

Grace Christian School

Pontiac, IL

Parent-Student Handbook

2018-2019

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29 NIV

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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

History

On a cool spring evening in 2012, a group of parents gathered to consider what God would have them do in regard to their responsibility of raising and educating their children. After much prayer, as well as discussion of the importance of a strong Christ-centered education with a curriculum that reinforces faith and values, an idea was born: Starting a new Christian school. Grace Christian School is not only for our own children, but also to reach a community of parents who are looking for something more for their children – a place where their children would be encouraged and respected as people while learning in an environment that not only provides a sound education, but also touches their hearts and minds.

Statement of Faith

- We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God, inerrant in the original writing, and that is of supreme and final authority in faith and practice. (II Timothy 3:16-19)
- We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (I John 5:6-8)
- We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man. (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:35)
- We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23)
- We believe that all human beings are born with sinful natures and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed. (Romans 3:10-12; Romans 5:12)
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of his shed blood on the cross. (I Corinthians 15:3; John 3:16)
- We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Romans 15:4; Romans 8:34)
- We believe in “that blessed hope,” the personal, visible, pre-millennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:1)
- We believe that all who receive by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. (Romans 3:21-24; Galatians 3:26-27)
- We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost. (Matthew 25; 46; I Corinthians 5:51-52)
- We believe that God designed marriage to be between only a man and a woman. We also believe that God made boys who grow up to be men, and girls who grow up to be women. (Matthew 19:4-6; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Cor 7:1-16; Genesis 1:27)

Mission Statement and Objectives

Grace Christian School is to aid parents in leading children to academic, spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational truth. These objectives are achieved by a curriculum and program which is:

- A. Instructional - teacher to student
- B. Demonstrational - student to teacher
- C. Relational - student to student
- D. Participatory - student with others
- E. Recreational - student with self

Core Values

- A solid spiritual Biblical foundation. (Psalm 102: 25-27)
- Academic Excellence. (Matthew 22:37)
- Extra-curricular excellence. (I Corinthians 10:31)
- A low student to teacher ratio (Mark 4:34; Mark 9:35)
- Moral Instruction (Philippians 4:8)
- An optimal learning environment (Isaiah 11:9b)

Statement of Educational Philosophy

Christian education is integration of biblical principles into every subject of knowledge. The student is educated in the truest sense by providing a foundation for good character training through Gods Word along with spiritual and moral values. God is the authority of truth and there is no distinction between secular and sacred truth in the sense that one of them is related to God and the other is not. (Acts 17:28) Truth is included in the “all things” of Romans 11:36. Everything is related to God and has significance in this world, in our lives, and beyond.

Christian education is an atmosphere, that is, the physical atmosphere of the schoolroom ant the emotional atmosphere brought by the teacher. Second, Christian education is a discipline. Meaning the discipline of a person who is self-governed because of development of positive habits in a student’s life. Third, Christian education “is a life” that is, the need of intellectual and moral as well as of physical sustenance is implied. That is the mind feeds on ideas, and therefore children should have a generous curriculum.

Believing that socialistic, humanistic, or evolutionary thought is contrary to Biblical principles and the Word of God, we acknowledge that it is a privilege and a responsibility to teach children the values and rewards of a free-enterprise system in an age of socially-oriented education. Our students are taught that nothing of value is achieved without the effort and hard work and that they are limited only by their ambition and ingenuity.

We believe that reverence for the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (psalm 111:10) and that in Jesus, Gods Son, are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It is our desire to maintain a school where instructions will center on the study of God the Creator and His creation. We will encourage the student’s fellowship with God, which will nurture a lifelong joy in seeking and learning.

In Eph. 6:4 we acknowledge that God is the creator of the family and has placed on parents the overall responsibility for training and nurturing their children. With this in mind we desire to maintain a school of exemplary educational quality which supports and come alongside the training received at home and in the local church.

We believe that the influence of Christian teachers as models is essential in the educational experience the students. (Titus 2:7-8) It is our desire to employ only Christian teachers who believe they are called to ministry of teaching and who relate to all areas of the curriculum through God's Word, who model mature Christian character (Galatians 5:22-23), and who have used their God-given abilities to acquire superior academic training. The teacher serves as a guide. They allow the Holy Spirit to give insight to students and present a "feast" of subjects for students to experience. Teachers will also find that they will be learning right along with the student. The teacher will be prepared to give the student experience in grappling with new concepts rather than telling them how to think about certain things.

We believe that Christian education should encourage the development of the student, with his/hers unique abilities and personality, to love the Lord God fully with heart, soul, and mind. (Matthew 22:37-38) We are committed to maintain a school which produces students who are committed to following Jesus Christ: who are able to analyze issues from a biblical viewpoint; seek answers; stand for the truth of the Word of God; who respond to the Holy Spirit by pursuing purity (Philippians 4:8); who learn to live and work with others; and who are maturing in their ability to live the Christian life as transforming influences in the cultures and society God places them. Children should be treated as persons, made in the image of God; they should not be talked down to or treated as unable to comprehend; not be underestimated; capable of becoming all God intended them to be; develop a love of learning and how to be life-long learners; and the list can go on and on.

Section 2: Admission/Enrollment Guidelines

Non-Discriminatory Policy

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

Admission Policies

A student is considered for admission to Grace Christian School after the submission of an application and an appointment with the admissions committee and/or school board. The purpose of the interview is to present the school's philosophy and to give the parents a better understanding of the basis for Christian education.

Acceptance of students is made on an individual basis and is contingent upon a satisfactory interview with the admissions committee and/or school board and signing of the Parent-Student Commitment Form. Test scores may be considered for admission. Admittance testing may be required by the teacher.

Kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before September 1st to be eligible for admittance on September of that year. All new students' birth certificate is reviewed for kindergarten applications.

Registration

A registration fee of \$50.00 per student is required to be submitted with the registration form. Registration fees are non-refundable, but upon acceptance will be credited toward full registration fee.

Health Records

Copies of the student's birth certificate, immunization records, and health physical are to be on file in the school office for all students.

Students entering Kindergarten and 6th grade are required by law to have a current physical exam and state-required immunizations prior to enrollment. Dental examinations are required by law for kindergarten, 2nd, and 6th grades. Students entering kindergarten are required to have an eye examination. Health forms can be obtained from the school office, the Livingston County Health Department, or any medical office.

Tuition

Tuition may be paid yearly (on or before the first day of school, or using FACTS Tuition Managements Systems. FACTS is a 10 month payment plan that includes a small fee for its different options.

Section 3: Academic Program

Report Cards

Report cards will be given to students after each quarterly period. Progress reports may be mailed to parents of students who are on academic watch.

Grading Scale

A+	99-100	A	95-98	A-	93-94
B+	91-92	B	88-90	B-	86-87
C+	83-85	C	78-82	C-	76-77
D+	74-75	D	72-73	D-	70-71
F	69-below				

Homework

Homework assignments will be used to reinforce, review and enrich what is covered in the classroom. Each student is expected to complete his homework on time. Homework assignments may be evaluated through examination by the teacher or reviewed in class.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers at Grace Christian School are always willing to answer questions and to work in a positive manner for the welfare of their students. Teachers will be available for conferences, by appointment, for all students at the end of the 1st quarter and 3rd quarter, after report cards have been distributed. These conferences are a great opportunity for the teacher and parent to discuss the physical, emotional, and academic development of the student. If a conference is desired at any other time, please contact the individual teacher to set up a conference time.

Section 4: Appearance Guidelines

Philosophy

Scripture exhorts us to present ourselves before the Lord with modesty, neatness, humility, and self-control. Grace Christian School believes the way a student dresses and his outward attitude is often a reflection of a heart attitude. We do not want a person's appearance, attitudes, or actions to be a distraction to anyone's walk with the Lord or the learning environment at Grace Christian School. Therefore we require our students to dress appropriately. The School Board reserves the right to make the final decision related to the appropriateness of a student's appearance.

Guidelines

- Clothes for school and school activities must be modest and should not draw undue attention to the individual. Students may wear shorts, t-shirts, jeans, and skirts to school.
- Thin strap tank tops, halter tops, midriff-showing tops, pajama pants, or any clothing with offensive lettering or pictures may not be worn.
- Girls when wearing skirts, dresses, or shorts they must be no more than 2" above the knee.
- Hats, caps, hoods, or other head coverings are not allowed indoors at any time.
- No writing on the rear of shorts, skirts, or pants.
- No skintight clothing of any kind

Section 5: Attendance and Tardiness

Philosophy

Grace Christian School's attendance policy is to teach the value of punctuality and good attendance as a lifestyle. Regular attendance is critical to success in school. Students and parents share the responsibility of making every effort for the student to attend class every day that school is in session.

School Attendance

Absences should be necessary and unavoidable. A parent must call when their student will be absent for all or any part of the school day. All students who arrive after the beginning of the school day must be signed in at the school office. If a student needs to leave the school for any reason, other than illness at school, the Parent is to send a note with the student, and they will also need to sign them out at the school office.

Excused Absences

Absences for the reasons listed below will be considered excused if the school is notified on the day of the absence:

- Illness or injury

- Serious illness or death in the family
- Medical or dental appointment (verification from the physician's office may be required)
- Vacation or planned absence with prior approval

A student of Grace Christian School may not be absent for more than 30 days of the school year. If a child is absent more than thirty days in the course of a school year, his promotion is dependent upon the approval of the School Board who will act upon the recommendation of the teacher. The school's policy on habitual student absenteeism is in agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education's policy on absenteeism for nonpublic schools.

Tardiness

Students are considered tardy if they are not seated when class begins at 8:15 a.m. Parents must sign in at the office when a child is tardy. Excused tardiness includes the reasons mentioned above for absences, as well as weather or road conditions. Excessive unexcused absences and or/tardiness will be a cause for disciplinary action.

Illness

Students with a sore throat, fever, or other noticeable symptoms of an illness, must remain home for their sake and for the sake of other students. Students, who have recovered sufficiently from an illness and have been without a fever for 24 hours without the aid of medication, may return to school.

Section 6: Character Expectations

Philosophy

Grace Christian School expects all parents to be professing Christians, it must be understood that we will uphold standards of Christian conduct and expect our students to operate within them. We will strive to train our students to live above reproach, showing respect to God, country, family, school personnel, and fellow students at all time.

Conduct

Students are expected to demonstrate respect, compassion, diligence, neatness, modesty, discipline, self-control, and good stewardship. Basic expectations include, but are not limited to, the following list:

- Since feelings, as well as physical bodies, can be hurt, students must avoid insults, threats or unkindness toward one another. A climate of mutual respect in word and deed will be sought.
- Since a safe and secure environment is desirable, and since roughhousing can result in unintentional harm, students must refrain from physical interference such as tripping, hitting, poking and the like.
- Since the appropriate response to authority is critical to the shaping of a child's life in every way, students must obey instructions from the staff and supporting adults promptly and willingly, avoiding the display of any negativism of tone or attitude, and exhibiting respect toward teachers and authority.

- Since words have integrity of their own and God expects man to be stewards of thoughts and expressions, students will refrain at all times from language which is vulgar, profane, laden with sexual innuendos, immorality or lies, and/or demeans either God or mankind.
- Since part of learning to live and work joyfully and productively together involves exhibiting a sincere mutual respect for other students and their rights, students will conduct themselves in a manner that does not distract or detract from the learning of others or themselves.
- Since the school's physical facilities exist as God's provision for the school, and some habits may not be consistent with responsible stewardship of the school's "home," students should do all in their power to keep the school and its campus neat and clean, and avoid the destruction or defacement of school property in any form. Chewing gum may not be used in the building or at any school functions.
- Since students deserve the right to manage their own belongings responsibly and individually, each student should protect the property rights of others and refrain from meddling with the personal or assigned property of others.

Discipline

If, after being warned, a student refuses to correct inappropriate behavior, parents will be notified as soon as possible by the teacher. Failure to correct inappropriate behavior may result in suspension and/or expulsion. When serious offense occurs (including, but not limited to, physical violence), the School Board reserves the right to override normal discipline steps and move immediately to suspension and/or expulsion.

Internet Use Policy

Grace Christian School is thankful and fortunate to have computers (Laptop and desktop) that provide access to the school's computer network. This blessing will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and other important web sites that will benefit student learning. While GCS has set guidelines in place to protect students while on the Internet, families should be warned that some material accessible via the Internet might contain items that are illegal, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. Ultimately, parents and guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources, especially when laptops are taken from school and used at home.

The purpose of this document is to provide policy that will govern student access to the Internet. Teachers who are utilizing computers and the Internet will discuss these rules with their students.

Internet Use Rules:

1. Students may not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the Internet by other users.
2. Each student will be responsible for the use of their individual account and password.
3. Use of the Internet will be limited to school related academic activities only.
4. Students may not engage in plagiarism (copying someone else's work and then pretending it is their work).
5. Students may not violate copyright laws (copying someone else's work without their permission).
6. Students may not use someone else's password to gain access to protected areas.

7. Students may not download or install any program except as directed by the teacher or IT Administrator.
8. Students may not use the Internet for any illegal activity, including the transmission of any material in violation of U.S. or Illinois state regulations.
9. Students may not use the Internet or the school's network for private financial or commercial gain.
10. Students may not use the school's network or the Internet to invade the privacy of others.
11. Students may not access, submit, post, publish, or display any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, harassing, or illegal material.
12. Students may not execute any program found via the Internet except as directed by a teacher.
13. If a student is aware of a violation of any of these rules, he/she is to notify a teacher.

Grace Christian School makes no warranties of any kind, whether implied or expressed, for the service it is providing. The school will not be responsible for any damages suffered while students are using the school network. This includes the loss of data resulting from delays, missed deliveries, or service interruptions. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the student's risk. The school denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through school equipment. Network security is a high priority. Students who identify a security problem on the Internet must notify the IT Administrator or a teacher. Demonstrations of the problem should not be shown to others. Attempts to logon to the school's network or the Internet as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges.

The use of GCS computers is a privilege. The school reserves the right to review the content of all school computer accounts and files. Files and communications may be reviewed in order to keep the network working properly and to ensure that users are handling the system responsibly. Therefore, any violation of appropriate use may result in the student's access privilege being denied, revoked or suspended. Misuse may also subject the student to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

Section 7: Extra-Curricular Activities

Philosophy

Grace Christian School participates in extra-curricular sports through a cooperative agreement with St. Mary's School in Pontiac, Illinois. All rules and policies of athletic eligibility of St. Mary's apply to student-athletes of Grace Christian School. Grace Christian School participates in sports programs in the belief that competitive team experiences contribute significantly to the development of character, mutual support, and school spirit. Further, participation in activities outside of Grace Christian School gives our students an opportunity to impact their culture for Christ. We expect our students to represent GCS in a manner that is respectful of others on and off the field of play and brings honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, sportsmanship is an important part of this training.

Eligibility

Academic Eligibility: A primary purpose of Grace Christian School is to provide an excellent education for all students. All participants and parents should understand that the curricular program takes priority while participating in extra-

curricular sport seasons. Eligibility to participate in extra-curricular activities is determined on Thursday of each school week. Any student whose cumulative average grade falls below 75% (D+) in any subject will be considered “ineligible” for the following week of extra-curricular activities. The period of eligibility is Monday through Saturday for each week. Students who struggle with repeated instances of ineligibility may be advised to withdraw from participation in certain extra-curricular activities in order to allow more time for academic preparation. If an athlete is “ineligible”, he/she may be allowed to practice and attend home games. Grades will be checked on a weekly basis, beginning with the 3rd week of a new semester.

Attendance Eligibility: All athletes are expected to be at all scheduled practices and contests. Continued unjustified unexcused absenteeism may result in dismissal from the team. If a student misses school due to illness, he/she will not be eligible to participate in the day’s sports activities. If the student becomes well enough to arrive at school by 11:00 a.m. and attends the remainder of the day, he/she will be able to participate in the evening’s extra-curricular activities. Exceptions to this rule include funerals, doctor’s appointments, early dismissal, and prearranged absences.

Section 8: General School Information and Procedures

Emergency Closing

School may be canceled for reasons of extreme weather or other emergencies. Grace Christian School will most often close or delay in the mornings for inclement weather conditions in concert with Pontiac School District 429 and Pontiac Township High School District 90, but will be specifically announced for our school. Announcements of our closings will be made through a phone chain and made on radio stations 98.9 FM, 93.7 FM, 101.5 FM, 104.9 FM, and Mediacom Channel 13.

After School Supervision/Pick-up

Grace Christian School dismisses at 3:00 p.m. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide supervision for students whose rides are late, so students need to be picked up by 3:15 p.m. When parents come to pick-up their child/children, they must come into the school building in order for the student(s) to be dismissed. This is to avoid any accidents in a busy parking lot. When accompanied children are in the building after school hours, they must abide by the same rules that apply during school hours.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to arrange for the transportation of their children to and from school. Many families make car pool arrangements. If anyone other than a parent is scheduled to pick a child up, there must be a note or email sent to the school office notifying the office volunteer. Otherwise, a child may not be permitted to leave with an adult after school if notice is not given.

Lunches

Grace Christian School does not have hot lunch; students are to bring a sack lunch for the noon meal. Students should bring proper utensils. The PTO may provide lunch for students on occasion. Notice will be given to the students and parents prior to these events. Please make sure your student has the proper utensils to eat their lunch. We do not have

utensils to hand out if the student does not bring their own. Spoons are especially helpful to have. Also, please make sure your student is able to open any food packaging they may bring with them.

Medicine

Written authorization from both the parents and physician is required for the administration of medications by school staff. Medication authorization forms are provided in the registration documents. Upon arrival at school, the student is to give medicines and the authorization note to the office. No staff member is allowed to administer medication to any student without written authorization. This includes aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops and other over-the-counter drugs. Any medicine to be administered to a student must be provided by the parent and in its original labeled container.

Drills and Emergencies

Grace Christian School has a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan in place. Regular emergency instructions and drills will be given to all students to help them thoughtfully respond to emergencies.

Lost and Found

Please mark all items and clothing used at school. Any lost items will be placed in a lost-and-found box near the office, where they may be retrieved. Items not picked up will periodically be given to Goodwill.

Electronic Equipment

Electronic equipment should not be brought to school for any reason. This includes cell phones, portable radios, CD players, mp3 players, iPods, iPads, and hand-held electronic games (such as PSP, Nintendo DS, Nintendo Game Boy, etc.). This applies to field trips. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged goods belonging to students.

Recess

Children are to be dressed appropriately for recess each day. Even if the weather is chilly outside, the children will be having recess outdoors as long as the weather permits. The sunshine and brisk breeze will stimulate their minds and bodies as they progress through the day. So be certain that your child is dressed to remain warm during chilly days. Children running and playing games will warm up rapidly even if the weather is a bit chilly.

Chaperone Policy for Field Study Trips

Purpose

Grace Christian School field study trips are designed to build team spirit while expanding students' learning environment. As students adjust to new settings and learn to take direction from new people, chaperones must also adapt as needs arise. In order to provide students with the best possible experiences and opportunities during field study trips, the following policies must be followed:

Chaperone Expectations

A chaperone serves 3 primary purposes on a field study trip:

- 1) Assisting teachers and students with general needs.
- 2) Providing transportation to and from the designated location (s).
- 3) Overseeing the safety and personal well-being of students.

In order to satisfy these expectations, the following conditions must be met:

- A chaperone must be able to provide transportation in the back seats of his/her vehicle for at least 3 students. Each seat must have a working seat belt.
- A chaperone must provide the school office with a copy of his/her valid driver's license and current insurance card for the vehicle(s) being used for student transportation. These must be on file prior to the date of the field study trip.
- Chaperones must be present during any initial trip instruction period (Example: when a teacher is giving directions as to proper behavior in the environment to be visited).
- Chaperones will be in charge of a designated group of students and must dedicate themselves to overseeing those children for the duration of the trip. Students are not to separate from their designated chaperone.
- Vehicle rider lists will be assigned and must remain as-is for the start and return trips. These lists are made with effort according to certain criteria and are not an item for debate or change, unless the physical safety of a child would be in danger (missing seat belt, etc).
- Since field study trips are school functions rather than family functions, chaperones must be present for the entire trip, starting from and returning to the school with the group. Anyone who is not able to provide both starting and return transportation, or who cannot be present for the entire duration of the event, should not volunteer as a chaperone.
- Chaperones must refrain from using cell phones for personal use for the duration of the field study trip, including text messaging; however, it is recommended chaperones bring a cell phone for emergency use.
- Chaperones may **not** bring any children who are not currently enrolled at GCS. Family events may be held from time to time, but these are separate from field study trips.
- Chaperones must be alert at all times. Student safety, needs, and learning should always take priority over chaperones socialization.