



# VPK Parent/Student Handbook

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2019-2020

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“Training children in the way they should go...”  
Proverbs 22:6

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## **VISION**

Our vision is to be a school of learning where students, parents, teachers, staff and administration are followers of Christ, seeking to bring Him glory, and are fully committed to keep Him preeminent in every aspect of the learning program.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to glorify God. At Grace we seek to provide parents the opportunity of obeying the commands of Scripture to "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). Christian training begins in the home and is continued in the Church and the Christian school by providing a Christ-centered education, by influencing each individual for salvation in Christ, by instructing in values for Godly living, and by providing a program of academic excellence.

## **HISTORY**

Grace Christian Academy (GCA) has been established as a ministry of Grace Baptist Church to partner with parents to help provide a quality Christian education. It is our desire to point both parents and students to the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and to help them develop a habit of Godly living in their everyday lives.

## **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

GCA is a ministry of Grace Baptist Church. It is important that students and Parents/Guardians know the basic beliefs of the school.

The Bible, in the King James Version, is the infallible, inerrant Word of God. It is plenary and verbally inspired by God and written by men that He chose specially to record it. It is our guidebook for faith and practice in this life.

God is triune (one God in three persons); namely, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God is the Creator of heaven and earth. Man is the direct act of creation by God. God determines the gender as male or female at conception. Jesus Christ, God's incarnate, virgin-born Son, took on human flesh to shed His Blood on Calvary's cross for the salvation of mankind from sin. He was buried and rose bodily on the third day. He ascended into heaven and will return one day to rapture all believers into heaven. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers and guides and instructs them through the Word of God. There is a literal heaven to gain and a literal hell to shun.

Salvation is based on a personal recognition of sin and complete faith (reliance) upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the soul.

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality;

including homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4). We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

## **SCHOOL POSITION ON THE KING JAMES BIBLE**

The King James Version is the only accepted Bible at Grace Christian Academy. Students should not bring other versions for classroom or devotional purpose. The "New King James" version is not an acceptable copy of the King James Version.

## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

At Grace Christian Academy it is our belief that a Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program should be nurturing, comprehensive and fun. It is our belief that children thrive in an engaging environment. We use the Abeka Christian curriculum. The curriculum is supplemented with hands-on activities that offer opportunities for play and exploration. Children learn Bible, Character, Phonics, Handwriting, Math, Science and Vocabulary. At GCA children are taught in a loving, safe, Christ centered environment where they experience spiritual, emotional and cognitive growth. Graduates are well prepared to enter Kindergarten upon completion of the program.

## **SCHOOL FACTS**

Name:	Grace Christian Academy
Address:	479 North Center Street Baldwin, Florida 32234
Phone:	904/266-9532; fax: 904/266-2971
	Email: <a href="mailto:gcaoffice@gcabaldwin.org">gcaoffice@gcabaldwin.org</a>
	Website: <a href="http://www.gcabaldwin.org">www.gcabaldwin.org</a>
Mascot:	Lions
Colors:	Red, Silver, and White
Scripture:	"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6
Pastor:	Dr. Dewayne Jowers

## **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Grace Christian Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, or color in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, athletic programs and other school-administered programs.

## ADMISSIONS POLICIES

1. Grace Christian Academy is a private institution and reserves the right to set and maintain our own standards for student dress, conduct, academics, and all other matters.
2. Grace Christian Academy maintains the right to refuse admittance or re-admittance to anyone.
3. Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to refuse students whose parents are uncooperative or non-supportive of its staff, purpose, standards and policies.
4. Students entering Pre-Kindergarten must be at least four (4) years old prior to September 1 of the current year.
5. All students are accepted on a probationary basis.
6. Grace Christian Academy only accepts students that identify with their birth gender.

**It is understood that attendance at GCA is a privilege and not a right. This privilege may be forfeited by any student who does not conform to the standards and regulations of the institution. The school may request the withdrawal of and/or dismiss any student who at any time, in the opinion of the school Administration, does not fit into the spirit of the institution.**

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1. Parents must obtain and read a copy of the current handbook.
2. The parents complete an application and schedule a time for an admissions interview with the Administrator. Parents should bring with them, a copy of their Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) certificate (if applicable) from the Duval County Early Learning Coalition, and a copy of the student's birth certificate.
3. The parents are notified within 2 business days after the interview if the student is accepted.
4. The parents complete the remaining required paperwork. Submission of a record of completed immunizations is required. This must be completed by the first week of school. A completed copy of all enrollment forms including but not limited to: Application for Enrollment Form, Medical Information and Consent Form; Parent-Student Behavior Agreement and Pledge of Cooperation.
5. A copy of the student's birth certificate and social security card.
6. Parents must attend the parent orientation meeting. Parents of transfer students coming in during the school year will receive a copy of the orientation meeting for review at home.
7. Final acceptance upon the completion of all required documentation and paperwork.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**NO STUDENT WILL BE CONSIDERED ENROLLED OR REGISTRATION COMPLETED UNTIL THESE FORMS ARE SIGNED AND DATED AND FILED IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE. THE SCHOOL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DISMISS ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT COOPERATE WITH THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OR WHOSE ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS ARE NOT IN HARMONY WITH THE SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE NURTURED HERE.**

## VISITING CLASSROOMS AND CONFERENCES

Parents visiting classrooms must arrange the visit ahead of time. Conferences may be arranged with your child's teacher through the school office. **Please do not go directly to your child's classroom during the school day; please check in at the office prior to visiting any classroom.**

## VOLUNTEER WORK AND FIELD TRIPS

Those wanting to volunteer at Grace Christian Academy must fill out a Volunteer Application and be interviewed by the administration. Once approved the volunteer will be required to get a background screening and sign an agreement to abide by all the standards of dress and conduct for Grace Christian Academy. The administration will make all decisions concerning volunteer placement based on the needs of the school. All those wishing to attend field trips are required to fill out a screening form and must abide by all standards of dress and conduct given by Grace Christian Academy.

## FINANCES

FEES: The following fees will be charged as needed: Field Trips.

## HEALTH AND MEDICATIONS

Administration must be notified of any student with any medical conditions. Students are not permitted to carry and/or self-administer medication, prescription or non-prescription (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin). Any medication found at school will be confiscated and the parent contacted. **Grace Christian Academy does not accept responsibility for students who abuse this policy.**

### MEDICATION:

1. All prescription and over the counter medication must be turned in to the school office.
2. An authorization form must accompany all medication.
3. All medication must come in its original container with dosing information appropriate for the child. Parents must provide all medication. No over the counter medication will be provided by the school.
4. Prescription medication given at school for more than two weeks must have physician authorization to administer at school.

**STUDENTS WITH ASTHMA:** If the student requires an asthma inhaler at school, state statutes mandate that the prescribing physician authorize self-administration. There are specific forms available for the physician to complete.

**HEALTH:** Students with any communicable illness (whether listed on the following page or not) must be kept home until the possibility of contagious infection is passed. A note from the doctor may be required for re-entrance. Head lice, though not a disease, is contagious. We maintain a "nit free" policy. For this reason, any student diagnosed as having lice will not be permitted in the

classroom until it is remedied and school personnel inspect the student. We require the student receive treatment from a specifically designated lice shampoo.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** Grace Christian Academy desires to maintain a healthy school environment by instituting controls designed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The term “communicable disease” shall mean an illness which arises as a result of a specific infectious agent which may be transmitted either by a susceptible host or infected person or animal to another person. A teacher or administration official who reasonably suspects that a student or employee has a communicable disease shall immediately notify the school principal. The reportable diseases include but are not limited to:

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)	Pinkeye
AIDS Related Complex (ARC)	Plague
Amebiasis	Poliomyelitis
Anthrax	Psittacosis Fever
Botulism	Relapsing Fever
Brucellosis	Rheumatic Fever
Campylobacteriosis	Rickettsia
Chicken Pox	Ringworm
Diphtheria	Roseola
Encephalitis	Rubella
Giardiasis Gonorrhea	Salmonellosis
Granuloma Inguinale	Scabies
Hansen’s Disease(Leprosy)	Scarlet Fever
Hemorrhagic Fevers	Shigellosis
Hepatitis	Smallpox
Hisoplasmosis	Strep Throat
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)	Syphilis Tetanus
Impetigo	Toxoplasmosis
Legionnaires’ Disease	Trichinosis
Leptospirosis	Tuberculosis
Malaria	Typhoid Fever
Measles (rubeola)	Typhus Vibrio Cholera
Meningitis	Whooping Cough
Meningoccal Disease	Yellow Fever
Mononucleosis Mumps	

Any student or employee with a communicable disease for which immunizations required by law or is available shall be temporarily excluded from school while ill and during recognized periods of communicability. Students and employees with communicable disease for which immunization is not available shall be excluded from school while ill. If the nature of the disease and circumstances warrant, Grace Christian Academy may require an independent physician’s examination of the student or employee to verify the diagnosis of communicable disease. Grace Christian Academy reserves the right to make all final decisions necessary to enforce its communicable disease policy and to take all necessary action to control the spread of communicable disease within the school. Necessary action may include withdrawal from school.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Grace Christian Academy follows the lead of the Duval County school system in all weather-related closings. Grace Christian Academy may, on occasion, have an unscheduled closing due to providential or safety-related issues. The administration will attempt to inform parents, in advance when possible by phone, text, school portal (MySchoolWorx), or via local T.V. when advance notice is not possible.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The regular school hours are Monday - Thursday 8:00 AM – 11:55 AM. No VPK students should be on campus before 7:30 AM or after 12:25 PM without proper supervision. ***Grace Christian Academy is not responsible for students on campus before 7:30 AM.***

## **DRESS CODE**

Believing that a well-disciplined environment sets the stage for proper learning, Grace Christian Academy desires to maintain an atmosphere free of chaos and disorder. The school purpose is to provide an environment that promotes and produces achievement and development of self-control. With these goals in mind and in order to honor the Lord Jesus Christ the following will be the dress code for Grace Christian Academy.

### ***Young Ladies***

In preparation for joining our Academy as a Kindergartener, young ladies are asked to wear skirts or shorts that reach to the bottom of the knee. Girls are asked to wear shorts or something under skirts as they sit on the floor at times during school. During cold times, a long pant (please, no jeans or jean material) would be acceptable under skirts. Skirts/shorts should be of the appropriate size to be loose-fitting and modest in appearance. This allows for young ladies sitting in chairs to remain modest and appropriately covered.

Preferred shirts are a standard, solid colored polo/golf shirt with no logos on them. Shirts need to cover the waistline at all times whether standing, sitting, or reaching with hands over the head.

Slips are recommended for light colored skirts. This avoids embarrassment and maintains our culture of modesty.

Shoes should be appropriate for both classroom and play. Sandals may be worn as long as they have a back strap. No flip flops or platform shoes. When needed, sweaters, vest, and jackets may be worn.

Only ear piercing is allowed (no other body part), with no more than two earrings in each earlobe. Earrings must be small studs or posts that do not extend beyond the earlobe. No hoops or dangling earrings are allowed as this may lead to injury during playtime or class time.

Hair should be neat, clean, combed and kept out of the face and away from the eyes. Hair color and highlights are to be natural looking. Please, no faddish colors or colorings in the hair.

### ***Young Men***

In preparation for joining our Academy as a Kindergartener, young men are asked to keep hair cut above the collar, above the ears, and above the eyebrows. Bush/shaggy, long, or hair curled up on the collar are not desired. Hair should be neatly combed.

Preferred shirts are a standard, Solid colored polo/golf shirt with no logos on them. Shirts need to cover the waistline at all times whether standing, sitting, or reaching with hands over the head.

Pants/shorts must be neat in appearance. The preferred pant style is khaki (any solid color that is not too outlandish) and we ask they be worn with a belt. Pants should fit in a manner where they do not sag and are a traditional fit (please, no jeggings or skinny/tight fitting pants).

Shoes should be appropriate for both classroom and play. Young men are not permitted to wear necklaces or earrings. When needed, sweaters, vest, or jackets may be worn.

**The Administration reserves the right to make judgment calls on all issues of dress code or grooming including any issues not listed.**

***An exception to the dress code policy for one is not meant as an exception in the dress code policy for anyone else.***

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our philosophy of discipline is set forth in three areas: Boundary setting, developing self-discipline, and corrective procedures.

**Boundary Setting** - GCA believes firmly that discipline is absolutely necessary for effective teaching and learning. Classes run more efficiently, with less time wasted, students are happier, more secure, and learn better when they know what is expected of them and those around them and when they realize there are consequences for inappropriate and undesirable behavior and/or attitudes. The discipline policy in effect is an endeavor to set boundaries and to help create an environment and atmosphere in which both the teaching and the learning processes can be effective and efficient.

**Developing Self-Discipline** - GCA believes that good discipline involves self-discipline and self-control. This is best achieved when the school and the parents work together. GCA will attempt to instill self-discipline and self-control in our students by the use of external regimen, structure, guidelines and through the teaching of God's Word.

**Corrective Procedures** - When there are discipline problems, they will be met with a standard of correctional procedures. If these steps are not productive in correcting the student's behavior and the parents cannot correct the child's behavior, the student may be asked to withdraw upon the recommendation of the Administration and Pastor.

Any discipline is done FOR the child not TO the child. Discipline is meant to correct a problem. We are here to work with the home, but not take the place of the parents and home. GCA maintains high standards and expectations that provide an atmosphere conducive for learning in a safe and non-threatening environment, while ultimately directing and instructing children to live the Christian life as taught in Scripture.

**NOTE: Grace Christian Academy reserves the right, with or without parental consent, to search any student's desk. The Academy also reserves the right, with or without parental consent, to have the contents of any student's personal effects examined, including but not limited to backpacks, purses, and pockets. Failure by the student or his parents to cooperate with the Academy will result in the student being asked to withdraw from school or face expulsion.**

*An exception to the discipline policy for one is not meant as an exception in the policy for anyone else.*

## WITHDRAWALS

To withdraw a student from school, a withdrawal form must be obtained, completed and returned to the office.

## DISMISSALS

Parents may be asked to withdraw their child(ren) for reasons including, but not limited to the following:

1. Parents who are non-cooperative or non-supportive of the school.
2. A child's conduct is detrimental to the wellbeing of the other students or teachers.
3. The child's behavior and/or academic need demands more time and attention than we feel is reasonable to expect from our school.

## ACADEMICS

Grace Christian Academy is a Christian institution and we believe it is important to have a strong academic program that will allow our students to excel. Training in Christian character demands that a student does his best in every endeavor of study.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Academic growth is greatly facilitated when parents are kept aware of student progress. It is for this reason that papers are kept by the teachers in a folder and sent home once a week with the

student. Progress reports will be sent home three times a year. A behavior report will be sent home each day.

## MEETING WITH PARENTS

There may come times when it is necessary to meet with parents. It is necessary to set an appointment with the parent/guardian(s) to assure no interruptions. These meetings should be scheduled on campus after school if possible.

## TARDINESS AND ATTENDANCE

**Tardiness:** Arrival for the VPK program is between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. VPK arrivals should be signed in with the staff member on duty. The instructional day begins at 8:00 a.m. and all children are expected to be in place and ready to start the day. Arrivals after 8:00 a.m. are disruptive to the group in progress and difficult for the arriving child as well. We understand it is occasionally unavoidable to be “running late”, but should be kept to a minimum. Excessive tardiness may result in dismissal from the VPK program.

**Late pick up:** The VPK program ends at 11:55 a.m. daily. If your child is not picked up by 12:25 p.m., you will be charged a fee of \$15 per day, which must be paid to the office by the end of the next school day.

**Absence:** Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning; however, you will be allowed three absences a month. Any absences beyond those require a written note from the parent for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or the child’s family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest.
- Physician or dentist appointment.
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation.
- Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child’s family member.
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena).
- Special education or related services for the child’s disability.
- Observance of a religious holiday or service.
- Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year.

**Please note:** Absences of 5 consecutive instructional days will be considered a **withdrawal** from the VPK program at GCA. Withdrawals from the VPK program will not be eligible for re-enrollment. GCA will allow one **documented** 5-day absence during the instructional period. Documentation must be submitted in advance, explain the reason for the 5-day absence, and be dated and signed by the child’s legal custodial adult.

**Verifying your child’s attendance and absences:** At the end of the month, you will be asked to confirm your child’s attendance for that month. You will be given a form to review and sign. Your signature on this form will not only verify the attendance, but also will direct the Early Learning Coalition of Duval to direct payment for the month’s VPK program for your child to

GCA, and that you continue to choose GCA to provide your child's VPK program for the upcoming month.

## SNACKS/LUNCH

All students will be required to bring a **healthy** snack daily. Please no candy, chocolate or carbonated beverages.

## STUDENT SUPPLIES

GCA will provide basic supplies; however, parents will be asked to contribute additional items. Please do not allow your child to bring personal items (Toys, Electronics, Etc.) to school.

## PLEDGES

GCA students will be required to learn and to recite the following pledges on a daily basis:

1. Bible - "I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make It a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide Its words in my heart that I might not sin against God."
2. Christian Flag - "I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe."
3. American Flag - "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

## RESERVATIONS

- A. ENROLLMENT - GCA reserves the right to refuse enrollment or re-enrollment to any student for any reason.
- B. GRACE AND MERCY - GCA reserves the right to extend grace and/or mercy to any student for any offense. Extending grace and/or mercy for one does not require extending grace and/or mercy to another. Extending grace and/or mercy for one offense or incident does not compel extending grace and/or mercy for other offenses or incidences.
- C. REVISIONS - GCA reserves the right to update, change, or otherwise revise this manual at any time and at its sole discretion.
- D. EXCEPTIONS - GCA reserves the right to make any exceptions. An exception in any policies for one student is not intended to be an exception in the policy for another. An exception in any policy once is not intended to be an exception again.
- E. ENFORCEMENT - GCA reserves the right to enforce all policies. Previous non-

enforcement of a policy does not prevent or prohibit GCA from enforcing a policy.

- F. STANDARDS - GCA reserves the right to set and maintain standards for student conduct, dress, academics, and all other GCA matters as determined in accordance with GCA mission, beliefs, values, objectives, and understanding of Scripture.

**THE SCHOOL ASSUMES NO LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFEKEEPING OF EQUIPMENT, BOOKS, COLLECTIONS, OR MONEY CONFISCATED FROM STUDENTS. ALSO, THE SCHOOL ASSUMES NO LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ITEMS THAT ARE LOST OR STOLEN FROM, CLASSROOMS, HALLWAYS, STORAGE AREAS, OUTSIDE AREAS, OTHER PLACES ON CAMPUS, AT ATHLETIC PRACTICES AND GAMES, OR AT ANY OTHER SCHOOL ACTIVITY.**

GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
VPK PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK 2019 - 2020

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**Grace Christian Academy Contract  
For Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten**

I \_\_\_\_\_, parent (or guardian) of \_\_\_\_\_ hereby request enrollment for said child in Grace Christian Academy's VPK program for the 2019-2020 school year, subject to the following statements and agreements.

Grace Christian Academy (GCA) will be operating a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) for 3 hours and 55 minutes a day, 4 days a week for a total of 540 hours per school year. All enrolled families received a calendar showing these scheduled days off during the operational period of August 2019 – May 2020.

Attendance during the scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. Not only is GCA funding linked to attendance, but also to the child's success upon entrance into Kindergarten.

By your signature below, you attest you have read and agree with and will abide by all policies and guidelines in the VPK Parent/Student Handbook

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand and have read all policies and guidelines written in the current handbook and agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Grace Christian Academy is a non-profit educational institution operated and staffed by those whose one aim is to benefit the student and that attendance at Grace Christian Academy is a privilege. Therefore, I hereby agree to cooperate with the administration by supporting its policies and its discipline. I further agree that in signing this contract, I am pledging loyalty to the ideals and aims of Grace Christian Academy. I also agree to the policy of bringing any and all questions and/or problems to the administration that they may be properly resolved.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that in regard to discipline there are occasions when it may be necessary to council and correct a student. If the occasion should arise, I give my permission to the administration to do so, trusting that such discipline will be administered fairly and reasonably.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Grace Christian Academy assumes no legal responsibility for the child other than as covered by insurance. The Academy will not be responsible for children brought to the property before 7:30 a.m. or left after 12:25 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Grace Christian Academy has dress/appearance requirements, and I, as the parent/guardian will ensure that the enrolled student will comply with these requirements.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_