

Early Education
HANDBOOK



2024-2025

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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FAITH & PHILOSOPHY

Grow in Grace

Statement of Faith

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and by it all doctrine is established. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
2. There is one true God who is revealed in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. (Jn. 3:16, 16:7-15; Jn. 17)
3. Our Heavenly Father is Creator, Almighty, Eternal, and a God of love. (Gen. 1; Jn. 1; Gen. 17:1, 35:11; Deut. 33:27; Romans 1:20; Jn. 3:16,17; 1 Jn. 4:8)
4. Jesus is the Son of God. He was the Word made flesh who lived a sinless life. He was born of a virgin. Jesus died as our substitute for sin and was raised from the dead victorious over sin, the devil, and death. Jesus now reigns as Lord and Head of the Church. (Jn. 3:16; Jn. 1:1-15; Is. 7:14, Mt. 2:18-23, Rom. 6; 1 Peter 3:18; Rom. 4:25; Heb. 9:26; 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18)
5. Salvation from sin and death is provided for all mankind through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. We receive salvation by grace through faith. Our salvation provides for forgiveness, healing, authority over the devil, peace, and fellowship with God. (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-10; Eph. 1:7; Ps. 103:3; Mk. 16:17; Jn. 14:27; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Jn. 1:3)
6. The Holy Spirit works to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to guide believers in truth. We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with believers being filled with the Spirit, empowered to live for Christ, and manifesting the gifts of the Spirit. (Jn. 16:7-13; Acts 1:8, 2:4; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12)
7. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture each representing unique aspects of God's nature, and together providing a complete picture of God's will for the family. Within this model, children are best positioned to grow and excel in every area of life (Gen. 1:27, 2:18-25; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6; Eph. 5:22-33). God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other and that there should be no sexual intimacy outside of or apart from marriage between a man and a woman (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4).
8. We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created each person as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27).

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior. Since Grace Academy is a ministry of Abundant Life Center, the church board of Abundant Life Center will be the final authority in determining the purposes, values and practices within the purview of the school's educational mission, including all policies, curriculum, content, and disciplinary standards.

Who We Are

Grace Academy is a ministry of Abundant Life Center. The vision of Abundant Life Center is *fruitfulness for the glory of God by sowing God's Word to our hearts and our lives to the world*. One way we seek to fulfill this vision is by providing Christian Education to our local community. Learn more about our church on our website at www.abundantlifectr.com.

Why We Are Here - Christian Discipleship

I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. John 15:5, 8

Christian Discipleship is not separate from an academic education but rather gives purpose to it. Knowing and fulfilling God's will for our lives should be the strongest desire and highest pursuit for every Christian. Therefore, **we are here to help parents foster within their children a desire to know God and to equip them to fulfill His will for their lives.**

Christian Philosophy

Proverbs 22:6 says, *“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* This Biblical mandate God gave to all parents. We desire to partner with parents to assist them in this training process. We consider the *parents' involvement* a vital component in ensuring their child has a positive and successful educational experience.

In preschool, we introduce several important foundational concepts of learning and character. Beginning in kindergarten, the classroom instruction transitions to focusing more on *Christian discipleship* where we partner with Christian parents to ensure consistency of life and learning.

We strive to create an environment where children can develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. All classroom instruction is taught through the lens of a Biblical worldview where God's Word, the Bible, is the basis of all truth and the foundation from which all learning begins.

Educational Philosophy

We believe that if children are not taught to look for and see God in every area of life, their perspectives on life will lack faith that God is relevant to every area of life. Therefore, our goal is to teach every subject through a biblical worldview; whereby, children will interpret all matters of life in light of the truth of God's Word, developing a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ.

Expectations of Grace Academy:

- Grace Academy will provide qualified teachers and staff.
- Grace Academy will provide a learning environment conducive to the age-appropriate needs of the students.
- Grace Academy will communicate regularly with parents regarding their child's performance and be available for consultations with parents throughout the year.

Expectations of Parents:

- Parents will abide by the policies set forth in the Student & Parent Handbook.
- Parents will maintain open communication with the school regarding any questions or concerns.
- Parents will participate in school activities such as field trips, fundraisers, and other events.
- Parents will pay tuition and fees on time.

Expectations of Students:

- Students will abide by the policies set forth in this manual and those established in the classroom by the teacher.
- Students will behave in a respectful manner towards the staff, other students, and the facility, and also will be a supportive and positive influence.
- Students will participate in class discussions, school activities, and field trips.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions Policy

All students seeking admission to Grace Academy will be evaluated on the basis of their enrollment application and entrance assessment (if applicable) to ensure compatibility with our educational programs. Enrollment for new families will begin after re-enrollment for current families. After enrollment opens for new families, applications will be primarily processed in the order in which they are received, along with the application fee. New families should have reviewed our school's COVID Operational Plan and our Health and Safety Plan from our website prior to submitting an Online Inquiry.

All new students and families will be enrolled on a probationary period until the end of the First Quarter (mid-October) to ensure they can meet the behavioral and class expectations. If at the conclusion of, or at any point during the probationary period, a student or family is unable to meet these expectations, the Director will meet with the parents to determine the appropriate course of action.

Preschool

Our preschool classes operate much like a regular classroom with age-appropriate instruction and play. We introduce several important foundational concepts of learning and character. Compatibility with our preschool program necessitates that preschool students are potty-trained. We realize that at these ages, accidents may happen on occasion. However, we are not equipped to handle the needs of non-potty-trained children on a regular basis.

Transitional Kindergarten

Our transitional kindergarten (TK) class bridges the path between Preschool and Kindergarten by providing the gift of time that will help children build a stronger foundation for success in elementary school.

Our TK class is for kindergarten-age children (5 years old) who could benefit from the gift of an extra year to further grow and develop. Students will be taught English Language Arts, Math, Handwriting, Science and/or Social Studies, Bible, and enrichment classes daily. This class may be ideal for children who are young (summer birthdays), or who need additional academic, emotional, social, or speech development. This class is a level between Preschool and Kindergarten.

Since they are kindergarten-age children, they are eligible for access to learning support services such as speech and Title 1 reading or math support. These students are also eligible for public transportation from their local school district.

Admissions Procedure:

1. *Online Inquiry* - Prospective families should submit an online inquiry from our website. The school will then contact the family to schedule a tour of the facility. If families want to pursue enrollment after the tour, they should submit an Online Application.
2. *Online Application* (link on website) along with:
 - Birth Certificate (photocopy)
3. *Entrance Evaluation/Testing*
 - *Preschool* – Prospective preschool students who have summer birthdays (June-August) may be required to have an entrance evaluation to ensure readiness for our preschool program. The school also reserves the right to require entrance evaluations for any new preschool students if deemed necessary. Preschool families are not required to have a family interview.
 - *Transitional Kindergarten* - Prospective TK students will be required to have entrance testing to ensure readiness for our TK class. The school also reserves the right to require entrance evaluations for any new preschool students if deemed necessary.
4. *Verification Emails* will be sent to families communicating the status of their enrollment. Upon acceptance, parents will be required to complete the online enrollment packet.

Notice of Non-discriminatory Policy as to Students

Grace Academy admits students of any race, gender, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to 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, gender, color, nationality, and ethnic origin in administration of its admission policies, educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school programs.

Community Life Standards

Every community or group of individuals has rules, regulations, and standards which define and govern them. The guidelines in this handbook serve to define Grace Academy, minimize distracting behaviors, and provide a structure within which the individual can feel secure and accepted. Persons joining a group need flexibility and a willing spirit to adhere to the customs of that community. The notion of balancing our individualism with a given community's standards is both an important Biblical principle and a social imperative which will follow us through our lives. Members of Grace Academy abide by standards that govern behavior.

The purpose of this handbook is to delineate the guidelines and principles which help define Grace Academy. Our obligation to the larger community outside the school is to well represent the Savior and the school. Conduct by families we covenant together with (students, parents/other direct representative) which does not conform to the spirit of these guidelines, even if off-campus or after-hours, may impact an individual's opportunity to remain a student at Grace Academy. Our ultimate goal is not simply conformity, but for our students to take on a spirit of willingness to serve the needs of others.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal from Grace Academy requires written notification to the school at least two weeks prior to the student's last day. Tuition payments are required until the withdrawal is complete. Refunds may be made for overpayments as long as proper notice was given. If no proper notice was given, the school reserves the right not to give refunds. In the event of an extenuating circumstance, the director reserves the right to work with the parents regarding payments and refunds.

FINANCIAL

Tuition and Fees (FACTS Management Company)

Parents will setup a FACTS payment plan when enrolling their student online for the next school year. All payments must be made through the FACTS Management Company. Families may choose to either pay annually, semi-annually, or monthly (10 monthly payments – August – May). Tuition payment will be made via ACH debit. A late fee will be assessed for each returned or late payment.

Lunch Buddies (Preschool only)

Our Lunch Buddies program runs from 11:30am-12:30pm. This time allows preschoolers to have lunch together followed by additional play and/or instructional time. Children need to bring a packed lunch not requiring the use of a microwave.

For planning and budgeting purposes, it is expected that a child who enrolls in the Lunch Buddies program remains in the program for the duration of the year. However, if circumstances arise where the school needs to remove a child from the program, the school will communicate directly with the parents. If parents choose to withdraw a child from lunch buddies, at least two weeks' notice must be given, otherwise, parents will be required to pay for an additional month.

Support Service Fees

If any TK students require any learning modifications, there may be additional fees for materials and/or individualized instruction. The school will communicate with the parents regarding any student support services.

Field Trips

All field trips will be billed separately to families through FACTS.

Grace Academy Financial Aid

TK students are eligible for school financial aid. Financial Aid will be prioritized for re-enrolling families. Grace Academy's ability to offer financial aid may vary from year to year. A family's submission of a Grant and Aid application through FACTS is not a guarantee that any financial aid will be received from the school. **Families should contact the school prior to submitting a FACTS grant and aid application to find out if any financial aid will be offered that year.**

FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment conducts the financial need analysis for Grace Academy families. Families applying for financial aid will need to complete an application and submit the necessary supporting documentation to FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment.

Once an online application has been completed, the following information will need to be sent to FACTS to complete the application process:

- Copies of your most recent Federal tax forms including all supporting tax schedules.
- Copies of supporting documentation for Social Security Income, Welfare, Child Support, Food Stamps, Workers' Compensation, and TANF.

All supporting documentation can be uploaded in PDF format online. Documentation can also be faxed to 866-315-9264 or mailed to the address below. **Please be sure to include the applicant ID on all faxed or mailed correspondence.**

FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment
P.O. Box 82524
Lincoln, NE 68501-2524

If you have questions or concerns about the application process, you may speak with a FACTS Customer Care Representative at 866-441-4637.

Financial Aid Usage

- If a TK student receives a scholarship from a third-party organization (Crispus Attucks, House of Hope, etc.) after having already been awarded financial aid from Grace Academy, the Grace Academy financial aid may need to be returned in total or in portion IF the amount of the third-party scholarship exceeds the amount of financial aid awarded to the student since the scholarship would count as income.
- If scholarships come in for a student whose tuition is already paid in full, that scholarship will be held until the following school year.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

Our expectation is for students to arrive on time every day. We know that illness or family circumstances sometimes make this impossible. However, we encourage parents and students to treat school attendance as a serious matter being considerate of the teachers and other students in the classroom.

“On time” means students arrive by 9am. Please allow enough time for students to use the bathroom at school prior to arriving in their classroom. Arriving late can be disruptive to morning routines.

For *unplanned absences* (such as illness), parents are responsible to call or email the school office by 8:30 am if their son or daughter will be absent that day.

Additionally, if parents do not call or email the school office ahead of time, parents must submit an **Excuse Card** (see below) within 3 days after the student returns to school for all absences, early dismissals, or late arrivals. This will help with the tracking and record keeping of student attendance.

Phone – (717) 430-6087

Email - sjoffice@graceacademyofyork.com

Excuse Cards

Excuse Cards provide a signed, written explanation for all absences, early dismissal requests, and late arrivals. Excuse Cards are available in the school office if needed. Electronic Excuse Cards may be submitted online through your FACTS Family Portal (Family Portal>School>Web Forms>Excuse Card).

Pre-Approved Absences

For all Planned Absences, parents must complete a *Pre-Approved Absence Request form*, available in the school office or on your FACTS Family Portal (Family Portal>School>Web Forms>Pre-Approved Absence Request Form). Please submit the completed form at least **two weeks** prior to the date of the requested absence. This allows teachers time to plan accordingly.

Excessive Absences or Late Arrivals

In the event a student is absent for more than 7 days, or has more than 3 late arrivals, the school may request a conference with the parents to discuss the matter further.

Early Dismissals

Parents must notify the school office at least **2 weeks** in advance for all early dismissals. Parents who fail to do so must submit an Excuse Card (in person or electronically) to the office within 3 days after the student returns to school. Excused early dismissals would include dental, medical, or other important appointments. Before leaving, the parent must sign out the student at the office. Any work that is missed during the absence must be made up. If an early dismissal is scheduled less than 2 weeks ahead of time, parents need to notify the school in a timely manner.

Pre-Approved Absence Request

For Office Use Only: Date Received: _____ FACTS SIS Parent Notified Teacher Notified

Return completed form to the school office at least **two weeks** before the proposed date of absence. Final arrangements for travel should not be confirmed until approval for the absence has been received.

SECTION 1: Parent(s) complete this section

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____ Today's Date: _____

Date(s) of Requested Absence: _____

Reason(s) for Request for Student's Absence (K-12: Include specific places to be visited and planned activities for educational purposes):

SECTION 2: Parent Signature

We have read the school policy and guidelines and are aware of the responsibilities, which we have assumed. We further agree to abide by the stipulations as set forth in the policy and guidelines.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

SECTION 3: Administrative Signature

Attendance Record to date: # of Absences _____ # of Pre-planned _____

Approved Prior Requests: _____

Not Approved Reason(s): _____

Administrative Signature: _____ Date: _____

K-12 families, it is your responsibility to communicate with teachers about all schoolwork.

Pre-approved Absence: Discretion is strongly advised in seeking approval for a pre-approved absence. While special events and trips could be advantageous for some students, they could also be detrimental for others. Absences for students who are just maintaining passing grades could have a serious negative effect on class studies and grades. Parents are asked to give this careful consideration before deciding on a trip or activity.

Students are expected to make arrangements with all teachers for any work that they will miss prior to a pre-approved absence. Students should make every effort to complete the work before returning. If this is not possible, then they will be expected to have the work completed in a timely manner.

Delays, Cancellations, & Closures

In the event of a school delay, cancellation, or early dismissal, parents will be notified via the Parent Alert text message system. In the case of inclement weather, school delays or cancellations will be posted on the WGAL and FOX 43 stations and websites.

Grace Academy will delay the opening of school or cancel school if weather conditions warrant. Parents will be notified using the FACTS Parent Alert system. Announcements will also be made on the websites listed above. In the event of an unexpected school closure after students have arrived at school (power outage, evacuation, etc.), parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the school will contact someone listed as your Emergency Contact. In the event the school is unable to reach someone, the school will take whatever precautions it deems necessary to ensure the safety of the students.

1-Hour Delay Schedule

Preschool – 10am-12pm. Lunch Buddies will run from 12-12:30pm.

- Full Day PK – 10am-3:00pm

TK – 9:45am-3:00pm.

2-Hour Delay Schedule

Preschool – 10:45am-12pm. Lunch Buddies will run from 12-12:30pm.

- Full Day PK – 10:45am-3:00pm

K-12 – 10:45am-3:00pm.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Hours of Operation

- *Preschool* - Half Day preschool operates from 9am-11:30am. Lunch Buddies runs from 11:30am-12:30pm. All day preschool runs from 9am-3:00pm.
- *TK* - Classes operate from 8:45am-3:00pm.

Arrival Procedures

- Drivers may either drop students off at the front entrance of the school or they may park and walk them up.
- *Preschool* - Doors open at 8:30am. If preschool parents desire to accompany their child to the classroom, please park in the parking lot.
- *TK* - Doors open at 8:30am. A staff member will greet at the front door. Parents may choose to drive up around the circle or walk up to the front door to drop off their child.
- If you know you will arrive late to school, please call the school at 717-430-6087 to let us know when you will arrive. Ring the doorbell upon arrival, and staff will let you in. The front door will be locked by 9:00am.

Dismissal Procedures

In order to ensure a safe and efficient pick up of your child after school, we request that all parents or other authorized adults display the Dismissal Sign provided by the school.

Dismissal Times:

- *11:30am - Half-Day Preschool students
- *12:30pm – Lunch Buddy Preschool students
- 3:00pm – Full-Day Preschool and TK students

**Mid-Day Dismissal will be conducted from entrance #6 (rear gymnasium door). Drivers will need to proceed straight past the playground and around the back of the church where they will wait in the car line. Students will be dismissed only to the first three cars for safety reasons. After those cars pull away, all cars are to pull forward where we will then dismiss students to the next three cars.*

3pm Dismissal - If any TK students will be riding school buses or vans, they will be escorted to their vehicles first. All other students will be dismissed on a first-come-first-serve basis by the staff person stationed at the front entrance of the school. You may wait in the car line which drives up to the front door, or park in the parking lot and walk up.

If you choose to wait in the car line, please follow signs in the parking lot to line up in the correct location. Once at the circle, please pull forward to the designated sign to accommodate cars behind you.

Student Pick Up Policy

Children must be picked up promptly at dismissal. A late fee of \$10/student will be charged for every 15 minutes beyond the dismissal time if there is a consistent occurrence of late pick-up.

Students will only be released to an authorized adult. Authorized adults will be identified as those displaying the Dismissal Sign provided by the school. If someone new will be picking up your child, please either give them one of the Dismissal Signs we provide or call to let us know ahead of time.

Transportation

Preschool– Parents are responsible for the transportation of their children.

TK– If parents desire to have their child(ren) transported to Grace Academy by their local school district, parents should reach out directly to their local school district to make this request. Local School districts are required to provide transportation, free of charge, if any part of their school district is within 10 miles of Grace Academy and if requested by the parents. For assistance with the process, please contact Grace Academy.

ACADEMICS

Curriculum

Our curriculum fulfills PA learning standards and utilizes resources based upon three core criteria:

1. *Competency* - Is it an effective method that will equip students to be competent in that subject area?
2. *Christian* - Is it in agreement with a Biblical Worldview?
3. *Continuity* - Is it able to be part of a comprehensive plan so that it provides continuity across multiple grades?

Preschool:

- *Creativity and readiness skills* through hands on sensory experiences
- *Language development* through a variety of interactive activities including singing, finger plays, and creative movement, as well as an introduction and reinforcement of phonics using the Zoophonics program
- Introduction to *basic alphabet and number concepts* through theme-based individual and small group instruction
- *Creative play and socialization* with an emphasis on sharing, caring, and interaction
- *Fine and gross motor skill development* with varied age-appropriate activities
- *Spiritual formation* through Bible stories, music, and interactive activities

Additional elements introduced in the PK4 class include:

- *Phonemic awareness, rhyming words, and opposites* reinforced through the phonics program
- *Mathematics* introduced through calendar activities, as well as a variety of hands-on activities; and problem solving, with a strong emphasis on using manipulatives
- *Handwriting* through the Learning Without Tears curriculum
- *Creative movement* through music and introductory sign language

Grading

*Preschool students will have progress reports twice a year.

TK students will have quarterly report cards. All students will have progress evaluations to assess their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, and social development. There will be parent/teacher conferences twice per year (fall and spring) for parents to review and discuss these details with the teacher.

Preschool evaluations will use the following assessment scale:

- C = Consistently demonstrates skill/concept
- P = still Practicing/working on skill/concept at school
- N = skill Not yet assessed

TK will use the following grading scale:

- O = Outstanding
- S = Satisfactory
- U = Unsatisfactory

Special Events

We will have special events throughout the school year designed to enhance the learning experience and encourage family involvement in the child's education. Some of these events include a Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Celebration, Christmas Program, Easter Celebration, as well as events celebrating Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparent's Day. We will participate in a variety of field trips to fun and educational locations throughout the year, as well as invite special guests into our school to instruct about topics such as fire safety and oral hygiene. More specific details will be provided throughout the year.

Holiday Policy

As a Christian school, we promote Biblical truth. Therefore, we will not promote nor encourage any tradition that is not true or that is in opposition to God's word. God is the Creator of all seasons, and we love to celebrate all the wonderful and unique things that each season brings. We are not seeking to judge anyone's family traditions, but rather simply communicating to you the school's position regarding certain holiday traditions:

- *Halloween:* We recognize that some families choose to celebrate Halloween during the fall season. As a Christian school, we choose to celebrate all the exciting things that fall brings, but we do not celebrate Halloween. Therefore, please refrain from sending in snacks with ghosts, witches, or other Halloween-related figures. Candy corn, pumpkins, and other fall-related snacks are great! Please do not have your children wear apparel associated with Halloween.
- *Christmas* - Though there are many wonderful traditions at Christmastime, we do not celebrate traditions associated with Santa Claus. Though he is a fictitious character, we simply want to keep our attention on Jesus, who is real, and the real Reason we celebrate Christmas. Therefore, please do not have your children wear apparel associated with Santa Claus.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of learning. They allow students the opportunity to experience what they are learning about in the classroom. All students are expected to attend field trips as part of the school day. TK students will be marked unexcused if they miss a field trip unless otherwise approved by the director.

All field trip information will be communicated to families ahead of time. Parents must return the Field Trip Forms by the deadline to ensure the timely scheduling of field trips. All field trips are a separate expense and will be billed to parents through FACTS.

Parents are responsible for transportation to and from the field trip location. Most field trips will occur during the allotted time for normal school hours.

Lunch

All students staying for lunch will have about 30 minutes for lunch and must bring their own packed, nutritious lunches. Only water and fruit juices are permitted (no sweetened drinks – soda, etc.). Candy is highly discouraged and must be limited since sugar has a negative impact on student performance in the classroom. (No full-size candy bars, etc. are allowed.) Gum is strictly prohibited. Please do not plan to use a microwave.

Preschoolers have the option to enroll in the Lunch Buddies program, which runs from 11:30am-12:30pm.

Recess

Preschool & TK students will be permitted to play on the playground equipment within the fence. Students will be provided with additional equipment and games to utilize in designated recess areas outside. During inclement weather, students will utilize indoor facilities as they are available (multi-purpose room, classrooms). Students must adhere to all indoor/outdoor recess policies to ensure the safety of all staff and students.

Recess Cold Weather Guidelines

Research shows that children get little, if any, physical activity when recess is indoors. All efforts will therefore be made to ensure that children have access to outdoor recess, weather permitting. ***Therefore, please be sure to dress your children each day expecting outdoor recess.*** The following are cold weather guidelines for outdoor recess. *All temperatures below are based upon “feels like” temperatures at the time of recess.*



Indoor or Outdoor Recess:

- Above 25°– Full Outdoor recess
- 16-25°– May have abbreviated Outdoor Recess
- Below 15°– Indoor recess

Cold Weather Dress Code: Here are two great “*rules-of-thumb*” to keep in mind when dressing for colder weather:

1. *Wear layers* to accommodate fluctuations in temperature throughout the day.
2. Arms and legs must be covered below 60°.

Additional dress code guidelines:

- Below 60° - sweatshirt/light jacket/coat (increase thickness as gets colder)
 - *Ex. 55°= sweatshirt; 45°= sweatshirt +light jacket; or just a heavier coat*
- Below 40° - winter coat, head covering, and gloves/mittens (*recommend keeping a set at school to have on hand as needed*)

Keep in mind that it can get very windy on the hill where we are located.

To access the current local temperature including wind chill:

- Go to www.weather.com
- Type in our school's zip code (17402) and select “York.”
- Look at the current temperature for York.
- Look right below that current temperature to get “**Feels Like**” temp.
- That is the temperature that we will use to determine outdoor recess.

Guidelines are based on the [Pennsylvania Key standards and Caring for Our Children standards](#). The Pennsylvania Key (PA Key) works on behalf of the Office of Child Development & Early Learning (OCDEL).

SCHOOL LIFE

Health Services

1. In case of accident or serious illness, the school will seek to contact the parents first, followed by a contact listed on the Emergency Information Form. If the school is unable to reach anyone, the school will call the physician indicated on the emergency form and will follow his or her instructions. If it is impossible to contact this physician, the school may take whatever actions seem reasonable and necessary to care for the child.
2. First Aid services are given in cases of accidents or the onset of a sudden illness.
3. Parents need to notify the school in writing if there are updates to their child's health, such as vaccinations or the contraction of an acute chronic disease.
4. Children enrolling in grades TK must submit a copy of vaccine records and recent physical exam.
5. If your child is taking medication, medicine must be brought to the office. It must be labeled with the child's name, along with proper instructions on how and when to administer the medicine.
6. If a child has a fever, pink eye, lice, been put on antibiotics for an infection, or any other possible communicable health issue, there must be at least a **24-hour waiting period before the child returns to school**. Please contact your pediatrician for medical advice and notify the school. Children may return to school as soon as their health permits or the doctor gives permission.
7. A child with an extended illness should have work sent home if he/she is able to complete it. Please inform the school of this kind of situation. The school will do its best to work together in the best interest of the child.
8. COVID Precautions – Grace Academy continues to take into consideration guidance and recommendations from the York County office of Emergency Management, the PA Department of Health (DOH), the PA Department of Education (PDE), the CDC, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), as well as the input from our school's legal attorney and other medical professionals. We use a "symptom-based" approach to illnesses and symptoms. Any operational changes due to COVID will be communicated to parents in a timely manner.

Discipline

The goal of discipline is conscience formation according to God's Word. We want to motivate children to control their own actions – building in them the knowledge of right and wrong, as well as the understanding of God's pattern for blessings and the opportunity for redemption. We do this by instilling an understanding of

- **Right and Wrong:** Helping them connect good choices with good consequences, and bad choices with bad consequences.
- **Redemption:** Helping them see that, even after they made a bad choice, they can still be rewarded if they repent, change their behavior, and make better choices.

At the beginning of each school year and periodically throughout the year, the teacher will review class rules and expectations with the students.

In preschool, teachers will utilize an age-appropriate discipline system incorporating the above mentioned goals. Depending upon the severity of the behavior, there may be an immediate consequence – missing recess, communication with parents and/or the principal. This decision is at the teacher's discretion.

A teacher may send home a *Discipline Form* if the student's behavior warranted communication to the parent. A copy of this form is also sent to the main office. Please contact the teacher if you have any questions. If the frequency and/or severity of a child's behavior requires further actions, the following steps may be taken to address this issue:

- Teacher communication with parents/principal
- Student meeting with the principal
- Verbal communication between principal/parent
- Parent meeting with the principal
- Student suspension
- Expulsion from school

Dress Code

Dress Code Policy

The Biblical principles of Christlikeness, modesty, purity, obedience, and respect are the standards applied. As Christians, our goal is to glorify God in everything and to be an example to those around us. The dress code is designed to serve as a guide to students and their parents on the proper attire for our student body.

Parents and students have the primary responsibility to understand and adhere to the dress code. In all circumstances Grace Academy retains the final authority to determine, in its discretion, whether a student is in compliance with the dress code. The administration reserves the right to amend the dress code as needed to address new fads and styles.

Dress Code Standards for both Boys and Girls:

- Students are to be neat and well-groomed. All attire must be clean, modest, and appropriately sized – not too small or tight and not too oversized.
- Tops must be long enough to cover midriff and bottoms must fit appropriately at the waistline.
- Inappropriate writings or images are not proper classroom attire.
- Frayed and torn clothing is not proper classroom attire.
- Shoes should be worn at all times.
- Plastic shoes such as athletic slides and flip flops are not appropriate.
- Shoes must have heel straps or closed backs.
- Head coverings such as hats, scarves, and hoods (sweatshirts with hoods may be worn, but the hood may not be worn in the building), are not appropriate in the school environment.
- Sunglasses or dark glasses may not be worn inside the school building unless medically required.
- Hairstyles or colors that are extreme are not acceptable. Hair must be a natural color.
- Jewelry must exhibit wholesome messages and be non-distracting. No gaudy or bulky jewelry may be worn.
- Girls may wear earrings in the lower lobes of the ear. No other facial or body piercings may be worn. Boys may not wear any facial or body piercings.
- Gang-related apparel and accessories are not permitted at any school-related function.
- Cold-Weather: Students will be outdoors for recess, weather-permitting. Therefore, in an effort to protect the physical well-being of our students while outdoors in colder temperatures, please ensure that appropriate outerwear (coat, hat, gloves, etc.) is worn. Also, legs must be covered when the temperature is below 60 degrees.

Dress Code for Girls

In addition to the Dress Code Standards for Boys and Girls above, girls should follow the following guidelines:

Tops

- Tops may not be form-fitting.
- Tops cannot show undergarments or come off the shoulder.
- The shoulders of sleeveless tops must be at least the width of 3 fingers.
- Tops must be opaque (no sheer or ultra-thin fabrics).

Bottoms

- Pants must be loose fitting. Acceptable pants can be straight, boot cut, flare, trouser cut, as well as loose fitting dress pants.
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses must be no more than 4” above the crease at back of the knee.
- **Preschool and primary age girls should wear shorts under their skirts and dresses.
- *Leggings* may be worn as long as they are not a thin material that reveals the outline of undergarments nor made of a see-through color, AND must be worn with a top that is long enough to come below the buttock.
- For uneven hemlines, the shortest part of the hemline may be no more than 4” above the middle of the knee. Fabrics may not be sheer unless an appropriate slip is worn underneath; no undergarments may show.

Grooming

- Hair color should look natural.
- Regarding piercings, only pierced ear jewelry is appropriate for the classroom environment.

Dress Code for Boys

In addition to the Dress Code Standards for Boys and Girls above, boys should follow the following guidelines:

Tops

- Tops (collared or non-collared) must be neat, appropriately sized, and have at least short sleeves. Tank tops and cropped tops are not appropriate classroom attire.

Bottoms

- Pants must be appropriately sized and sit securely at the waist. Belts should be used if needed to satisfy this requirement.
- Shorts must be no more than 4” above the crease at back of the knee.

Grooming

- Hair should not cover eyes, and at its longest point hair must be above the collar.
- Boys may not wear any facial or body piercings.

Faculty & Staff

All of our faculty and staff are carefully selected and well qualified for their role. They are born-again Christians who are actively involved in their local churches and in the promotion of their Christian faith. They each have obtained their security clearances and are First Aid and CPR certified.

Volunteers

All volunteers working with children must obtain and submit a copy of their security clearances. If you would like to volunteer at school when needed, please submit a copy of your clearances to the school along with your Volunteer Form.

Facilities & Grounds

Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten students will be in Early Education campus, which operates out of the St. John Lutheran Church, located at 2580 Mt. Rose Avenue, York, PA, 17402. There are several classrooms that will be used for the dual purpose of Children's Church Ministry by the church and Grace Academy's early education classes. A gymnasium and fellowship hall are available for additional activities and events. Children will also have access to outdoor playground areas adjacent to the facility.

Emergency Procedures

Grace Academy has adopted the Standard Response Protocol Program from the "i love u guys" foundation which is based on five primary actions steps to take in emergency situations. For more information, please visit www.iloveguys.org. You may also request more information from the main office. Specific details of our emergency response protocol will remain confidential for safety reasons.

Child Protection Policy

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

Child Sexual Abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child under the age of eighteen and an adult when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult person or a third person. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced whether or not it is consented to by the child. Child sexual abuse is a felony (according to federal and state law).

Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Child sexual abuse as defined above.
2. Rape or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation.
3. Sexual conduct (such as offensive, obscene, or suggestive language or behavior, unwelcome touching or fondling) which is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another person.

Policies:

Staff Background Check: All Staff of Grace Academy must have the following clearances before hiring:

- State Criminal History Check
- Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse Check
- Federal Criminal History Check
- Mandated Reporting

Procedure for reporting suspected abuse or sexual misconduct:

If the employee or volunteer observes questionable or inappropriate behavior affecting students, or suspects abuse, the employee or volunteer should report it immediately to the school administration. The school administration will investigate the matter in a timely manner and determine if there are grounds to report the allegation to the Department of Human Services via Childline or to local law enforcement. The school administration will ensure communication with parents as deemed necessary throughout the investigative process. The allegation will thereafter be handled in accordance with the procedures described below.

Suspected Abuse:

If the school administration determines that the allegations of abuse are reasonable, the teacher who brought the allegation, along with a member of the administrative team, will call Childline together. The school administration will also notify the parents that Childline has been called. The Director or his designee will complete the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Form. All actions pertaining to a specific incident must be carefully documented utilizing the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse Form and any other means deemed necessary.

Sexual Misconduct:

If it is alleged that a Grace Academy staff member or volunteer has engaged in sexual misconduct, as previously defined, then the Director will direct that the staff member/volunteer to remove himself/herself from his/her current position. The staff member/volunteer may return to his/her previously held position after allegations have been cleared and upon approval by the Director.

The Director may contact local law enforcement regarding the matter to include professionally trained law enforcement personnel to aide in the investigation.

In cases where incidents of sexual misconduct are yet to be substantiated, which occur outside the realm of the school or school activities, the accused staff member/volunteer will be temporarily suspended from working at Grace Academy. The suspension will remain in effect until the alleged incident has been adjudicated to the satisfaction of School Administration.

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

Date of incident: _____

1. Name of Staff/Volunteer observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's Name: _____ Age/Date of Birth: _____

3. Date/Place of initial report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (give detailed summary with verbatim quotes):

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim: _____

6. Has the incident been resolved? Yes No

Explain: _____

7. List Witnesses (obtained written, signed statements if possible):

8. Call to victim's parent/guardian

Date/Time: _____ Spoke with: _____

Summary of conversation:

The following procedures will be performed as deemed necessary by the Director:

9. Call to local children and family service agency:

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with; _____

Summary of conversation:

10. Call to local law enforcement agency:

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with; _____

Summary of conversation:

11. Other Contacts: _____

Date/Time: _____

Spoke with; _____

Summary of conversation:

Signature of Individual Completing Form

SCHOOL/FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

We believe that the school is to be an extension of the home, not a substitute. Therefore, we seek to work closely with all parents to further enhance the child's overall growth and development. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the teacher or the director.

Communication

Weekly school communications will be emailed home from the school highlighting important information. Teachers may also send home periodic communications highlighting class-specific information such as assignments, field trips, and special events. Text communications may be utilized by the school when deemed necessary.

Each child will have a CLASS FOLDER/BINDER which will be used for direct communication between the teacher and the parent. At the younger levels, this folder will be collected each day by the teacher to add any communications, student work, or other information to send home.

Each family will have a FAMILY FOLDER which will be used for communication between the office and the parents. This colorful, plastic folder may be used for picture forms, fundraiser information, field trips, and other important information. These folders will be collected directly by the office staff, usually at arrival or dismissal time.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES will be in the fall and in the spring. These meetings allow the parents to view additional class work by the child, review their child's Report Card, and discuss any questions or concerns with the teacher. Teachers and the director are available for any additional consultations upon request.

Children's behavior and classroom performance can be greatly affected by life events, such as the death of a loved one, separation from parents, moving, etc. Please be sure to communicate to the teacher regarding any such events so that we can properly help your child if changes in their behavior arise.

Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF)

The PTF exists

- To *strengthen* the relationship between families and the school.
- To provide opportunities for parents to *serve* at the school by helping with event planning, special events, fundraisers, and other such needs as they arise.
- To utilize the unique *skills and talents* of our families for the benefit of the entire school community.

* The PTF President will be appointed by the Director. All additional PTF committee members must be approved by the director. Meetings will be held periodically throughout the year and will be communicated to the PTF committee by the PTF President.

Parent W.A.T.C.H. (*Warning Against Threats Corrupting Habits*)

Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits. 1 Corinthians 15:33

As Christians, our goal is to glorify God in everything we say and do and to be an example to those around us. Scripture also urges us to be watchful, to be on our guard, because the devil seeks to steal and kill and destroy our lives (John 10:10). Satan himself is even able to masquerade as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). We need to be sober-minded and watchful (1 Peter. 5:8). As the body of Christ, we are to encourage one another to live godly and upright lives and to help each other avoid traps set by the enemy. The Parent W.A.T.C.H. initiative is designed to further partner with parents in the identification of subtle threats to our training children in the ways of God.

We are not here to “police” the homes of our students or dictate what they do, watch, or listen to. However, when things impact the school environment, we will take the necessary steps to communicate with parents to ensure a safe and healthy environment. We invite parents to be "watchmen" at home in helping protect their children! Check out the website for more information.

Conflict Resolution

In the event that conflict arises involving parents and school staff, it is expected that all parties involved seek to resolve the matter directly with the other party(ies) in a Biblical manner (Matthew 18:15-19):

- Go directly to the person involved in a timely manner endeavoring to reconcile the matter.
- If the matter cannot be reconciled, bring it to the attention of immediate person in charge (teacher, principal).
- If no resolution can be reached, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Director to serve as a mediator in an effort to resolve the matter.