



2016-2017 Parent Handbook

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Inspiring minds...Nurturing hearts

Welcome to Grace Crossing Academy! The decision to entrust your child – your most valued possession – to Grace Crossing Academy is an honor we do not take lightly. By making the decision to educate your child in a Christian environment, you are laying a strong foundation for your child’s future; we are honored to be a part of that process. We at Grace Crossing Academy commit to helping your child grow in a well-balanced manner. Our goal for your child is that she or he is fulfilled and prepared in every way for the challenges that face each of us in everyday life.

MISSION STATEMENT and PURPOSE

The mission of Grace Crossing Academy is to develop within students a *heart for God*, enabling them to grow as Jesus did in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man. Excellence in Christian education is the driving force at Grace Crossing Academy. We are committed to providing a Christ-centered environment that creates an educational experience of challenges, security, growth, and fulfillment. Our principle goal is to work with the family and church to build a firm foundation for further development through educational excellence and Biblical values. We pray GCA is a place away from home and family where children can feel a sense of love, security, and self-worth while learning about the love of God and His son Jesus. We strive to provide a wholesome environment where children can grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, and emotionally while interacting with their peers and committed Christian teachers. We pray that God is glorified in everything we do at Grace Crossing Academy.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Grace Crossing Academy supports and actively teaches the Mission Statement, Vision and Core Beliefs of Grace Crossing, A Community Church of Christ. For information about these values, please visit Gracecrossing.net

ENROLLMENT PRACTICES

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

G-R-A-C-E: OUR CORE VALUES

Goodness – Using the Bible as our guide, we will do the right thing in all situations. We will be honest and forthright in all of our dealings.

“[M]ake every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge.... For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8).

Respect – We will treat all individuals with honor and respect.

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves” (Romans 12:10).

Accountability – Because God has trusted us with so much, we will honor Him by taking care of our property and taking responsibility for our actions.

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (from The Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30).

Cooperation – We recognize that the teachers, administrators, and parents are a team whose mission is to educate children in a wholesome environment; we will promote communication and cooperation as a means of furthering our mission.

“From [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:16).

Excellence – We will be enthusiastic and prepared for each task, striving for excellence in all we do.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

OUR PRINCIPLES

Spiritual Development – We value the importance of Christian character development among students and faculty. We seek to teach children to distinguish between right and wrong based on Christian teachings and principles. Students receive religious instruction daily at Grace Crossing Academy. Chapel time consists of Bible songs, scriptures, and prayers. A formal, all-school chapel will be held on Wednesdays. This is a wonderful opportunity for our older children to develop leadership skills. On all other days of the week, classroom chapel will be conducted, and children will have a chance to pray for each other, sing songs, and learn Bible stories. All aspects of teaching include the Christian perspective and provide guidance for personal responsibility and friendship.

Balanced Education – We value the challenge of helping children grow and mature in all areas of development. In addition to academics, we work to develop our students spiritually, emotionally, and physically. We seek this balance in order to help each child reach his or her fullest potential and to attain a positive self-image. We truly believe that if children are loved, they will learn.

Academic Focus – We value all learning styles and seek teachers who will motivate students to learn. We are not bound to one particular curriculum but will pull from a variety of sources that we feel will enhance our students’ academic development, including but not limited to A Beka, Frog Street Press, and Essentials Preschool Curriculum. We focus on Language, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Social/Emotional Skills. Students will also attend music, Spanish, art, and P.E. classes. We believe it is vital for our staff to be well informed on current issues and developments in the education world, so we consistently research and update our curriculum and classroom strategies. Each teacher works toward the achievement of high academic and developmental expectations for the children. To better partner with you in your child’s development, we offer two parent-teacher conferences a year.

Independence – We value the opportunity to help children develop self-reliance, self-control, and responsibility. We understand that these characteristics impact their feelings of worth and greatly enhance school performance.

UNIFORMS and DRESS CODE

We at Grace Crossing Academy believe uniforms provide a variety of benefits. In addition to promoting community spirit, uniforms promote safety and discipline on our campus and help students and faculty maintain focus on spirituality and academics. Therefore, children three and older at the start of school are required to wear school uniforms. This policy does not apply to students who turn three throughout the school year. Children under three should wear durable and comfortable clothing suitable for an active day. Please do not bring your child to school in clothes you would not like soiled. Uniforms are not required during the Summer Program.

A link to Parker Uniforms is available on our website under the “Uniforms and Dress Code” heading on the navigation bar.

The uniform requirements are as follows:

- Boys: solid khaki or navy pants or shorts; solid dark green, dark navy, or white polo shirts; the Parker plaid button-up shirt for Wednesdays
- Girls: solid khaki or navy pants, shorts, skirts, or jumpers; solid dark green, dark navy, or white polo shirts; the Parker plaid jumper (with modesty shorts or leggings) or skirt with white button-up shirt for Wednesdays

The plaid uniforms must be worn on Wednesdays, but they may also be worn on other days. All clothing should be free from labels, designs, and insignias. Cargo pants are acceptable. No shirts other than plain, solid-colored polo shirts or white button-down shirts should be worn at school, with the exception of our school t-shirts that may be worn on Thursdays and Fridays. Sweaters, sweatshirts, jackets, leggings, and tights may be worn on cool days. Please do not allow your child to wear sweats, track pants, or jeans except on appropriate occasions (Thursdays, Fridays, and extracurricular activities such as TOTS do not qualify as appropriate occasions). Modesty shorts or leggings *must* be worn under skirts and jumpers. Students may change into their workout clothes and/or uniforms for afternoon activities such as soccer shots or ballet.

For safety purposes, all children are required to wear rubber-soled, closed-toe, closed-heel shoes every day. *Cowboy boots that come off easily or have slick soles, galoshes, slip-ons (including Toms), and mules (including Crocs) are prohibited.* **Students whose clothing and footwear do not meet these standards may be asked to refrain from certain activities, including P.E. and/or playground. Violations to the dress code will be noted and parents advised. After 5 violations per year, the student’s account will be charged \$1.00 per additional violation.**

On holidays (Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, etc.) and other special days determined by the teacher or administration (Spring Portraits, Go Texan Days, etc.) the uniform requirements are relaxed, provided the clothing is modest and appropriate for school.

Likewise, parents and visitors are expected to dress appropriately when on school campus. Clothing that does not promote modesty is discouraged.

COMMUNICATION

We intend for our primary means of communication with parents and the community to be by email and our website: <http://www.gracecrossingacademy.net>. Please check for updates on a regular basis. It will keep you informed of upcoming events and relevant news. Our monthly newsletter is also a great way to stay up-to-date. We will use Remind101 in the event we need to contact parents with important information and emergency situations, such as school closings.

ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Most enrollment forms are available online. If access to the Internet is not available at home, parents may come to the office for an enrollment package. An application/registration fee of \$150 is due at the time of enrollment. Current families who return the next school year will be eligible for a discounted registration fee for that school year. Registration and Re-registration Fees are not refundable unless we can fill your child's place in class or admission is denied due to space limitations. A \$100 supply fee is due **at the beginning of each semester**. An additional Curriculum Fee of \$70 will be charged for Pre-K and Kindergarten students *enrolled after the start of school*. Kindergarten students are charged a \$60 diagnostic fee due January 15th. All fees are non-refundable.

Our **school year tuition** may be paid in full up front (with a 5% discount) or divided into 10 monthly installments. **Tuition payments are due by the 1st of each month, August through May.** *Failure to pay monthly tuition by the 10th of each month will place your child's enrollment at risk.* It is imperative that families in financial distress communicate with the Office Manager or Director in order to create a financial plan that is mutually beneficial. Failure to make payments/communicate will result in your child's unenrollment at GCA.

Only Full Care Student tuition is due by the 15th of each month, and late/non-payment will place your child's enrollment at risk.

Scholarship applications are available from GCA Office when families are in need. They are not guaranteed, nor can they be applied to past due balances.

All tuition payments are non-refundable. Because of budgeting and staffing needs, no tuition credit or make-up days can be given for a child's absences, with one exception (during the school year only), **one time a year**, the equivalent of one half of one week of a child's tuition may be credited if a child misses an entire week of school and ***a two week advance notice is given***. A detailed tuition schedule may be found online and is included at the end of the handbook. Families with a balance at the end of the school year will not be eligible for reenrollment until the balance is paid, and student records will not be released until the balance is paid.

School Year tuition for students enrolling after the start of the school year is prorated for the first month then follows the regular monthly rate.

Drop-In Care: Parents who wish to bring their children to school on a day they do not normally attend may do so provided space is available. Parents must make arrangements with the office staff and pay the \$50 fee *in advance*. The drop in rate covers the hours from 8:30 am – 5:30 pm. Care extended beyond these hours is charged at a rate of \$3.00 per half hour.

Holiday Care: Holiday Care (i.e. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break) 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. is available at a daily rate of \$50 on an as-needed basis and subject to availability. Care extended beyond these hours is charged at the rate of \$3.00 per half hour. A two-week notice and pre-payment are required. *No refunds for holiday care will be given after the Friday before the holiday because the number of teachers needed to maintain a safe ratio will already have been determined and scheduled.*

Transition Care: *Transition weeks are the three separate weeks during the summertime before, between, and after our summer sessions.* Parents must make arrangements with the office staff and pay the \$50 per day fee *in advance*. This rate covers the hours from 8:30 am – 5:30 pm. Care extended beyond these hours is charged at a rate of \$3.00 per half hour.

DISCOUNTS

Parents who wish to pay for the full school year in advance will be eligible for a 5% discount on tuition per child. Payment must be received by September 1, 2015 to qualify for this discount.

Families who enroll multiple children will pay full tuition for the oldest child and receive a 10% discount for each additional child.

We offer discounts for **FULL CARE** if your child will be attending five days per week year round and/or most holidays and transition weeks, you may benefit from these discounts. The full care rate is revised every new school year. Please consult the Office Manager for a detailed explanation.

WITHDRAWAL and REFUNDS

Parents who wish to withdraw their child (ren) from Grace Crossing Academy must notify the Director in writing two weeks in advance. **Telling the teacher does not qualify as notification.** Parents are responsible for tuition throughout the entire notice period. Partial month tuition will not be refunded.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Grace Crossing Academy operates year-round, Monday through Friday. School year hours are 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. except for holidays, transition weeks and summer sessions. Hours for holidays, transition weeks, and summer sessions are 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. The following information applies to the 2015-2016 school year.

Regular Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Every student must be signed in and signed out by the parent, legal guardian or designated emergency contact. This person must be 18 or older. Children may be dropped off in their classrooms between 8:20 and 8:30; as soon as the teacher is available (no child may be left in a classroom without a teacher present). At 2:30, students will be released to parents/legal guardians and adults who have been designated on the GCA Emergency Card. See below for dismissal procedures.

Extended Care: Early Drop-off and Stay n' Play

Extended Care is intended to provide safe supervision of children whose parents must routinely drop off their students prior to 8:20 a.m. or pick up their students after 2:30 p.m. Extended Care fees must be paid in advance for children who regularly participate.

- **Early Drop-Off: 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.** – Breakfast (such as cereal, cereal bars, fruit, and other foods that do not need to be heated) will be provided to students arriving by 7:30 a.m.
- **Stay n' Play: 2:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.** – Our goal is to provide a safe, active environment for children to learn important social skills and have fun after a full academic day. Children will have the opportunity to play, explore, create, and learn from other children in various developmental stages. Typical activities include playground time, story time, centers, games, and simple crafts. Snacks will be provided.

Drop-in Extended Care and Late Fees

Drop-in childcare is available for enrolled children who do not regularly utilize the extended care program for a fee of \$3.00 per half hour. To eliminate miscommunication and allow for planning,

parents must contact the office in advance when they will be utilizing drop-in extended care. **Children not picked up in a timely manner at the close of school will automatically be placed in extended care, and parents will be charged the drop-in childcare fee.**

Late child pick-up from extended care incurs an initial charge of \$5, then an additional \$5 for each 15 minutes or portion thereof. This money goes into a fund for the school. Checks are accepted for this time of the day.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A car line is available for all parents who wish to participate. The following guidelines are intended to protect your child.

- Dismissal will begin at 2:25 pm and end at 2:45 pm.
- Each family will receive two GCA Car Rider placards. A placard **must** be displayed in the windshield on the right side of the vehicle when you pick up your child. ***We will not release your child to anyone who is not on your child's emergency card without your prior written consent.*** Anyone who is not the parent or regular driver and anyone who does not display the placard in the window of his or her vehicle will be asked to park and come inside to sign their child out while we check for authorization and driver's license. Children will not be released to a minor. Your cooperation in this is greatly appreciated as your child's safety is our number one concern.
- Please be patient and remain in your vehicle until you reach the horseshoe driveway. The line should move quickly if everyone follows the rules.
- **Please do not exceed 10mph in the drive way** and do not back up your vehicle in this area.
- Form a single line **along the right curb** in the horseshoe driveway in front of the school. Please pull forward past the awning (unless it is raining) to make room for other cars along the curb.
- Please pay attention to all signs, cones, and signals made by the staff members.
- Please stand outside your vehicle at the curb. A staff member will bring your child (ren) to you. Please do not leave your vehicle.
- Quickly but *safely* buckle in your child(ren).
- Please leave the horseshoe as soon as possible, but for the safety of all children and parents, do not drive around a stopped vehicle in the horseshoe, unless directed by a staff member.
- **THE CAR LINE IS A CELL PHONE FREE ZONE.**

Parents who do not wish to participate in the car line may **park in a parking space** and come to the **first door on the west side of the building** facing the parking lot to pick up their children directly from the Great Room. Please observe the handicap parking signs.

REQUIRED ITEMS

Please bring a full-sized backpack or suitable diaper bag for infants equipped with the following items to school with your child every day:

- **Nutritious lunch:** Each student must bring his or her own lunch and drink in a lunch box clearly marked with his or her name. Please include a "freezer pack" to keep cold foods cold. Please help us in promoting good health and nutrition. An appropriate lunch may include fresh or dried fruit, fresh vegetables, cheese, peanut butter** or meat sandwiches, dry cereal, and/or fruit juice

or milk. Please limit sugary foods and avoid carbonated and caffeinated beverages. Microwaves and refrigerators are not available for children ages two and older.

- **Extra clothes:** Please provide a shirt, shorts/pants/skirt, underwear, and socks in a plastic bag. For ages three and up, extra clothes should meet the uniform requirements; please check regularly so the correct size stays in your child's backpack.
- **Necessary rest-time items:** Each child must bring a rest mat and cover at the beginning of the school year. These items will be stored in the classrooms and sent home weekly for washing. Children may also bring a blanket and, if necessary, a security item (pacifier, teddy bear, etc.) to help them rest more easily. *Pre-K students do not rest for an extended period of time. Please do not send more than a simple mat with cover. Pillows, blankets, and security items are not necessary and take up valuable storage space. Kindergarteners do not need a rest mat.*
- **Sweater or jacket:** Weather-permitting, children will be taken outside to play on a daily basis. On cool days, please bring a sweater or jacket for your child. Please make sure to label it with your child's first name and last initial.
- **Infants and toddlers:** Infants and toddlers require diapers and formula and/or baby food. Cloth diapers are only allowed for use in our Infant 1 and Infant 2 classrooms. It is a good idea to send a familiar blanket from home if the child is over 12 months. We are unable to put blankets and soft bedding in the cribs of infants under 12 months. A warm sleeper is more suitable for that age. The State of Texas has eliminated swaddlers and sleep sacks for use with infants in school. We wash all infant items in Ecos detergent (hypoallergenic), but you are welcome to provide your own sheets if you feel more comfortable doing so. Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to feed their infants in our nursery and/or provide breast milk to be fed in their absence. Gliders are provided for their use. A privacy screen will be provided upon request.

Please make sure your child's backpack, blanket, and each item inside are clearly marked with your child's first name and last initial, and, although most school supplies will be covered under the supply fee, check with your child's teacher to see if anything else will be required for his or her class.

**If we are informed a student in your child's class has a serious allergy to foods such as peanut butter, we will ask that you not send these foods in your child's lunch. (See ALLERGIES.)

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. GCA prohibits swearing or cursing in our facility.

Threatening staff, children or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. GCA has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

GCA must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. If you would like to go to their website it is:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/child_care_standards_and_regulations/

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). **Parents who fail to sign in or out may be charged a \$5 penalty for each occurrence.** Signing In and out is a state of Texas requirement. Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of GCA is not permitted to take children home from our center.

In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home. GCA staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use at naptime and an item brought for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher when the class has Show & Tell time.

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate in writing or by email any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to the Director.
- Pick up and read the notices and information in your child's back pack and/or posted in the classroom, in the office, Remind101 or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled meal times and make sure your child arrives in time to be included.
- Please do not allow your child to bring gum or candy to the classroom.
- Periodically check out your child's supply of extra clothing, making sure it is clean, still fits, and is appropriate for the season.

CUSTODY SITUATIONS

GCA does not get involved in custody disputes. GCA will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.*

With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, GCA has the right to terminate care.

VISITORS

Parents and family members are invited to attend our all-school chapel on Wednesdays and are welcome to visit their child(ren)'s classroom any time. For the safety of our students **all** visitors are required to enter through the front doors and check in at the front office. They must present a valid driver's license or other acceptable form of ID, sign the visitor log, and wear a visitor badge at all times. No child will be released to anyone other than a parent/legal guardian or an adult pre-approved on the GCA Emergency Card.

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday with his or her class, please coordinate with your child's teacher and the administration in advance to be sure you know how many children are in the class and that the time and date do not conflict with a planned activity. Cookies and cupcakes are acceptable, but please accommodate for the food allergies in your child's class and make an effort to avoid chocolate, red dye, and excessive sugar. *Please do not bring candles.* Party invitations may be sent home provided each member of the class receives one.

GUEST SPEAKERS/SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the year we will invite a variety of guest speakers to the school to perform a demonstration for the children. These guests may include but are not limited to community helpers, such as police officers, fire fighters, and nurses; dentists; dairy farm workers; service dog trainers; and other people whose jobs may be interesting and educational for young children. A couple of times a year, we have "splash days" or "water days." This special event involving water play will be limited to the use of sprinklers, slip and slides and individual water dispensing handheld apparatus. GCA prohibits the use of

a pool of any depth. State mandated ratios are followed for this special activity. Parents have the right to request an alternate activity for their child. General permission is granted in the enrollment paperwork, but notice will always be given with enough time for the parents to opt out.

Notice will be given at least 48 hours prior to each event. Participation is voluntary, and parents may request an alternate, supervised activity for their children.

IMMUNIZATIONS & TB TESTING

Grace Crossing Academy requires all students to be immunized according to state guidelines. Current immunization records must be provided to GCA upon enrollment. It is the parents' responsibility to keep these records updated. Parents opting not to immunize their children must provide an acceptable statement or affidavit that meets the standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Tuberculosis testing requirements are set by the county health department. They are not required at this time but could be required in the future.

GCA will only require testing and immunizations of Teachers as mandated by the Montgomery County Health Department. TB testing is not required at this time.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

Grace Crossing Academy requires all students to be screened for hearing and vision problems according to state guidelines. When your child turns **four**, please have him/her screened and submit a copy to GCA.

ILLNESSES

Any child who has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher by mouth, vomiting (one time or more), diarrhea (two or more episodes in a 24-hour period), or other symptoms of illness will not be admitted to class. If a child becomes ill at school, he or she will be separated from other students (for his or her and other students' protection) and must be picked up immediately/within one hour, by a parent/guardian or an adult designated on the GCA Emergency Card. In the event of *severe illness or injury* or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, GCA may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense. Symptoms for which a child may be sent home include but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Profuse colored nasal discharge
- Reddened or discharging eyes
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Constant coughing, sneezing, or wheezing
- Rash, sore throat, or abdominal pain
- Injury

For the health and safety of all children, please do not return your child to school until she or he is fever and symptom-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.

Students who have been diagnosed with one of the following childhood communicable diseases will require a doctor's note to return to school:

- Chicken Pox
- Measles
- Mumps
- Whooping Cough

- Pneumonia
- Hepatitis A
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Impetigo
- Roto Virus
- Hand, Foot, Mouth
- Ringworm
- Pinworms
- Scabies
- Scarlet Fever
- Viral Meningitis
- Strep Throat
- Pink Eye

Students who have the following condition must have a parent's note or doctor's note indicating the condition has been treated and is no longer contagious:

- Head lice

ALLERGIES

Please make sure you list all of your child's allergies on the GCA Emergency Card upon enrollment. We will take every precaution to prevent your child from coming in contact with the allergen(s). Please understand, however, that we do share space with the church, and we are not responsible for the food brought into the classrooms.

MEDICATION and EMERGENCIES

We prefer that medications be administered by the parent outside of school hours. However, in the event that medication must be given during the school day, it will only be administered to a child under the supervision of administrative personnel.

The Following Must Take Place:

- All prescription medication must be in its original container with the child's name and dosage, as prescribed by the child's doctor.
- All over-the-counter medication, including sunscreens, must have age-appropriate dosages clearly marked (in English) on the label. Over-the-counter medications without age-appropriate dosages will not be administered without written permission from the child's doctor.
- Parents must complete an authorization form prior to the medication being administered (you may find it online and bring it with you) and must deliver the medication in a zip-lock bag labeled with the child's name to the front office. The authorization forms are valid for only 30 days. **Never leave medication in child's backpack.**
- Medicine that has reached its expiration date will not be administered.
- It is the parent's responsibility to pick up the medication at the end of the day. We will not send it home in the child's backpack.

There is no registered nurse on campus. All GCA employees are trained in CPR and first aid. Staff members will document accidents and send home reports in a timely manner. In the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency, we will call 911 and contact the parent guardian or designated adult immediately.

GUIDANCE and DISCIPLINE

In order to maintain a classroom environment that is beneficial to all students, it is necessary for each child to practice appropriate behavior. Our goal is to teach children how to make good choices when interacting with their peers and adults, and our discipline will be positive and age-appropriate. Many discipline issues can be handled through good classroom management, but when dealing with inappropriate behavior becomes necessary, we will make every effort to gently redirect the child, modeling for him/her how to make better choices in the future. Ultimately, we

aim for each child to be able to self-correct and self-direct as she or he grows and becomes more independent. All discipline will be aimed at promoting our core value of respect—respect for oneself, for others, and for property.

In an effort to be consistent, the following strategy will be implemented when a child's behavior becomes a significant distraction from instruction and verbal correction ceases to be effective. Many factors must be considered, including but not limited to the age and attitude of the child, the seriousness and frequency of the offense, and the effect on the classroom or school environment. Then, the following techniques will be used, alone or combined, as deemed necessary:

- redirection
- counseling from the teacher or caregiver
- a brief “cooling off” or time-out period appropriate for the child's age limited to one minute per year of child's age
- sending student to front office for counseling by the administrator
- parent conferences

In some cases, when the administration feels a behavior or infraction, or a series of behaviors or infractions, significantly disrupts the educational and/or spiritual environment, a child may be shadowed, suspended, or expelled.

- *Shadowing* is the assignment of a caregiver for a child who behaves aggressively (i.e. biting) toward other children. The caregiver remains near the child at all times in order to redirect him/her and protect other children. In the event that shadowing requires the placement of an additional staff member, *the parents of the aggressor may be charged additional fees.*
- *Suspension* is a temporary dismissal of a child from school for behaviors that include but are not limited to hitting, kicking, biting, teasing, and other aggressive behaviors. Nonaggressive behaviors, including but not limited to persistently disobeying instruction and severely disrespecting classroom and school guidelines, may also lead to suspension. A period of suspension may range from 2 to 30 days, depending on the severity of the offense.
- *Expulsion* is dismissal from Grace Crossing Academy and is reserved for extreme cases when a variety of disciplinary actions has not positively impacted a student's negative behavior.
- Tuition is not refundable in cases of suspension or dismissal.

GRIEVANCES

We welcome open communication between parents and staff because we believe it is through open communication that issues are avoided and peacefully resolved. We will do our best to use the Biblical model for conflict resolution found in Matthew 18:

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

If you have a concern, we ask that you please use the following procedure:

- Avoid discussing the matter - in person, by email, or on social media websites - with those not directly involved.

In matters related to the classroom:

- Speak directly with the teacher about your concern privately, away from the children, and outside of class time.
- If the situation is not resolved, speak to the Director or Associate Director, who will schedule a conference with all parties involved in order to seek a reasonable solution.
- If the administration's solution is in violation of the policies set forth in this handbook, the matter may be presented in writing to the Committee of Shepherds, comprised of elders and ministers of Grace Crossing Church who will be the final authority. The matter may be addressed in a committee meeting or in a separate conference with a committee member.

In matters unrelated to the classroom:

1. Address the concerns directly to the Director or Associate Director.
2. If the administration's solution is in violation of the policies set forth in this handbook, the matter may be presented in writing to the Committee of Shepherds, who will be the final authority. The matter may be addressed in a committee meeting or in a separate conference with a committee member. Please schedule at least 24 hours in advance.

POTTY-TRAINING

Although *potty training is not a part of the preschool curriculum*, our staff will be happy to support you in your efforts. Because we know each child is different and develops at his or her own natural pace, we will not refuse admission of a child based solely on whether or not she or he is potty-trained. Please communicate your individual needs to your child's teacher, who will assist you in a reasonable manner. While we will not force a frustrated or distressed child to sit on the toilet, we will provide regular opportunities to go to the restroom and implement simple reward systems at the parent's request. Non-flushing potty chairs are not permitted.

BITING

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between childcare providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. When biting becomes a problem, GCA staff will work with parents to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS

GCA believes in the benefit of using real life pictures and videos in our educational program. Photos/videos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera. If parents choose to take pictures/videos of events held at our program, they may only photograph/record their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent. Please note: during certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs and Carnivals, photographs/videos may be taken; but are not to be posted on any social media site. If you wish for your child not to be photographed/recorded, you may want to remove them from these events.

CELL PHONES

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children; however, it is difficult to supervise children properly when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. As previously stated, we will also use Remind101 in case of emergency. Please help us stay in compliance with this new standard by not contacting

your child's teacher by his/her cell phone. Contact our office @936-442-5790 if you need to convey information regarding your child to the teacher.

CONFIDENTIALITY

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may inadvertently come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from GCA must remain confidential at all times. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If Conroe ISD closes its campuses due to hurricanes, flooding, or other crisis situations, Grace Crossing Academy will follow suit. Also, weather-related loss of electricity at our facility may make closing GCA necessary. We will make every effort to publish that information on our website and/or the front door of the school; if your child is in our care at the time power is lost, we will contact you to pick up your child. Please make sure we have an accurate contact number on file. We will also use Remind101 in emergency situations. Tuition will not be refunded in such situations; make-up days may be scheduled at the discretion of the Director.

FIRE and EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

In case of a small fire or gas leak in the building, children will be evacuated to the pavilion (more than 50 feet from the building), or church building, and parents will be called to pick up their children. In keeping with state-mandated safety guidelines, we conduct fire drills on a monthly basis and severe weather drills once every three months. In case of inclement weather, such as a tornado or hurricane, we move all children to interior classrooms away from glass doors and windows. In case of an intruder in the building or threatening individual in the area, we will implement lockdown procedures: all teachers will be instructed to close and lock classroom doors, and we will call 911. We follow Conroe ISD's lead with regard to school closures due to inclement weather or natural events, such as wildfires. (See INCLEMENT WEATHER.)

In keeping with state-mandated safety standards, we have put into place a plan for extreme emergency situations (i.e. major gas leak, explosion, or other catastrophe brought on by a natural event). Our number one priority is keeping the children in our care safe. Therefore, the Parc Woodland Apartments has agreed to allow GCA the use of their clubhouse. Our entire staff will facilitate the movement of all children to this location. We will walk there in coordination with the local fire department.

Parc Woodland Apartments
Clubhouse
245 FM 1488
Conroe, TX 77384
936-229-4187

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1 (800) 222-1222.

REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE

Every person, including GCA personnel, having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person is required by law to report to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or Children's Protective Services. The number for the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400. Timing and source for notification of the child's parents will be at the recommendation of DFPS or CPS. When a report of suspected child abuse is made in good faith, the reporting person is immune from any liability.

GCA employees, as part of required annual training hours, receive instruction about child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We receive newsletter and updates from Prevent Child Abuse, Texas. Information may be obtained from the following agencies:

Prevent Child Abuse, Texas
13740 Research, Ste. R-4
Austin, TX 78750
512-250-8438

www.preventchildabusetexas.org

The Children's Assessment Center
2500 Bolsover St.
Houston, TX 77005
713-986-3300
cachouston.org

GANG-FREE ZONE

As a licensed child care center, Grace Crossing Academy is designated as a gang-free zone. Be aware that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of GCA is a violation of sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

NOTIFICATIONS

This handbook applies to the 2016-2017 school year and following summer sessions and is subject to change. Parents will be notified of changes in writing. This handbook is intended to promote fairness and safety. If you have any questions about any of the above policies, do not hesitate to contact the school Director.

State-regulated Minimum Standards are available in our front office or online at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/Centers746.pdf. The local licensing office may be contacted at (936) 441-1775. Each year we are inspected by a representative of the DFPS. The most recent inspection report is always posted on the bulletin board in the foyer, and we welcome any questions regarding its contents. Again, we thank you for being a part of Grace Crossing Academy!

Fall 2016 – Spring 2017 Tuition Rates

AUGUST 22, 2016 – JUNE 1, 2017

The YEARLY tuition is divided into ten equal, monthly installments, regardless of the number of days the school is open during the month. Payment is due on the 1st of each month, August through May. Some discounts and fees apply (see below for more details). **Tuition for students enrolling after the start of the school year is prorated for the first month then follows the regular monthly rate.**

PROGRAM*	DAYS	YEARLY TUITION 2016-2017	PREPAID YEARLY TUITION 2016-2017	MONTHLY TUITION PAYMENTS	FULL CARE
Infant (up to 12 months)	M - F	\$6,100	\$5,795	\$610	1002
Toddler (12-23 months)	T Th	\$2,600	\$2,470	\$260	988
Toddler (12-23 months)	M W F	\$3,850	\$3,658	\$385	
Toddler (12-23 months)	M - F	\$5,950	\$5,624	\$595	
Two Years	T Th	\$2,400	\$2,280	\$240	938
Two Years	M W F	\$3,550	\$3,373	\$355	
Two Years	M - F	\$5,450	\$5,178	\$545	
Three Years	T Th	\$2,300	\$2,185	\$230	917
Three Years	M W F	\$3,400	\$3,230	\$340	
Three Years	M - F	\$5,300	\$5,035	\$530	
Pre-K / Four	M W F	\$3,700	\$3,515	\$370	957
Pre-K / Four	M - F	\$5,700	\$5,415	\$570	
Kindergarten	M - F	\$6,800	\$6,460	\$680	1062

	EXTENDED CARE COST		
	AM	PM	BOTH
T Th	46	99	146
M W F	66	140	205
M - F	112	240	352

* All ages are based on chronological age as of September 1, 2015, unless otherwise specified at the time of enrollment. **Tuition does not change on a child's birthday.**

+ In addition to tuition, the following fees are required:

- \$150 Enrollment Fee (\$100 for returning families), due upon enrollment
- \$100 Curriculum and Supply Fee, due September 1st and January 1st
- \$60 Diagnostic Fee (for Kindergarten only), due January 15th

^ This column represents a 5% discount for families who pay the year's tuition in full by September 1st (or the date of enrollment if after September 1st).

Families who enroll two or more children will pay full tuition for the oldest child and receive a 10% discount for each additional child. Those who do not pay up front will pay 10 equal payments unless the start date is other than the first day of school.

Regular school day hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Extended Care Hours are 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Please consult the Parent Handbook for more specific information.

12-Month Full Care Includes: 5 days per week - 6:30 am-6:30 pm, Summer and Holidays/Transition Care - 6:30 am – 6:00 pm

Holiday Care Policy: The GCA school year follows the Conroe ISD calendar for start date, holidays, and end date, with the exception of early-release days. Holiday Care is often available.

Please consult the Parent Handbook for more specific information. 2/5/2016 4:45 PM



Remind101 is a free, safe easy-to-use communication tool that helps GCA staff connect instantly with our parents.

Connect Freely

Parents can start using Remind today, for FREE, on any device. No commitments required. There is an app available for both Android and iPhones or simply receive a text message.

Instantly receive GCA messages as a text message!

GCA uses several forms of communication (Facebook, website, email), this text messaging service INSTANTLY alerts you with an important GCA message.

To receive messages via text, text @gcafamily to 81010. You can opt-out of messages at any time by replying, unsubscribe@gcafamily.

Trouble using 81010? Try this Remind number instead:
(936) 755-3720

WHO WILL SEE MY PHONE NUMBER?

No one, that's the beauty of Remind! Your account is not attached to your personal cell phone number or carrier. Phone numbers are always kept private so communication is 100% safe and secure.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

(Borrowed from Conroe ISD and Cy-Fair ISD)

WHO IS INVOLVED IN BULLYING?

The person who exhibits bullying behaviors (bully, perpetrator)

Characteristics: displays power in some form (size, popularity, athleticism, knowledge, number, etc.) thrives on feelings of dominance; lacks empathy; uses blame; does not accept responsibility; craves attention; may have a small network of friends; without intervention, could continue to exhibit bullying behaviors which may escalate to other types of antisocial or more aggressive behaviors.

The person who experiences the bullying behaviors (target, victim)

Characteristics: may lack social skills such as friendship and assertiveness skills; may be passive (withdraws appearing weak) or provocative (restless with pesky behaviors or taunts); may experience isolation, frustration, hopelessness or fear leading to inability to concentrate, loss of interest in school, and, in more severe situations, suicide or violence toward others.

A person may be involved as both – one who exhibits bullying behaviors and one who experiences bullying behaviors

Characteristics: high levels of depression; punishment and zero tolerance are not effective; needs one-on-one therapeutic model in order to break the cycle of bullying/victimization.

The person who observes or knows about the bullying behaviors (bystander, witness)

Characteristics: feelings of empathy yet seldom stepping forward; feels powerless to defend support the target; actions (not reporting, joining in, etc.) protect self from becoming a target; may begin to think the bullying behaviors are the ‘norm’; may feel guilt for not acting to stop the harmful behaviors; can successfully prevent or intervene if given instruction and practices intervention strategies (not join in, involve peers, assertive statements, report procedures, friendship and other social skills).

STUDENT STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Choose to not participate in bullying behaviors.
- Report any incidence of bullying to a teacher, administrator, or counselor.
- Practice skills and strategies to take a stand.
- Encourage your friends and classmates to take a stand against any bullying they observe.
- Take an individual stand.
- Be friendly toward another student that is a target of bullying.
- Be a friend to new or needy students.
- If you hear bullying, change the conversation or help the student being bullied walk away from the situation.

STUDENT STRATEGIES IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED

- Walk away with confidence, even though you may not be feeling it at the moment.
- Be calm.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- Use appropriate language.
- Do NOT argue or fight back.
- Have friends around and stay in safe places.
- Tell a responsible adult that you trust (parent, teacher, counselor, and administrator).

- Keep telling until the bullying behavior stops.

PARENT STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Teach your children to respect others and their differences.
- Model respectful behavior.
- Use the “teachable moments”. When watching TV, or witnessing an event in public that is clearly bullying, talk to your child about that incident. “How would you feel?” “What could you have done?” “Why is this not a good (nice) way to behave?”
- Let your child know that inexcusable behavior by others (other children or even adults) is NOT an excuse for their bad behavior.
- Teach empathy. “How do you think that person feels?” “Why?” “Would you want someone to treat you or members of your family or your friends that way?”
- Talk with your child about what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior when using communication and information technologies.
- Be aware of your child’s time on the computer and cell phone and the web sites he/she visits.

PARENT STRATEGIES IF YOU’RE CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

- Help him/her learn coping skills.
- Alert the school if it is happening on campus.
- Continue to monitor what is happening.
- Help your child understand the need to tell.
- Don’t let fear of retaliation keep you from reporting any incident.

IF BULLYING OR HARRASSMENT IS SUSPECTED AND/OR REPORTED

- School staff takes appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what has occurred. The specific steps of the investigation will vary depending on the nature of the allegations, the source of the complaint, the age of the students involved, and other factors including the availability of staff to investigate the complaint.
- The inquiry should be prompt, thorough, and impartial.
- If an investigation reveals that discriminatory action has occurred, a school should take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate any hostile environment and its effects, and prevent harassment from recurring.
- Appropriate steps to end harassment or bullying may include separating the accused harasser and the target, provide counseling for target and/or harasser, and/or taking disciplinary action against the harasser.

WAYS TO STAY BULLY FREE

 <p>Avoid Bullies</p>	<p>Be Assertive</p> 	 <p>Say "Stop it!" "Leave me alone!"</p>
 <p>Look & Act Confident</p>	<p>Stay Calm</p> 	 <p>Use Humor and "I" Messages</p>
 <p>Be Observant</p>	<p>Keep a Safe Distance</p> 	 <p>Join & Travel in a Group</p>
 <p>Tell a Friend or Teacher</p>	<p>Walk Away</p> 	 <p>If you're in danger, RUN!</p>

Acknowledgement of GCA Policies 2016-2017

I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or electronically access at www.gracecrossingacademy.net the Grace Crossing Academy Parent Handbook.

I have chosen to:

- Accept responsibility for accessing these documents by visiting the web address listed above or
- Receive a paper copy of these documents

I understand that these policies describe important information regarding Grace Crossing Academy. If at any time I have questions regarding these policies; I should consult the Directors.

My relationship with Grace Crossing Academy is voluntarily entered into and is subject to termination by me or GCA at will, with or without cause, at any time that either GCA or I believe such action is appropriate. Such termination shall be subject to all the policies relating to termination of services.

I agree to abide by all policies stated in the GCA Parent Handbook. I understand that I will be notified in writing of any changes in these policies. Any complaints, concerns, or grievances against Grace Crossing Academy will be made in writing and will be handled in a timely manner according to the GCA policies.

Parent Signature and Date

Parent Signature and Date

Child's Name

Child's Name

Child's Name