



**STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026 - 2027**

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ACCEPTANCE TO GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Grace Christian School exists *primarily* to serve Christian parents who desire to train up their children in godliness, firmly establishing them in the doctrine of Scripture. As such, we prefer that any parent(s) with whom the student resides be an active attendee at a local Christian church (unless hindered by their employment) and to sign our Statement of Faith, acknowledging that you have read it and understand that these doctrinal principles are foundational for classroom instruction and curriculum. We require that any parent that resides with the student sign the Family Agreement, stating that they agree to support our behavioral expectations. While we do accept students whose parent(s) are not confessing Christians or active attendees at a local church, our hope is that your family will desire to grow in faith and fellowship through attendance at a local church. Members of First Baptist Church of Inverness will have the Registration Fee waived.

In general, we desire that students admitted to GCS possess the following characteristics:

1. A respect for God's Word
2. An attitude of submission and respect for those in authority
3. A teachable spirit and courteous, polite behavior
4. An ability to admit and accept responsibility for wrongs committed
5. A record of good behavior from their previous school
6. A desire to be taught in a manner that acknowledges that Jesus is Lord
7. Not reported to engage in bullying or drug or alcohol use

As a policy, we also require that the family notify GCS if any member of the immediate household has been convicted of a felony crime. At any point after initial acceptance of a student, if a felony conviction occurs for any member of the household, GCS must be notified so that we can help safeguard the situation as it relates to our students and campus. Failure to notify the Administrator of a felony can result in immediate withdrawal of the student from GCS.

The school admits and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship, and loan programs and athletic and other school administered programs.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process for acceptance into Grace Christian begins with the initial online application. Once the application has been received, a staff member will call or email an invitation to interview the parent(s) and prospective student. No child will be admitted to GCS without this initial interview and a records request from the previous school. Once these steps have been completed, the school will inform the family of its decision regarding acceptance. Parents are responsible for informing themselves regarding the educational philosophy and methodology of the classical and Charlotte Mason approach and the curriculum chosen each year. A copy of the curriculum list is available on the school website Admission page.

If needed, diagnostic testing will be administered for math and reading proficiency before admittance to Grace Christian School to verify our ability to meet your child's educational needs. The Administrator will work with parents to give these tests.

If the family is accepted for enrollment, it is imperative to turn in necessary paperwork as soon as possible. Students cannot begin the school year without a birth certificate, immunization form (or waiver), and a school health physical form. If the student is entering a Florida school for the first time, a new school physical is required before the start date. Other documents, such as the Internet Usage Agreement, Family Agreement, Statement of Faith, and Emergency Medical Form, Media Release, and Emergency Contact form should be completed and turned in at Orientation.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each grade level has specific core classes that will be fulfilled by every student, including language arts, math, science, history, and Bible. The School Board of Grace Christian School holds sole authority over curriculum selection. Our administration has dedicated extensive time and careful consideration to designing an academic program that fosters life-long learners and seekers of God's truth. Operating on the principle that all truth is God's truth, we desire to cultivate students who eagerly engage in learning and thoughtfully examine their world and culture—ultimately concluding that God's Word is the definitive guide toward true wisdom.

Beginning in 3rd grade, math instruction is designed as a unique hybrid opportunity. The curriculum allows students to begin at the level they are capable of successfully completing. That level may be above, below, or right at grade level. Because our mathematics curriculum is online, GCS can effectively support both academic intervention and accelerated learning, enabling students to progress according to their individual abilities. Each class also has a math instructor immediately available for needed help.

Middle school students will be required to redo any daily assignment that is lower than a D in math and any other subject as determined by the instructor, except on a test, quiz, or special project. High school students will be given the grade they earned on all assignments and assessments. Secondary students receive standard letter grades on their report card.

The secondary grading scale utilized by GCS aligns with the Florida public school/ university scale for most FL counties.) The credit designations apply only to completed high school courses.

<u>Numerical Equivalent</u>		<u>Reg</u>	<u>Honors</u>	<u>AP/DE</u>	<u>1/2 credit</u>	<u>1/2 credit Honors</u>
90-100	A	4.0	4.5	5.0	2.0	2.25
80-89	B	3.0	3.5	4.00	1.5	1.75
70-79	C	2.0	2.5	3.00	1.00	1.25
60-69	D	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.67	
Below 60	F	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

At Grace Christian School, elementary student progress is monitored through an ongoing, formative assessment process. Rather than relying solely on isolated testing, teachers continuously observe each child's daily work, skill development, and academic growth. These cumulative observations are utilized to assign a proficiency code that accurately reflects the student's current level of mastery and individual ability. The following proficiency scale will be utilized:

AP=Advanced Proficiency DP=Displays Proficiency PP=Progressing to Proficiency AC=Area of Concern
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Student AI Usage Policy

The following rules apply to all students enrolled at Grace Christian School, covering the use of AI tools for assignments, projects, and research.

- AI tools may only be used as a supplementary resource, not as a replacement for original thought or effort.
- Students must not use AI tools to complete assignments, tests, or projects unless explicitly permitted by their teachers.
- All work submitted must be the student's own, and any AI assistance must be properly credited if allowed.
- Students must use AI responsibly and respectfully, avoiding any behavior that could harm others or violate their privacy.
- Any content generated by AI should be critically evaluated for accuracy and bias.
- Students must refrain from sharing personal information when using AI tools.
- AI tools that collect personal data may not be used.
- The school will provide guidance and resources on how to effectively and ethically use AI tools.
- Students are encouraged to seek help from teachers if they have questions about using AI.
- Students should report any misuse of AI tools or any issues that arise from their use to a teacher or school administrator.

Homework Policy

GCS seeks to limit homework at both the elementary and middle school levels. However, it may become necessary occasionally to assign work to be completed at home. When a student is absent from school due to an excused reason (see Excused Absence policy), he/she will have 2 days for every 1 day absent to make up work. It is the student's responsibility to ask the instructor for missed work. Students and parents should not rely solely on SchoolWorx to accurately reflect missing work. If a student is absent due to a family vacation or any unexcused absence, he/she should ask each teacher if they will accept the 2 days for every 1 day policy stated above. Teachers may require that assignments be completed before or during a planned family vacation or other unexcused absence.

FINANCIAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Enrollment/Re-enrollment fees are due immediately after a formal acceptance to GCS. Payments may be paid in cash, check, or PayPal. The fees must be received before a student is officially enrolled at GCS.

The Technology Fee is due by July 15 of the preceding summer or immediately upon enrollment after that. In certain circumstances, a payment plan of \$50/month for 6 months may be utilized.

It is expected that all students will apply for and receive a Florida state tax credit scholarship as this scholarship is now available to all students in the state of Florida and is no longer income based. GCS has attempted to designate our fees so that most expenses, especially tuition and books, are completely covered by the tax credit scholarship. However, expenses may arise for which families are responsible, such as uniforms, field trips, etc. Grace Christian School accepts the Florida Tax Credit (FTC), Florida Empowerment – Education Opportunities (FES-EO), and the Florida Empowerment – Unique Abilities (FES-UA) scholarships.

Parents of students who have been accepted to Grace Christian are expected to regularly monitor their application submission on the Step Up EMA portal for notification of documentation, etc. needed to finalize and award the scholarship. If a parent/ guardian is not diligent to apply for and monitor the application in an expedient manner, lost funds may be required to be paid by the family.

All returning Step Up students should approve their GCS enrollment on the EMA portal by June 15, and all new Step up award students should approve their enrollment on the EMA portal by July 15.

Step Up for Students Scholarship Invoice Acceptance

This policy establishes the expectations for families participating in the Step Up for Students program at Grace Christian School regarding the acceptance of invoices. Timely acceptance is crucial for ensuring proper funding and uninterrupted educational services at GCS.

- Families will be invoiced quarterly and are responsible to review and accept their invoices within 5 business days of receipt.
- Invoices will be sent electronically directly from Step Up for Students to the email address provided during enrollment. It is the family's responsibility to ensure that their contact information is current.
- Families should carefully review all charges and ensure that they align with the services provided and agreed upon during enrollment.
- Failure to accept invoices within the specified time frame may result in delays in funding and could impact the availability of educational services for the student.
- Continuous delays in acceptance may lead to a review of the family's participation in the Step Up for Students program and their continued enrollment at GCS. Parents/guardians will be financially responsible for funds lost due to invoice acceptance delay.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Compulsory attendance is required for all students between the ages of 6 and 16 in the state of Florida (FS 1003.21). Under Florida law, a student is considered a habitual truant if they accumulate 15 or more unexcused absences within a 90-calendar-day period, regardless of parental knowledge or consent. Any student who has more than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-calendar-day period will be referred to the judicial system for possible truancy. Personal or vacation days are not considered excused absences.

according to state law. However, if permission has been granted by Administration before an absence which is deemed to be fully or in-part educational in nature, some days may be considered as excused. Full explanation of educational merit must be presented in writing before the absence to be determined solely at the administrator's discretion as to its educational suitability for an excused absence.

Excused Absences

Your child will be excused from school for illness, unavoidable student medical appointments, and urgent family emergencies or events, such as a funeral or wedding. **To have the absence excused, the parent must present a written excuse on paper to the school which includes the reason for the child's absence, the date of absence, and parent signature.** Children absent more than five continuous days due to illness should present a doctor's excuse. GCS will require that course work be made up at home. **Messages sent via text or SchoolWorx message will not count as notification of excuse.**

Unexcused Absences

All absences not mentioned above will be counted as unexcused. Students should expect to work at home to make up for missed days. Students who are absent during the day for competitive sports games may have those absences counted as excused at the discretion of the administrator. Sports involvement with another school will be counted as excused. Any student who leaves school before 2:00 for team practice will not have that absence excused.

Pre-Arranged Absences

It may be necessary for a student to miss school for a scheduled family event. Parents are asked to notify the Administrator regarding any pre-arranged absence by submitting **written** (on paper) notice no later than 1 week in advance of the anticipated absence. Approval of these pre-arranged absences are not guaranteed to be considered as excused.

Tardies/Late Arrivals

Parents are expected to make sure that their child is on time. Students not in their seats and ready to begin class at 8:30 will be considered tardy. In the morning, late arrivals due to an excused reason (see excused absences and including car problems) are not considered to be an unexcused tardy. All late arrival students must present a written excuse to be considered for excusal. Medical appointments will be excused by a form from the medical provider. For students who are habitually tardy, a fee of \$5 may be charged for every 5 unexcused tardies. Our morning devotional time should be considered very important to the students' education, and every effort should be made to be at school on time. A student's unexcused tardies may be a consideration in the following year's re-enrollment status.

Early Dismissal

When a child is dismissed from school before 11:30 AM without returning, the student will be considered absent for the entire day. Students must be signed out and signed back in if they return the same day. A note would be appreciated to alert the teachers that the child will be leaving early. No child will be dismissed to leave with anyone other than the child's parent/guardian or an approved individual unless advance permission is received in writing from the parent/guardian. If an unforeseen event happens and the child must be picked up early or at school dismissal time by an individual not included

on the list, a phone call must be made to the school office. Texts are not approved for this type of dismissal. Identification will be required from anyone other than the parent/guardian/regular pick-up person at the time of pick-up.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Transportation

Grace Christian School does not provide transportation to and from school at this time; however, we will do our best to help parents connect with each other to solve transportation issues. If you can help provide transportation for another student in your area, please contact Administration. Students in middle school and high school are permitted to ride their bike/walk to school with the understanding that a parent can preferably track that student's trip using an app on their phone. Parents of walkers/riders are required to sign the appropriate Waiver before the student will be released as a walker/rider. **ALL ELECTRIC BIKE/SCOOTER RIDERS MUST OBSERVE THE 15 MPH SPEED LIMIT ON SCHOOL CAMPUS AT ALL TIMES. A HELMET MUST ALSO BE WORN AT ALL TIMES ON CAMPUS.** Any student who fails to obey this rule, especially after a warning, will not be allowed to ride on campus.

Inclement Weather

GCS may occasionally need to cancel school due to inclement weather due to a severe weather event. In general, GCS will follow the lead of the Citrus County Public School System's decision to cancel schools, which will be announced through local media outlets. If Citrus County is under a tornado **warning** in the morning BEFORE school begins, parents should stay home until the tornado threat has been lifted. Note: this does not include a tornado "watch" (Parents should use their own wisdom about the safety of leaving their homes. Excused tardies will be given to late students in this situation.)

If a tornado warning is posted during a school day, students will be moved to an interior hallway away from all windows/ glass doors. Administration asks that parents NOT attempt to pick up a student from school during a tornado warning.

If school is cancelled due to inclement weather, other school days may be added at the end of the year as "make up" days as required by County officials. Several hurricane days are built into the school calendar each year.

Drop Off/Pick-up Procedures - Elementary

Elementary students may be dropped off as early as 8:15 at the north end preschool playground gate. Please pull all the way forward so 3-4 vehicles may have their child exit their vehicle at the same time. Students should not exit the vehicle until it is in the final section of the parking lot.

For elementary pick-up beginning at 3:00, a teacher will be placed on duty at the north end preschool playground gate. Vehicles should line up to receive children. Please pull all the way forward so that 3-4

cars can drop pick-up at the same time. Students should not move toward their car until it is in the final section of the parking lot and the on-duty teacher has said they can go.

Students will be dismissed at 3:00 from the inside hallway to come to your car. Please hold up your Crusader Pick Up card to alert the on-duty teacher of your child's name and that you have permission to pick up your student. You may be asked to pull around and park if your student is not immediately ready to leave. Any parent who needs to speak to a faculty member and has a pre-arranged meeting should park and come in. We do not want to hold up other parents for extended conversations.

Children will be allowed to leave with any legal residential parent/ guardian and any adult listed in SchoolWorx as having permission to pick up the student. Any other adult or licensed driver must have prior authorization to leave with a student in their care. Please notify staff at the beginning of the day if a change in pick up is expected. If arrangements for pick up must be made during the day that were not anticipated before school, a phone call to the school must be made by a residential parent/ guardian and the driver will be asked to show photo identification. Parents may be asked to speak to their child at the time of the phone call and inform them that arrangements have changed.

Crusader Pick Up Cards may be given to all of the approved pick-up people on your list to avoid a lengthy process of verifying authority to pick up a student. However, all individuals with a Crusader Pick Up Card should also be in SchoolWorx as an approved pick-up person.

Drop Off/Pick-up Procedures – Secondary

Please note all rules and regulations above. Pick up for secondary students begins at 3:10 at the south end portico.

DRIVERS ARE EXPECTED TO USE CAUTION AND OBSERVE A 15 MPH SPEED LIMIT AT ALL TIMES WHEN ON CAMPUS. NOTE: THE CENTER MAIN ENTRANCE OFF OF PLEASANT GROVE ROAD HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY AT ALL TIMES. ANY VEHICLES ENTERING FROM DRUID RD. AND CROSSING THAT MAIN ENTRANCE MUST STOP OR SLOW TO ENSURE RIGHT OF WAY TO THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

Student Phones

Florida state law now prohibits the use of phones at school by elementary and middle school students. Students at GCS (of any age) are permitted to have their phones while on campus. **However, all phones should be completely turned off and will be collected by the teachers in the morning to be returned at dismissal time.** Any phones that are found to be in the possession of a student will be confiscated and returned only to a parent, and the student will be given a lunch detention.

Smart watches may be used only when the phone is turned off and if the watch does not have internet service. Only students with a Dexcom monitor or a medically necessary device connected to an app will be allowed to carry their phones with them in their backpack.

Visits to Campus

Parents/ Guardians and other family members are encouraged to visit the campus during scheduled events for which a parent invitation has been sent. Parents are also welcome to eat lunch with their

student at scheduled lunch times. Unscheduled visits are not permitted. Adult visitors should never find themselves alone with a GCS student that is not their child. They must exit the room immediately.

Food Items

Grace Christian does not prepare or cater snack time or lunch. Food items are brought from home only, except for Fridays when pizza and a soda option can be purchased.

Students are allowed a morning snack time in their scheduled classroom. Snacks should be nutritional choices (i.e. granola bars, cheese sticks, fruit, nuts, etc.) and not require extensive clean-up nor extra paper goods of any kind. **Students are required to carry a no-leak water bottle throughout the day. We ask that you not bring a water bottle with a screw top.**

Preferably, lunches should be comprised of options that do not require use of a microwave. A microwave is available for student use, but food items should not require more than a quick reheat (1 minute maximum), and no frozen food is allowed. Lunches should be brought in insulated lunchboxes with a cool pack which should not generally require refrigeration.

Food items that are NOT permitted:

- any food items/ beverages in a glass container for storage
- no soda or energy drink for any student (except what can be purchased on Fridays)
- no excessive snack items in the lunch box
- please bring your own paper goods (plate, napkin, plastic utensils, etc.) when possible.

If your student forgets his lunch and a parent is unable to bring it to him, our staff will provide a lunch option such as canned spaghetti, etc. Parents will be invoiced for these lunches.

Backpacks and Lunchboxes

Because different families consider the appropriateness of certain media promotions differently, GCS has determined that no logo or licensed character of a television show, video game, book series, toy, card game, or musical group may be displayed on lunchboxes, water bottles, apparel, or backpacks. Students who arrive with a lunchbox, backpack, or apparel that does not follow this policy will have one day to find a new one.

Care of Furniture, Fixtures, Facilities, and Grounds

Students are expected to share the responsibility of caring for and preserving the school's furniture, fixtures, facilities, and grounds. Students who choose to destroy property of the school or of other students will be required to pay for the items destroyed or defaced.

Students are also expected to share in keeping the lunch area, classrooms, and outside grounds clean. Daily responsibilities may include wiping counters, tables, and sweeping. Students are responsible for keeping the area immediately around their tables clean.

Computers/ Laptops/ Tablets/ Other Devices

Please see the *Technology Usage Agreement* for specific policies and procedures regarding most issues concerning technology.

A Chromebook or tablet will be provided for every student in 3rd grade and above at the beginning of the school year for the exclusive use of schoolwork. The math curriculum and other enriching activities will be completed on these devices. While it is reasonable to expect some wear on the devices, it is possible that unnecessary damage on the part of the student will result in financial compensation required from the parents.

Accidents/ Medical Emergency

If a student is injured during the school day or at any school-sponsored event, the following procedure will be utilized:

1. Student should report the accident to the nearest teacher or staff member.
2. Staff will determine if immediate professional medical attention is needed. Emergency medical services will be called if deemed necessary. Parents will be called immediately.
3. Minor accidents will be treated by staff and an accident report will be filled out and sent home if needed or the parent will be advised upon pick-up. If the parent has signed an OTC Medicine Permission Form, a student may be given OTC pain reliever. Any questions about the injury can be addressed to GCS staff.

Medications

No student may be in possession of a **prescribed or over-the-counter medication**. This includes aspirin or other pain relievers, cough syrup, inhalers, or epi-pens. Inhalers and EpiPens are prescribed medications and must be turned in with the label attached to the box. A note from the doctor must be submitted to allow a student to carry an inhaler or epi-pen throughout the day.

Parents may send written permission for a GCS faculty member to administer over-the-counter (OTC) cold, cough, and pain relievers. Faculty cannot legally administer a dosage that is not specifically designated by written direction on the label without a doctor's prescription. GCS cannot be held liable for failure to administer OTC products. Cough drops may be kept in the students' possession.

A Prescription Medication Form must be completed and information should be entered into the School Worx account for regularly prescribed medications that will be administered at school. Any such medication will be administered by staff according to specific label instructions. Grace Christian does not employ a nurse or any medical professional.

Illness

Students who are found to have a fever of 100 + or any student who vomits will be sent home immediately. In addition, any student who is found to have lice will be sent home until the situation is

resolved. **HCS requires that no student be sent to school unless they have been without a fever or vomiting for at least 24 hours.**

DRESS CODE POLICY

It is our desire that this dress code will be affordable and convenient for families while at the same time honoring to God and helpful in keeping distractions away from the students.

Applicable to Boys

- Polo-style shirt with school logo iron-on patch from school approved vendors – heather gray, burgundy, baby blue, or white
- Shirts must not show any skin on stomach or back when both arms are raised above the head or bending over.
- Tan, navy blue, gray, or black pants or shorts. Pants and shorts should be uniform style material or performance wear (golf style). No denim in any color. Pants and shorts should not be frayed, have holes, worn thin, or ragged and sagging. Length should be proper as to not pile up on shoes or drag the floor. Pants should fit properly at the waist without sagging.
- Hair must not hang over eyebrows, ears, or bottom of collars. Haircuts must not cause distraction because of style.

Applicable to Girls

- Polo-style shirt with school logo iron-on patch from school approved vendors – heather gray, burgundy, baby blue, or white.
- Shirts must not show any skin on stomach or back when both arms are raised above the head or bending over. Must be buttoned appropriately and modestly. All shirts worn under jackets or sweaters must meet dress code standards.
- Tan, navy blue, gray, or black pants or shorts. Pants are to be straight cut/ regular fit/ boot-cut fit, or slightly flared pant leg. **NO super skinny cut or jeggings.** Pants must have the ability to be gently pulled away from the skin. No ankle slits. Length should be proper so as not to pile up on shoes or drag the floor. All clothing should fit properly at the waist without sagging. Pants and shorts should be regular uniform-style material or golf-style. No denim in any color.
- Lower elementary girls (K-2nd grade only) may also wear skorts, with a minimum length of mid-thigh and longer preferred -- generally not shorter than 3 inches above the top of the knee when standing. The shorts underneath should be bike-short length.
- NO sweatpants, yoga pants, gym shorts, leggings, jeggings, or pajama pants.
- Undergarments are not allowed to be seen through the material or visible at the neckline.
- Shorts must be “Bermuda style” – generally not shorter than 3 inches above the top of the knee when standing.

- Clothing may not be excessively tight.
- Only natural shade hair color is acceptable.
- Girls are not permitted to wear nose jewelry or other facial piercing other than earrings (no more than 2 earrings per ear bottom and no more than 2 cartilage piercings).

Applicable to all

- Closed-toed shoes only/ No backless shoes (including no sandals with only a back strap, i.e. no Crocs)
- No heels higher than 2"
- Any color/ style of socks is permitted
- NO stretchy/ spandex/ form fitting materials
- NO sweatpants, gym shorts, joggers, or pajama pants, NO DENIM.
- No hats or sunglasses may be worn inside.
- During cooler weather, solid colored heather gray, navy blue, baby blue, burgundy, or white sweatshirts/hoodies/jackets **with a GCS iron-on logo may be worn no writing or** over the school uniform shirt. Students may not pull up the hood on hoodies while inside the building. Refer to the Accepted Shirt Vendors document available on the website or in the school office.
- No piercings, visible tattoos, or facial hair growth (no hand drawn/sticker tattoos permitted).
- No excessive jewelry. Boys should limit to one chain necklace and one bracelet/band. Girls should limit to 4 bracelets/bands

DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

When parents enroll their student at Grace Christian School they are choosing a high standard of conduct for their child. Parents and students must accept the responsibility of upholding these high standards while at school and, to some extent, also in non-school activities. Regardless of the type of activity or location, our students are representatives of Grace Christian School, and even more, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Most children require instruction and discipline – and a lot of love and mercy -- as they grow toward maturity and self-regulation. GCS has developed a point system to clarify for students what is acceptable behavior and what is not. This point system is consistent through all grades and will be utilized for most disciplinary incidents. Points will be added into the SchoolWorx portal for full disclosure to parents in real time. However, having a discipline entered in the SchoolWorx system is simply a way to track points. It is not equivalent to a discipline being entered into a permanent file or a record that will transfer to another school.

Students, especially elementary students, can expect to be warned of inappropriate behavior and given opportunity to change that behavior before receiving points. When a behavior incident is entered into the SchoolWorx system, the point equivalent should appear. With the accumulation of 5 points, a lunch

detention with a written essay which examines the student's behavior in light of Scripture will be assigned or another consequence will be given. After 10 points have accrued and two essays have been written, any further points will result in a work service project for GCS, First Baptist Church of Inverness, the student's church, or another non-profit entity will be assigned. Any further points after all of those disciplines will result in a discipline contract, which if broken, may result in a referral to the school board to consideration of expulsion. At the beginning of 2nd semester, each student will start fresh with no demerits. However, behavior contracts will continue to be enforced.

Response to Discipline

When students are disciplined, they should never argue about the problem with the teacher in front of the other students. If the student feels a misunderstanding exists, he/she should obey the teacher without protest and take the following steps to rectify the matter:

1. Go to the teacher after class and ask for time to discuss the matter privately.
2. Talk the problem over with parents and ask parents to contact teacher for discussion and clarification.
3. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent may request assistance from the Administrator to discuss the matter privately.

Immediate Suspension or Expulsion

Depending on the significance of any misconduct and its impact on the environment of the school, students engaging in certain misconduct will be in jeopardy of immediate suspension or expulsion.

Behaviors worthy of immediate suspension/expulsion:

1. Fighting on school property
2. Flagrantly abusive or obscene language or gestures, bullying, racial disrespect
3. Possession of weapons, including knives (Police will be involved.)
4. Leaving school without permission
5. Harassment, threats, assault or battery of a teacher or other student in person or through social media avenues.
6. Moral misconduct -- inappropriate sexual conduct or conversations in person or via text or internet, even when the text or internet interaction occurs off campus, alcohol consumption on or off campus (illegal)
7. Possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia (Police will be involved.)
8. Possession of vape or tobacco products (Police may be involved.)

Searches

The Administration reserves the right to search individual students and their possessions, including desks, backpacks, and electronics for items which are dangerous or violate other policies addressed in this Handbook. GCS students will never be physically touched by a staff member in a search. Failure to cooperate with instructions will result in an immediate phone call to the parents. If a situation is reported to be extremely dangerous, the police will be called. Every attempt will be made by the Director and teachers to work with parents in helping their child succeed at GCS.

Student Dating/ Relationships

Students who consider themselves to be “dating” or “boyfriend/girlfriend” should not allow their focus to become excessively directed toward each other. School is a time for learning, building friendships, and focusing on strengthening their relationship with God. Students may not display any physical affection of any kind. Doing so will result in a minimum 5-point behavior entry in SchoolWorx.

Threat Assessment

Students and parents should report to a staff/faculty member or administrator any concerns regarding potential threats to the school community. Reports will be kept in confidence. (For a full copy of the Threat Assessment Policy and Procedure, please request from Administration.)

Suspected Abuse

All employees of Grace Christian School have an affirmative duty to report all actual or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect. Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and must be reported.

Reporting Suspected Misconduct by GCS Personnel

All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

Reports of misconduct of employees should be made to the acting Director of Grace Christian School. Reports of misconduct committed by the acting Director should be made to the Pastor of First Baptist Church of Inverness or the Chairperson of the School Committee. Please see the Parent page on the GCS website for current contact information.

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services. Policies and procedures for reporting misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student are posted in the Standards of Ethical Conduct, posted on our website at www.GraceChristianInverness.org.

EXTRA CURRICULAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Sports

Grace Christian School students are permitted by law to participate in competitive sports at their locally zoned public school. (Sideline cheerleading requires approval by each specific school.) A simple notarized form is all that is required to be handed in to the public school. Parents are responsible for

arranging for their child to participate in a sport. Playing a sport for another private school is an often-changing law within the state of Florida. Please speak with the other school's administration/ coaches for clarification whether that is allowed.

Students may miss school for a game, but prior written notice is required. A copy of the season's game schedule will serve as written notice.

Students may leave up to a half hour early for practice. However, if any core curriculum has not been completed for that day, it must be completed at home for homework. Students who leave earlier than 2:30 for practice will be considered unexcused for the missed class

As Grace Christian School grows, we anticipate providing an active sports program with opportunities to participate in several different sports.

Student Employment

No middle school student may leave campus early to work, even at a family business.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

Administration and faculty will primarily utilize the SchoolWorx platform (app or browser login available) for communication of important information, including but not limited to calendar events, discipline, attendance, academic progress, and assignments. Parents MUST access their personal SchoolWorx account on a regular basis. **Grace Christian School cannot be held liable for information that is not received by the parents** in any other way, although we will try to pass on important announcements through social media, printed documents, and the website Parent page, as well. Any technical problems with your SchoolWorx account/app should be addressed with SchoolWorx directly. The GCS front desk is able to reset your password if needed. In cases of very important information, a text from Administration to the parents may be sent school-wide if necessary.

PHYSICIAN EVALUATION FORMS

Grace Christian School faculty and administration are happy to help physicians and therapists evaluate your child using their specific evaluation forms. Important to the process of these evaluations is the idea that your child may behave in a different way in different places and situations; therefore, it is important that the evaluating physician have information from GCS that has not been influenced by the parent. To insure this happens appropriately, physician forms will be mailed directly to the evaluating physician upon completion. Parents will NOT be allowed access to these. An addressed envelope would be appreciated in these cases.

PASTORAL ROLES

As GCS is a ministry of FBCI, all staff pastors of FBCI are de facto staff for GCS and serve as spiritual counselors to non-pastoral faculty, staff, parents, and students; they also serve in ministry capacities in the school as envisioned by the Lead Pastor in cooperation with the direction of the Administrator including, but not limited to, chapel, Bible lessons, field trips, class aid, substitutes, informal counselors, and advisors.

By enrolling your student at GCS, parent/guardian(s) acknowledge and consent to the possibility of such informal pastoral counseling as deemed appropriate by the Administrator. Participation in these meetings is expected to be cooperative and respectful.

Parent/guardian(s) may request additional info regarding pastoral counseling at any time.

The pastors may also serve in a counseling capacity to aid in social-emotional counseling. A pastor may assist students to develop skills to interact more effectively with others and identify personal values, talents and interests. Pastors may also provide support and assistance to students and families in crisis and may provide referrals to the Biblical Counseling Ministry of FBCI for more extensive assistance through biblical counseling.

All continued counseling with the Biblical Counseling Ministry of FBCI is optional and will be discussed beforehand with parents/guardians.

How might a student be referred to a Pastor?

- **Students** may self-refer to a pastor. Students will be asked to identify the level of urgency of their request. Administration and parents will be notified by the pastor immediately if a student expresses a concern of self-harm, abuse or sexual activity. However, many students self-refer to discuss academic, social-emotional, and/or friendship concerns. These issues are kept in biblical confidentiality (which recognizes appropriate spheres of authority).
- **Teachers/Staff/Admin** might refer a student to a pastor when a need has been identified. Teachers/Staff/Admin could refer so that the student can receive additional academic, social-emotional, or peer relationship support. For example, if the student is being excessively disruptive, the Administrator may initiate contact with a pastor in the process of resolving behavioral concerns.

Students who display violent behavior or violent, vulgar, hateful, or threatening speech may be referred to a pastor for counseling.

- **Parents and guardians** are welcome to meet with a pastor to discuss referral of their child. Parents/guardians are asked to make an appointment in advance via a phone call or email. This will ensure that the pastor will be available to discuss the referral.

- **Parents, teachers, staff, and administration** are also welcome to schedule a meeting with a pastor for personal or family counseling.

Grace Christian School reserves the right to change the contents of this Student Handbook at any time in regard to legal, financial, or practical purposes. Changes will be effective immediately and parents will be notified.