spiritual growth, establish friendships, and help develop leadership and “teamness.” They also provide an opportunity for students to interact with the teachers and the administration outside a school environment. They are an important part of our curriculum. Students are expected to attend unless a written request is submitted to the principal and approved in advance. Unexcused absences will be treated as those on a regular school day.

Students who by a family decision are not allowed to attend their class trip will be expected to participate in a school planned, organized and lead community service project here in Smith County. It will typically be based on normal school hours for four days during “Go Week”.

If there are extenuating circumstances, medical issues, family issues, etc., that need to be considered, please present the situation to the administration, as soon as possible, so that we can help determine that best course of action.

Efforts are made to keep costs down and financial assistance may be available for trips where necessary. Please contact the trip organizer for details.

Guidelines for Field Trips

- The parent authorization/emergency procedure card must be on file before a student will be allowed to travel with the school.
- Parents, sponsors, students are to behave in a manner that is pleasing and honoring to God. We are representing God, GCS, our families, ourselves, and Grace Community Church.
- Staff sponsors and chaperones are responsible for the behavior of all students while under their care and have the authority and responsibility to correct a student.
- In order to keep our students safe and secure, parents are prohibited from posting any field trip information or pictures to any social media site, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, until students are safely returned to the school campus.
- Students are expected to follow the directions of the adult leaders.
- Students are to be supervised at all times. Students will be responsible for being where they are supposed to be on time and doing what is expected.
- Students are not allowed to leave early without GCS staff member approval.
- Students must wear required field trip attire unless special permission has been obtained from the trip leader.
- GCS trips are for current GCS students only.
- Any student on disciplinary or academic probation may be excluded from a field trip.
- School policies are in effect on all field trips on or off campus.
- Students who attend field trips must have attended school at least four periods on the day of the activity.
- Students are responsible for any academic material missed while on a school field trip or school activity.
- If a student misses a scheduled test because of a field trip or school activity, the student will be responsible to take the test the very next day.
- It is unacceptable to bring weapons (knives, firearms, sling shots, etc.), matches, lighters, water balloons, laser pointers, etc. on class trips. Use of other items such as iPods, radios, tape/CD/DVD players, or other electronic entertainment devices may be limited at the discretion of the trip leader. If restricted items are brought, they will be confiscated. Additional discipline may also occur.
- It is unacceptable to have possession of or use of alcohol or drugs on trips.
- Possession of weapons, drugs, or alcohol may result in immediate expulsion.
- Boys and girls are not allowed to enter the rooms/cabins of the opposite sex. Leaving rooms/cabins after hours is not permitted.
- Class trips are not times for "dating." There should be no handholding, no kissing, nor any other obvious acts of affection, e.g., sitting in each other's lap, straddling each other's legs, etc. Couples should never be alone or away from the group. Couples should stay in lighted areas that are easily visible to camp monitors.
- All students are required to be present and attentive at trip chapels/devotions.
- The basic school dress code applies, with a few exceptions:
 - Shirts and blouses: Boys are expected to wear shirts unless the camp administrator gives permission for them to be removed for particular games. Tank tops and bare midriffs are not acceptable. Swim suits must be modest.
 - Shorts: Athletic shorts are permissible but must be modest.

Proposed Junior High Field Trips

| Grade/Group | Event | Date | Est. Cost |
|---|--|-------------|-------------------|
| 6th | Texas Capitol | October | \$125 |
| 7th | Choir to Lower Campus | Mar | \$0 |
| 7th | San Antonio | Mar | \$180 |
| 8th | Houston | April | \$325-350 |
| 8th | Drama – Tour local theatres/attend local shows | Varies | \$5 |
| 8th | Drama Competition or Festivals | Varies | Meals |
| 8th | Choir to Lower Campus | March | \$0 |
| Strings | Share Music with Community | December | \$10 |
| Orchestra | Share Music with Elementary Campus | Spring | \$0 |
| Orchestra/ Band/Choir/ Percussion | Various competitions/Music in the Parks/ Symphony Stories | Spring | \$30 |
| Choir | Nursing Home Performance | December | \$5-10 (lunch) |
| Drum Corps | Attend performance in area | Spring | \$20 |
| JH | Various Academic Competitions | | \$10-30 |

Proposed High School Field Trips

| Grade/Group | Event | Date | Est. Cost |
|---|---|-------------------|------------------|
| 9 th -12 th | Service Project | October | \$0 |
| 9 th | Carolina Creek | March | \$231 |
| 10 th | New Orleans, LA | March | \$528 |
| 11 th | Memphis, TN | March | \$539 |
| 12 th | Washington, D.C. | March | \$1,771 |
| HS Anatomy & Physiology | Local trips: UTT nursing dept., vet clinic, labs, research facilities, etc. | Late fall | \$15-30 |
| Yearbook | Taylor yearbook plant | October | meals |
| Drama | Local Drama Productions/Tour theatres | Varies | \$0-40 |
| Strings | Share Music with Community | December | \$5 (lunch) |
| Orchestra | Share Music with Elementary Campus | Spring | \$0 |
| Choir | East Texas State Fair | September | \$0 |
| Choir | Sing at Lower Campus | December | \$0 |
| Orch/Band/Choir Drum/Academic/ Speech | TAPPS State Competition | Feb. or March | meals |
| Orchestra/ Band/Choir/Drum Line/Academic/ Speech | TAPPS State Competition | April | meals |
| HS Drum Line | Attend performance in area | Spring | \$20 |
| HS Drum Line | Competition | September/October | \$0 |
| HS | International Travel | Summer | \$2,000 |
| HS Art | Ft. Worth, Kimball, Modern Museum of Art | Spring | \$50 |
| HS | Various Academic Competitions | | \$10-30 |
| Acts of Grace | (optional trip) Texas Educational Theatre Association Theatre Feast | Jan/Feb | \$300-\$375 |
| Drama | TAPPS State One Act Play Competition | Nov/Dec | \$150 |

LIBRARY GUIDELINES

The purpose of the Grace Community School Upper Campus Library is to support the overall mission of GCS by:

- Providing books and electronic resources that enhance the learning process.
- Fostering an atmosphere that is conducive to reading and studying.
- Supporting teachers in the acquisition of materials to supplement the curriculum.

Library access

The library is scheduled to be open for study and research during regular school hours, and usually before and after school. Junior High students must have a pass in order to use the library during class time. If a High School student needs to use the library during an off period, that student must come prepared to study.

Library atmosphere

- While in the library, students are expected to respect the quiet learning atmosphere for others by displaying appropriate behavior.
- The library is not a location for study groups or socializing. Accordingly, students are not allowed to have more than four chairs at a table.
- No food or drinks are allowed in the library.
- Use of the library is a privilege and may be lost if a student does not behave appropriately while using it.

Borrowing policy

Books may be checked out for three weeks and renewed at the library for an additional five days. It is each student's responsibility to recheck his or her own book.

- Students are limited to borrowing one (1) item at a time.
- Reference books may not be checked out, but copies of needed material can be made at no cost to the student.
- Books are to be returned by the due date. Books that are not returned on time are subject to a fine.
- Overdue notices are placed in lockers periodically. If a book remains unreturned for two (2) weeks, the student will lose library privileges until necessary fines are paid and books are returned.
- The loss of a book should be reported as soon as possible to the librarian. Students are responsible to pay the replacement cost of any lost or severely damaged books.
- At the end of the school year, those students who have not returned books or paid necessary fines will have RenWeb accounts disabled until library accounts are cleared.

Library computers

There are a number of computers in the library. Computers are offered as a privilege and not a right. Computers are made available to students solely for educational purposes and are not for casual use. In the event a student uses library computers for reasons other than school work, he/she may lose computer privileges.

Students are required to have a “media pass” from a teacher or school administrator to use the computers.

Grace Community subscribes to several online resources that may be accessed from school or home. A complete list of these resources along with the login information may be found on the Grace website.

A wireless network is available in the library for school issued devices. Students who bring their own equipment must abide by all school rules regarding computer use.

Grace Community School uses filtering software to ensure that students are protected from inappropriate material on the Internet. The library staff uses monitoring software that allows library staff to monitor every student’s activity on the Internet. If a student attempts to circumvent the firewall or filtering software for the purpose of viewing sites that have been prohibited, that student may lose computer privileges for up to nine weeks.

USE OF COPIER/PRINTER

A copier is available in the media center for student use.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Authorized school personnel may conduct a reasonable search of a student, staff member, vendor or visitor or his/her locker, vehicle, and/or belongings at any time.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students should not damage or deface any property belonging to the school or church. Students will be charged for repairs (parts & labor) of damaged property resulting from their inappropriate behavior.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

GCS works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district’s Asbestos Management Plan is available in the central administration office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district’s plan in more detail, please contact Mike Cornelison, the district’s asbestos coordinator at 903-352-0633.

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS INFORMATION

WHAT IS MENINGITIS?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent damage or death.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash or tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and causes meningitis or another serious illness.

HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?

Do not share food, drinks, or utensils.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

APPENDIX A: Parent iPad Agreement Form

Grace Community School - Parent iPad Agreement Form

I have read and agree with the iPad portion of the AUP and understand my child’s responsibilities and my liabilities with respect to the 1:1 High School iPad program.

I acknowledge and understand that my child will have access to the internet with this device wherever Wi-Fi is available. Grace Community School uses filters, firewalls, and monitoring software on campus, as well as on the iPad; however, these tools are never 100% preventative, and parents should be aware of the risks associated with unsupervised internet usage.

Student Name (please print): _____

Parent Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

The iPad and its accessories must be returned to Grace Community School library at the end of the school year. Students who graduate early, withdraw, are suspended or expelled, or terminate enrollment at Grace Community School for any other reason must return their school issued iPad on the date of withdrawal.

APPENDIX B: Do You RenWeb?

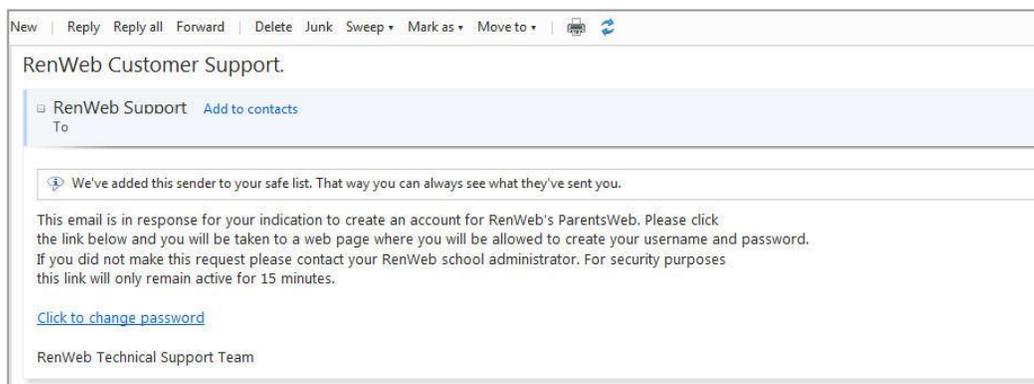
RenWeb School Management Software gives you, the busy parent, an opportunity to get more involved in your child's academic progress and future success – all via the Internet!

RenWeb's ParentsWeb is a private and secure parents' portal that will allow parents to view academic information specific to their children, while protecting their children's information from others. You can see your child's grades, attendance, homework and conduct, as well as other useful school information. You can also communicate with teachers and other school staff online whenever necessary.

RenWeb's ParentsWeb – Family Billing will be utilized by the Business Office to charge and collect various school fees. Hot lunch will be ordered and paid online. View a summary of billed charges prior to making your online payment.

Here's how to access our easy-to-use **RenWeb ParentsWeb**:

- First, you need to make sure that the school has your email address in RenWeb.
- Next, go to www.RenWeb.com and click **Log In**.
- Click **ParentsWeb Login**.
- Type your school's **District Code: GCS-TX**
- Click **Create New ParentsWeb Account**.
- Type your email address and an email is sent to you.



- Click the **Click to change password** link. This link is only valid for 30 minutes.

- A web browser displays your Name and RenWeb ID.



- Type a **Username**, **Password** and **Confirm** the password. Click **Save Password**. A message displays at the top of the browser, "**Username/Password successfully updated.**" You can now log into ParentsWeb using your new Username and Password.

We look forward to your participation. Together we can continue to improve our children's academic development as well as communication between our school and your home.