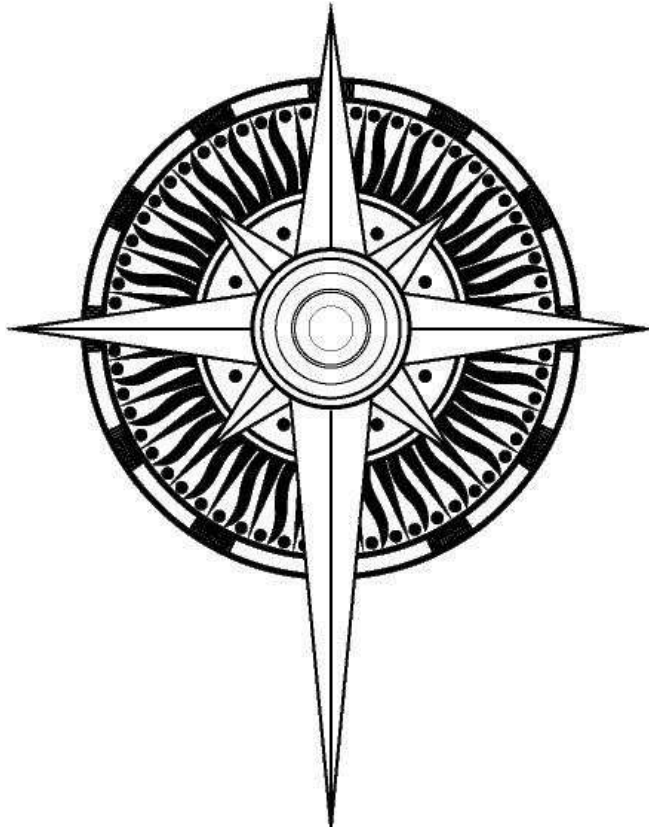


# **GRACE COVENANT ACADEMY**



**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2010-2011**

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## Mission & Philosophy

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### Mission Statement

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Grace Covenant Academy seeks to assist parents in their role as disciplers of their children. Together, we seek to know God, to glorify Him, and to equip our children to make Him known in whatever sphere He chooses to call them.

### Core Values Statement

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Our values are expressions of what the Grace Covenant Academy community believes. We seek to practice the following core values to guide students in fulfilling God's call on their lives.

#### Love for God

We passionately pursue a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

#### Devotion to Truth

We pursue, promote, and defend biblical truth in all subjects, and seek to link all subjects to the Truth.

#### Love for Learning

We discover the wonder of God and pursue a delight in a lifestyle of learning.

#### Commitment to a Biblical Worldview

We seek to engage the world with biblical discernment

#### Partnership with Families

We work closely with parents in the task of educating and training their students.

## Philosophy of Education

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Amazed by the Savior, and guided by God's Word, we seek to develop...

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

We pursue these goals knowing that our students are both made in God's image and sinners in need of a Savior. Folly is bound up in the heart of a child (Proverbs 22:15). Yet through new birth and the sanctifying work of the Spirit, they can put sin to death and bring God great pleasure. This motivates us to be patient with them and encourage them daily.

Without minimizing sin, we strive to magnify grace in the gospel.

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

- We seek to model a love for God and the local church, as well as a love for learning.
- We view our students as individuals with unique gifts and needs.
- We seek to make knowledge attractive through a broad range of age-appropriate teaching methods and resources.
- We maintain biblical standards for student appearance, conduct, and academic achievement, and we communicate regularly with parents.
- We aim to instruct, exhort, rebuke, and encourage with all humility, depending on the Holy Spirit to convict and illumine.

Learning is a hard but wonderful privilege. It is an incremental process. Students learn most effectively as active participants -- by asking and imitating and doing, not simply hearing. The goal of learning is to gain wisdom as biblically defined: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...(Psalm 111:10).

Whether our graduates continue with formal education or move directly into a vocation, GCA challenges them to be life-long learners devoted to serving God, the local church, and their community. In each subject, each grade, we seek to teach students to master the tools of learning, not just the facts, with the goal of producing disciples who love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

## Faculty and Staff Qualifications

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Full-time faculty and staff are members in good standing of a gospel centered church and support the church in its policies and activities. They provide the students and parents with an example of godly character and serve as effective role models. They have shown evidence gifts of the Spirit necessary to fulfill the school's mission.

At times the school employs professionals from outside the church community to provide instruction beyond the capabilities of the full-time faculty. In such cases, these professionals are in full support of the school's philosophy and mission.

## School Board

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

## Admissions

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### Admissions Standards

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

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

The above standards are stated as principles which will be applied with discretion based on the student's age. We expect students to demonstrate increasing maturity and faithfulness to these standards as they grow older.

If the school administration determines that a student is not eligible for admission, the student's parents may appeal the decision. A written appeal should be submitted to the Headmaster, who will present it to the School Board for review. The School Board will make a final decision. The appeal should be submitted in a timely fashion so that the Board has sufficient time to review and discuss it.

### Admissions Procedure

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Families who are involved in the school must be in agreement with the philosophy, mission, and policies of the school. Admission to Grace Covenant Academy is an opportunity offered to the children who qualify with the school's Admission Standards. The enrollment procedure is outlined as follows:

#### Step One: Prayerfully Consider

- Attend "Informational/Vision Meeting" (required)
- Obtain Information Packet

- Review Key Documents: Parental Agreement, Statement of Faith, Code of Honor, Parent/Student Handbook
- Prayerfully consider with spouse:
  - How does GCA's mission and methodology further our goals for our student?
  - Do we sense that this is the direction the Lord would have us take this year?

#### Step Two: Application

- Apply for Admissions Online ([www.gcafrisco.org](http://www.gcafrisco.org))
- Give Pastoral Questionnaire to Pastor or Home Group Leader

#### Step Three: Family Interview

- After Submission of Application – Schedule a Family Interview
- Bring any remaining application documents to interview
- Bring all academic documentation and information to determine academic level of student

#### Step Four: Acceptance & Academic Placement

- Acceptance letter and packet will be mailed to you
- Schedule appointment for academic testing, if needed.

#### Step Five: Registration

- Schedule Registration Appointment
- Bring signed Code of Honor (for 7-12 grade students)
- Bring all immunization records or waivers
- Bring Registration Fee (see Fee Schedule)

#### Step Six: Get Ready For School

- Purchase curricula & supplies for school
- Attend Back To School Meeting

NOTE: Families who apply late in the summer must realize that their students may not be able to attend if the placement testing identifies the student as needing to enroll in a classroom that is already filled.

### Honor Code (Grades 6-12)

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Attendance at Grace Covenant Academy is a privilege which comes with certain responsibilities. I, therefore, personally accept each of the following responsibilities as a student at GCA.

#### ***To God Almighty:***

- I want to grow in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:16)
- I want to grow in following after Christ and obeying His commands in all the areas of my life. (Deut. 26:17)
- I am willing to submit to the word of God and to allow the Bible to guide me in all areas of my life (I Cor. 10:31) (II Tim 3:16)

#### ***To my parents:***

- I will attempt to honor my parents in everything I think, say and do (Ex. 20:12)
- I will seek to learn all that I can from them (Eph. 6:1-3)
- I acknowledge that I cannot receive what I need in life or godliness without them (Ps. 78:1-8)

#### ***To my church:***

- I will submit to all the authorities in the church that God has placed over me (Titus 2:1-5)
- I want to grow in making worship, discipleship, and spiritual growth a priority in my life (Gal. 2:20)
- I will attempt to be an example of godly character wherever I am. (I Tim 4:12)

**To my teachers:**

- I will demonstrate respect, attentiveness, gratitude, and obedience to my teachers (Heb. 13:17)
- I will seek to do all the work I have been assigned with diligence, honesty and integrity (Eph. 5:8-17)
- I will do my utmost to learn as much and achieve as much as I possibly can (Phil. 4:8-9)

**To my classmates:**

- I will honor and respect the time, work and feelings of my fellow students (Rom. 12:9-18)
- I will model honesty, integrity, kindness, and modesty in my relationships (Phil. 2:3-7)
- I will love others by confronting their sin (and receiving their correction) in a spirit of humility (Eph. 4:15-16)

I, therefore, pledge to uphold these Christian responsibilities, realizing that I will be able to enjoy the privilege of attending Grace Covenant Academy only so long as I faithfully and with integrity seek to fulfill this commitment.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Non-discrimination Policy

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

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## General Information

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### School Hours

**MORNING:** Elementary School begins promptly at 8:30 am on Wednesday and Friday. Middle School and High School classes begin at 8:30 am on Tuesday and Thursday. Students will not be allowed in the building before 8:15 a.m.

**AFTERNOON DISMISSAL:** School will end at 3:30, except for Kindergarten which will be dismissed at 1:20.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE:** Middle School (and most High School) Classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday. Elementary classes will be held on Wednesday and Friday. A la carte courses will vary, but be held primarily on Mondays.

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## Parents

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### Affirmations of Parental Responsibility

Grace Covenant Academy seeks to cultivate a partnership with families rooted in our biblical responsibilities. Your eagerness to embrace the following enables us to covenant together to provide a distinctively Christian education.

1. I believe that God has given me the primary responsibility for training my children and providing a suitable education.

2. I desire to provide my children with a distinctively Christian education. I will seek to teach biblical principles and truths to my children, and make relevant applications of God's Word to the circumstances of our family life.
3. My goal for the instruction of my children is point them to knowing God and cultivating academic excellence to prepare them so as to make Him known in the whatever ways and places He has designed for them. I understand that this is built on the foundation of biblical truth and godly character. I will seek to develop my children's character according to the standards of God's Word.
4. I will demonstrate my faith to my children through personal devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and through faithful involvement in a Bible-believing, gospel-centered local church as described in the Membership Agreement.
5. I will carry out my responsibility to effectively secure in my children the proper attitude toward authority and the willingness to adhere to the policies, standards and practices of Grace Covenant Academy.
6. I will make a wholehearted effort to attend all scheduled parent meetings and conferences.
7. I will seek to meet the school's recommended guidelines for my involvement and participation in school.
8. I will endeavor to develop and maintain a Godly atmosphere in my home by exercising control over inappropriate influences on my children and by modeling a Christ-like life to the best of my ability.
9. I will maintain integrity in all of my dealings with the school, which includes covenanting in faith for the full payment of annual tuition for my children's education.
10. I have read the *Discipline Policy* of Grace Covenant Academy. I understand and agree with this philosophy and practice and will take advantage of the opportunities that arise through the school's disciplinary actions to disciple and train my children.
11. I have read the *Parent/Student Handbook* of Grace Covenant Academy and agree to abide by the policies and practices it contains.
12. I understand that acceptance into Grace Covenant Academy is decided annually, and that continued enrollment is contingent upon satisfying the Admissions Standards.

## Communicating Concerns & Suggestions

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**SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS:** Each person has a different perspective of "school," and so each one has a unique opportunity to make suggestions which could lead to improvement in something we do. We want the parents to have a legitimate sense of ownership when it comes to the school, and we desire to see every service, program and curriculum through as many eyes as possible. Please help us by passing your thoughts along to us. The best way to do this often is in writing. This will help you to focus your thinking and it better enables us to understand your thoughts and respond properly. Also, general thoughts are helpful, but specific recommendations are most helpful.

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

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## Opportunities for Involvement

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

Parents should contact the school office to find how they can make the most helpful volunteer contribution to the school.

## Students

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### Attendance

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**General Information:** Students are expected to be in attendance unless there is a valid reason to miss, such as illness, injury or an emergency.

**Absence:** If your child is ill and will not be coming to school, please call the school office to inform the principal of the absence.

**Tardiness:** Students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to begin the school day by 8:30 a.m.. When students enter the classroom late, they are not able to be prepared for early classroom learning, and they disrupt their classmates and teacher from the activity that is going on when they enter the room. Therefore, we adhere to the following procedure:

1. The school entrance doors will be unlocked by 8:15 a.m. to let students in. Students are to go directly to their Homeroom.
2. We recommend that students arrive at least 5 minutes ahead of class time to make sure they get to their classrooms.
3. Students need to be in their class by 8:30 to be on time.
4. Students arriving after 8:30 will be considered to be tardy.
5. Students arriving *after 8:45* must have a note from their parent or be accompanied by their parent (or carpool driver) or the tardiness will not be excused.

**Early Departure:** Parents of students who need to leave school early (e.g. a dr.'s appointment) should inform the principal the day before. Students will not be allowed to leave early without a note from a parent or guardian.

**Sickness:** Students should not be sent to school if they are ill. Students arriving with a fever or an obvious illness may be asked to return home. Students with communicable diseases will not be allowed to attend school until permission is given by the child's attending physician.

**Family Vacations:** Parents are responsible to determine when their children attend school and can decide for any reason to keep their children out. The faculty and administration are not responsible to make a determination as to appropriateness of an absence.

From an educational standpoint, absences for the purpose of vacation are rarely in the student's best academic interest. Parents should be aware that absences can have a significant impact on a student's ability to master class material - especially prolonged absences.

## Academic Consequences for Being Absent or Tardy

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**Late Homework:** Late work is any assignment (homework, project, paper, etc.) turned in after the completion time and date assigned by the teacher. If a student fails to complete an assignment on time or is absent from class when homework is collected, he/she will be expected to turn in that assignment, along with any subsequent assignments, the next time that class meets. Students can always bring in a signed note from their parents, asking for a deadline extension due to extenuating circumstances.

Exceptional situations should be discussed with the teacher(s) and, as necessary, the principal.

If a student misses a full week of school (due to sickness, vacation, etc.), he/she will be expected to turn in all missed assignments within one week of returning to school. New assignments should be submitted on time as the student makes up missed assignments.

On quarterly report cards, teachers will only give an “Incomplete” due to extenuating circumstances – not for late assignments that have not been submitted.

**Missed Tests:** If, due to sickness or vacation, a student misses school on a day a test is given, he/she will be expected to take the test the following day. This may be administered during the regular class period, during another period (study hall, etc.), or after school, at the discretion of the teacher.

If a student misses three or more consecutive days of school (due to sickness, vacation, etc.), and thus misses a test or tests given during that period, he/she must schedule make-up test times with the teacher(s) the day he/she returns to school. **This is the student’s responsibility.** If the student fails to take this initiative, the teacher may administer make-up tests at his/her convenience without advance notice.

## Cell Phones

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As technology has evolved, cell phone use has become more of a concern. Grace Covenant Academy permits students to have cell phones for communication before and after school hours. However, cell phone usage is never permitted during school hours.

- Cell phones are to be turned off and kept in the student’s backpack during the school day
- If parents need to contact their student during the school day, they should call the school office.
- If students need to contact their parents during the school day, they may bring their cell phone to the school office and make a call with permission from the office staff.

## Discipline Policy

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**Objectives:** Biblical education in Grace Covenant Academy takes place in the larger context of Christian parents training their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Parents have the responsibility to effectively secure in their children the proper attitude toward authority and the willingness to adhere to the policies, standards, and practices of The Grace Covenant Academy (1 Tim. 3:4). When parents are faithful and effective in their role, the school is then able to assist them in the character training and spiritual formation of their children.

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

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

**Guidelines:** We expect all students to embrace with due seriousness their responsibility to submit to the authority of God's Word and the school's policies, standards, and faculty. Secondary school students (Grades 6-12) are expected to conduct themselves according to the Honor Code, which they sign each year. Integrity requires that they abide by these biblical principles at all times and all places, not just in the classroom or during the school day.

In the event that a student should fail to do the above, the faculty and administration will engage the student in a disciplinary procedure which typically includes a progression of reproofs and consequences. The school will communicate with and involve the student's parents during the disciplinary process. If the student does not respond satisfactorily to these actions, the school may employ the disciplinary actions noted below.

General types of student behaviors requiring a disciplinary response include the following: late to class, chewing gum, classroom disruption, dress code infraction, and disobedience. More grievous infractions include bullying; deception; disrespect for authority; disrespect for any person; disregard for Biblical moral standards; failure to control anger or other disruptive emotions; fighting; intentionally harming another person's feelings or property; recurring foolishness or uncontrolled behavior; lying; cheating; plagiarism; profanity; and stealing.

Because of our commitment to moral purity and healthy relationships, we ask that students show wisdom and discretion in their interactions with each other. We expect each student to communicate honestly with their parents about romantic feelings, words, or actions. We insist that students avoid suggestive speech and sexual contact of any kind (Eph. 5:3-14).

When behavior occurs outside the school context that might involve significant disciplinary consequences, we rely on parents to inform the appropriate principal.

### Definitions of Disciplinary Actions:

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**Detention:** In order to reinforce the standard of conduct expected for students enrolled in GCA, detentions may be issued by either faculty or administration in response to any misconduct that may be displayed by students.

**Study Detention:** In order to reinforce the importance of homework, middle and high school students may be required to serve a study detention for each assignment they fail to complete on time (unless they have a written excuse from a parent). Students who fail to submit a required assignment on time may receive a study detention slip from the teacher. If students receive multiple study detentions on a given day, they may need to serve a study detention for each assignment that was incomplete.

Students will be expected to serve a detention after school and complete the unfinished assignment. The completed assignment and the study detention slip (signed by a parent) must be turned in the next time the class meets.

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

Due to life's demands and family priorities, students will not always be able to complete every assignment when it is due. If a student brings a written note from a parent explaining why he or she was unable to complete the assignment, that student will not be issued a study detention. However, the student will be expected to complete the assignment by the following class day. Grace Covenant Academy encourages parents to exercise this privilege in a way that safeguards each child's well-being while maintaining high standards of personal responsibility and diligence. It is rarely in the

student's best interest to postpone a homework assignment. If a teacher suspects that this privilege is being misused, he may contact the parents to clarify the intent of this policy.

**Work Detention:** A work detention is an after school assignment that involves physical labor on the grounds of the school. Work detentions will be a minimum of at least 2 hours. Work detentions lasting longer than 2 hours will be assigned on a Saturday morning.

**Suspension:** A suspension is defined as an involuntary, short-term separation from Grace Covenant Academy classes and activities for disciplinary purposes. The duration of the suspension will be at the discretion of the school administration, depending on the offense. During the period of the suspension the student is not permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activities. The time served is considered an unexcused absence from the classroom. Students can expect to receive a reduced class participation grade for classes missed. All class work, quizzes, tests and reports must be made up at the discretion of the teacher.

**Disciplinary Probation:** Students with serious or recurring patterns of unacceptable conduct may be placed on disciplinary probation. Disciplinary probation is defined as a period of grace during which a student must demonstrate a recognizable change in sinful attitudes, words or behavior that have been displayed in the students reoccurring patterns of misconduct. Disciplinary probation is meant to be a proactive service to the student but it is also a clear indication that the student's current enrollment status is in question for the following semester. Therefore Disciplinary Probation serves as a final warning that the student is in danger of being dismissed from the school if patterns of behavior do not significantly improve. A Behavioral contract outlining specific behavior and standards will be required.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Driving Policy

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

1. Any student wishing to drive to and from school must submit a permission form (from the school office) signed by a parent.
2. Vehicles must be registered with the school office.
3. Student drivers must abide by all state laws.
4. Students must park vehicles in designated area(s) upon arrival. During orientation student drivers will be informed about the student parking lot.
5. Vehicles may only be used for transportation to and from school at the beginning and end of the school day. They may not be used as a place to spend free time during or after school, nor used for leaving school grounds to do errands, eat meals, etc.
6. As a rule, student drivers will not be used as transportation for field trips or other school events. Any exceptions must be approved by the high school principal.
8. All vehicles must leave the school grounds immediately after the driver's final commitment of the school day (including study detention, activities, etc.).
9. Driving privileges may be denied if warranted by a student's disciplinary record; privileges may be suspended or revoked if, in the opinion of the administration, a student driver or student rider disregards these guidelines or uses a vehicle irresponsibly.

## Electronic Devices

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

## Food, Gum, and Drinks

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To maintain the good condition of our facility, we ask that students not eat or drink in the classrooms unless given special permission. Open sodas, juices, and coffee are permitted only in the lunch room – not in lockers or in the hallways. Gum is not allowed anywhere in the facility at any time during the school day. Students may use water bottles in class with teacher permission.

## Internet Usage Policy

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

### **ACCEPTABLE USES:**

1. The computer lab at Grace Covenant Academy provides access for educational purposes only. This includes classroom activities, individual research, and peer review of assigned work.
2. Students may only use the computers or internet if a teacher is present.
3. Student use of the internet is contingent upon parent/guardian permission in the form of a signed copy of this Acceptable Use Policy. Parents/guardians and school personnel may revoke approval at any time.
4. Students will have access to the internet via computers in the computer lab only. Internet use is only permitted during school hours, unless a special exception is made by a teacher or principal.
5. Students may save files on their home drive or to a USB flash memory stick.

6. Students must log off the computer when done and must not allow others to share or allow to use their password.

### Unacceptable Uses:

1. The computers may not be used to download, copy, or store any software, shareware, or freeware without prior permission.
2. Students may not store files on the hard drive of the computer.
3. The computers may not be used for receiving or sending personal e-mail, but may, with permission open it momentarily to print off a copy of a homework or school related document.
4. Students may not access or participate in chat rooms, instant messaging, or blog sites.
5. Students may not access Web sites that contain inappropriate, pornographic, or violent material. If a user accidentally accesses this type of information, he or she should immediately turn off the monitor and notify a teacher and/or computer lab monitor.
6. The internet and the school computers may not be used for entertainment purposes. Students may not use the computer lab to play computer or internet games or play music. Students also may not shop on the internet.
7. The internet may not be used for commercial purposes. Users may not buy or sell products or services through the system.
8. Use of the internet for advertising or political lobbying is prohibited.
9. The internet may not be used for any activity, or to transmit any material, that violates United States or local laws. This includes, but is not limited to, illegal activities such as threatening the safety of another person or violating copyright laws.
10. Students may not use vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language. Students may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person.
11. Students may not log on with someone else's password or attempt to access another user's files. "Hacking" or otherwise trying to gain access to another person's or organization's computer system is prohibited.

### Internet Usage Disciplinary Process:

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Students that have disobeyed the aforementioned rules and guidelines will be subject to the following consequences:

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** Detention, one week suspension of computer privileges

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** Work detention, one month suspension of computer lab privileges, parent meeting;

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** Work Detention, ½ day outside school suspension, parent meeting, indefinite suspension of computer lab privileges

Offences beyond three may include school suspension, further fines, and/or Disciplinary Probation. More grievous offences may result in dismissal from school.

### Safety Guidelines for Students:

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1. Never give out your password, last name, address, or phone number on the internet.
2. Notify an adult immediately if you receive a message that may be inappropriate or if you encounter any material that violates this Acceptable Use Policy.
3. Keep your parents informed about your internet usage. Get their input and advice to make sure you are using the internet in a way that is edifying.

### Pranks and Practical Jokes

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Appropriate humor is an essential part of a healthy school. However, inappropriate humor can easily breed disrespect, strain relationships, and hinder true fellowship. As Solomon said, "Reckless words pierce like a sword" (Pr. 12:18). So do

reckless pranks. In order to prevent harmful attempts at humor, we ask that students stay within these four biblical boundaries:

**RESPECT:** Do you respect the person you are targeting? Will this prank inconvenience or embarrass him? (1 Pet. 2:17)

**HONOR:** Will this prank build others up or tear them down? Is it a form of retaliation? How would others interpret your intentions? (Rom. 12:10)

**LOVE:** Will this prank strengthen your friendship with the other person? Are you doing it to bless him/her or to please yourself? (Rom. 12:10)

**WISDOM:** Will this prank cause any damage? Could it inconvenience people other than those you have targeted? Have you gotten approval from someone in authority? (Lk. 2:52)

## Uniforms

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Why does Grace Covenant Academy require students to wear a uniform? First, uniforms ensure a standard of modesty and neatness which glorifies God and helps students focus on academics. Second, they simplify our lives – students are less tempted to compare and parents face less pressure to keep up with the current fashions. Third, they minimize costs. Though uniforms are not cheap, they get a lot of wear and pay for themselves over time. As you keep these goals in mind, we trust that our uniform policy will prove to be more of a blessing than a burden for your family.

Students are expected to be in uniform from the time they enter the facility until the time they leave the facility, with the following clarifications:

1. Students will remain in uniform during study hall periods and after-school activities (clubs, tutoring, etc.), unless their last class of the day is P.E., in which case they may remain in their athletic uniforms.
2. Students will not be required to wear school uniforms on field trips unless otherwise specified.

Below is a list of expectations for how the uniforms should be worn. Students are urged to embrace the “spirit of the law” as they uphold these standards.

### **PANTS:**

- Boys: khaki pants in good condition
- Girls: khaki pants with modest waistline and fit; no denim or designer styling

### **SKIRTS & SKORT:**

- Knee-length

### **POLO SHIRTS:**

- Boys and Girls: Polo shirt with GCA logo may be worn untucked but must be clean and neat
- Undershirt: A black or white undershirt may be worn but must not be visible at the sleeve or waistline

### **SWEATSHIRTS, JACKETS, HATS, ETC.:**

- Uniform sweatshirts with GCA logo may be worn at all times during the school day.
- Students are only allowed to wear other sweatshirts or jackets if going outside at lunch.

Wearing the uniform properly starts with a desire to honor God and serve others. Students who fail to wear the uniform properly can expect disciplinary consequences.

## Grading Policy

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**Grade Scale:** Grades are computed according to the following scale:

<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
89.5 TO 100.00	A
79.5 TO 89.49	B
69.5 TO 79.49	C
59.5 TO 69.49	D
BELOW 59.49	F

Colleges and employers who inquire about student’s grades will be given a copy of the student’s high school transcript. Only year-end grades will be recorded on transcripts.

**Student Advancement:** For students to advance to the next class in Spanish, Math, and English, they must achieve a year-end grade of a C (70%) or better. (This requirement may be waived if the next course in the sequence does not

build directly on concepts from the previous class). Any student not achieving a C or higher in these subject areas must repeat the course to receive credit. In other subject areas, students need a D or better to receive class credit.

## Homework

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Homework is a valuable and important part of every student's educational experience. Homework is beneficial in the following ways:

- 1) It helps students acquire basic knowledge and skills;
- 2) It helps students remember what they have initially learned;
- 3) it helps students acquire and develop critical thinking skills; and
- 4) as they pass through the grades, it helps students develop more sophisticated study skills and the ability to work independently.

All students at Grace Covenant Academy will have homework. The length and frequency of the assignments will obviously vary from a few minutes a week with our youngest students to a more regular and rigorous schedule for our high school students.

Parents play a critical role in helping students gain the full range of benefits from homework. We ask that parents support our standards of excellence and help hold their students accountable to fulfill their responsibilities. We will seek to give assignments that are educationally appropriate, of sufficient length and frequency to accomplish our educational objectives, and no longer or more frequent than necessary to do so.

Our hope and goal is that students will become intrinsically motivated to please God and only turn in their best possible work.

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If students fall behind in homework due to an extended illness or some other circumstance, the parents should make arrangements as necessary with each teacher. Students will be expected to make up all missing assignments, quizzes, and tests.

## Report Cards

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**Elementary Grades (K-5):** Our understanding of grades is that they are a summary statement of our evaluation of how a particular student is doing in an area. Since the natural tendency is for people to place too much emphasis on grades, filling out report cards is one of the most difficult things a teacher has to do. Please keep current in communication with your child's teacher(s) to have an accurate understanding of how your child is performing at school.

We believe that character and effort are sometimes more important than the achievement grades. This is because the achievement grades are a measure of competency, while the effort and character evaluations are a measure of motivation and maturity. We believe that motivation and maturity are the real keys to success in school and in life.

Report cards are designed to be understood and interpreted by the parents. We don't want our young students comparing themselves with any other students or trying to interpret the report cards themselves. Please consider

carefully the definitions included on the report card. Much time and thought has gone into the design of our report cards. If we use and interpret these instruments as designed, they will be valuable tools we can use.

**Secondary grades (6-12):** Report cards are more formal for secondary students. While the same principles apply to all students, the grade becomes more significant for students as they get older. There are effects of student grades that are beyond our control when a student's grade point average (GPA) is calculated. A student's GPA, along with his or her college entrance exam scores (SAT), can affect a student's eligibility to apply for admission to some colleges and universities. Many scholarship programs look closely at student grades as well. One of our goals is to help our students achieve the highest academic results they can with integrity.

**Confidentiality:** Student grades are to be kept confidential. Report cards are given to parents, not to students.

**NOTE:** All outstanding invoices need to be paid quarterly in order to receive report cards.

## Standardized Testing

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Each spring we also administer standardized tests which help to document the relative progress and achievement of each student and the school as a whole. Any results which are out of the ordinary will be brought to the parents' attention. You can help your children prepare for these tests by making sure they get adequate rest, eat a normal breakfast, and are as relaxed mentally as possible.

## Textbooks

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All required texts will be purchased by the families attending Grace Covenant Academy.