



Grace Christian Schools
(GCS)

*Parent-Student Handbook
2024-2025*

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GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

WELCOME

ABOUT GCS

We are very grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for His provision of this Christian school in Maricopa. We are thankful that He has led you to choose Grace Christian Schools as your school!

God has enabled and directed GCS to assist parents in leading their children to Jesus Christ and to build them up to serve Him according to the gifts and abilities He has given them.

This handbook is designed for both students and parents in the hope that it will provide basic information on the policies and procedures of the school. It is intended to be a readable guide containing important information concerning doctrine as well as school policies and procedures. You can access this and other information from the school's website at www.gcsmaricopa.org.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it handy for future reference. Revisions of this handbook will be made in the future. Thank you again for choosing GCS. May God bless you as we partner with you in educating your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!

Our Goal

Provide Christian education with strong academics supported by a biblical worldview that closely involves parents in their children's educational journey.

Our Mission

2 Peter 3:18 (LSB)

“. . . grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.”

Our Vision

To equip students with knowledge and biblical truths to develop them into Christian leaders who will positively and faithfully impact their communities and future generations.

Our History

GCS was established in 2023 as a Christian School committed to providing an exceptional Christ-centered education for our students.

Our Purpose

God has given the primary responsibility for teaching and training of young people to parents. The rationale for the existence of GCS is to assist parents as an extension of the Christian home, in providing an education that is thoroughly and distinctively Christ-based. It is our goal through teaching and training to prepare young people to function as individuals who can reason and relate all issues of life to the doctrinal foundation of the Christian worldview.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Core Values

Academic Excellence: We continually strive for academic excellence as Christ asks us to give our all for His glory. (Colossians 3:23) We want to prepare the students well for whatever the Lord calls them to do. We expect the students to have a positive outlook on learning and persist through challenges.

Biblical Truth: We not only want students to grow in knowledge and know God personally but equip them with foundational biblical truths that equip them to defend their faith and refute false teachings. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5 and Ephesians 6:10-18)

Biblical Worldview: The 66 books of the Bible, God's Word, is our authority in ALL areas, which includes education. A biblical worldview education looks at each subject through the lens of Scripture as our starting point. (Hebrews 6:13)

Discipleship: Children need to be trained in wisdom and the admonition of the Lord. We cannot assume that they are already experts on discernment and evangelism - they require biblical and academic training to be equipped for discipleship. (Proverbs 1)

Fruits of the Spirit: Those who belong to Christ are led by the Spirit and will exemplify love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and truth. (Galatians 5:22-23 and Ephesians 5:9)

Parent Partnership: The responsibility of educating children is given to the parents (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). Our school partners with parents to be an instrument to assist in providing a Christ-honoring education that is biblically, academically, morally, spiritually, and relationally sound.

We intend that each student, with the help of the Lord, at every stage of his or her development will be loved with Christ's love at GCS.

Education Philosophy

At Grace Christian Schools (GCS), we strongly believe that parents are the primary teachers of their children. Our four-day school week and periodic Family Faith Fridays are intentionally built into the school calendar to emphasize the importance of the family unit in developing strong spirituality and a family-first mindset.

GCS is dedicated to providing students with a quality, standardized education. Our highly qualified teachers and staff work hard to provide for the needs of each individual student. We understand that all children learn in different ways. Therefore, we continually monitor our curriculum, daily schedule, and specialties to support the needs of our students.

Our curriculum presents a Biblical worldview across all subject areas. Our staff is dedicated not only to the academic formation of the students but also to their spiritual formation. We partner with parents to teach God's truth and principles and how to apply them to our lives.

GCS has high expectations for each student and teaches there is pride in hard work. As our students strive for excellence, we teach that our failures are learning opportunities and challenges are a necessary part of growing. God created us with the desire to learn and the ability to grow in grace and knowledge daily.

We seek to grow children into strong men and women of faith that will be well-educated and self-confident. Our students will be prepared to embrace the truth of God's word and His instruction and not compromise in the face of adversity.

DOCTRINAL ISSUES

Statement of Faith

The Bible

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. Since we believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, the Bible is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17 | 2 Peter 1:20-2)

God

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(Genesis 1:1 | Deuteronomy 6:4 | Matthew 28:19 | John 10:30)

Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity of Christ (*John 10:33*); His virgin birth (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:35*); His sinless life (*Hebrews 4:15; 7:26*); His miracles (*John 2:11*); His vicarious and atoning death (*1 Corinthians 15:3 | Ephesians 1:7 | Hebrews 2:9*); His resurrection (*John 11:25 | 1 Corinthians 15:4*); His ascension to the right hand of the Father (*Mark 16:19 | Ephesians 1:20*); and His personal return in power and glory (*Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11-13*).

Human Condition

We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation because all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and that men are justified on the single ground of personal faith in Jesus Christ based on his all sufficient sacrificial death for our sins. It is only by God's grace through faith alone we are saved.

(John 3:16-19; 5:24 | Romans 3:23 | Ephesians 2:8-10 | Titus 3:5)

Life after Death

We believe, according to His promise, that Jesus will physically return for His people. This truth has been revealed to provide the believer comfort and encouragement in his life.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Sanctity of Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

(Genesis 1:26-27 | Psalms 139:13-16)

Gender, Human Sexuality, and Marriage

We believe that God has uniquely and immutably created us male and female. We believe, these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God, and that rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We affirm that God's plan and benevolent intentions for human sexuality are found exclusively within the context of marriage between one man and one woman and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that context. We affirm the goodness of sexuality in the context of marriage, the importance of purity, fidelity, and the sacredness of marriage.

(Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:23-24 | Matthew 19:4-5 | Mark 10:6-9)

Christian Living

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

(Romans 8:13-14 | 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19-20 | Ephesians 4:30; 5:18)

For a comprehensive Statement of Faith, please click here.

Policy on Denominational Differences

Grace Christian Schools is an affiliate of Grace Community Church which is a non-denominational Christian church. This school believes all genuine Christians are one in Christ. It is our desire to remain united in the salvation and love of Christ. Nonetheless, the school is aware that believers have denominational preferences. Since it is our desire to maintain this position and to do so in all fairness it is necessary to inform all parents and staff that those families falling outside of the Statement of Convictions will be warmly received; however, we will not be altering our teachings to accommodate differences in denominational beliefs.

Pledges

We begin each day and Wednesday's chapel service with worship and a pledge to the Christian flag and the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States, and the pledge of allegiance to the Bible.

"I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe."

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

"I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God."

School Declaration

I go to Grace Christian Schools, a school where God is present.

I see others through my Father's eyes.

I love God with all of my heart, with all of my soul and with all of my mind.

I love my neighbor as much as I love myself.

I can say "No" to ungodliness and I am eager to do what is good.

I listen and obey the first time, not the second time.

I am made in the image of God, my Creator, who loves me more than I can fathom.

I know that with God, all things are possible!

Prayer

Prayer is a vital component in our program of Christian training. Students are trained in the importance of establishing a consistent daily prayer life. Teachers lead the students to understand how God is central to all of life and that continual communication with Him is essential to consistent Christian living.

Students are trained in the habit of prayer throughout the school day: before beginning the responsibilities of each day, before eating lunch, for special needs, and to give God praise for all things. Students are encouraged to make their requests known to God and are given opportunities to pray and to share their needs with others.

Chapel/ Bible Class

Each Wednesday, GCS devotes time for Chapel, a time of singing, worship, and a short devotional or message by the GCS pastor or other special guest speaker. Speakers range from missionaries, athletes, pastors, teachers, and parents. All have one goal: to properly lift up the name of Jesus and point students toward Him. Parents are welcome to attend and participate in all chapel services.

Affiliation and Accreditation

To keep tuition costs down, we have chosen not to pursue accreditation for our elementary level program; however, if and when we choose to add a high school program, we will likely pursue accreditation for those grade levels.

Organization and School Governance

The Board of Directors comprises 4-7 members and elders from the church and meets monthly. Items that need to be addressed or added to the agenda may be done so by contacting the Principal or Board President. All requests must be submitted in writing at least 7 days prior to the meeting.

ADMISSIONS

GCS recognizes that teaching of spiritual truth requires much reinforcement from the home and church. Therefore, the following requirements are necessary unless otherwise approved by the board for all student admissions:

- In accordance with GCS's Education Philosophy and Statement of Convictions, we desire to enroll students who will exhibit the Biblical values of showing care and concern for others in our school community and who demonstrate enthusiasm for the learning process.
- Each student enrolling should have at least one parent or legal guardian express a personal saving faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The student's parents must have read the Purpose, Guiding Principles, Doctrinal Issues, and Student Code of Conduct of GCS and will support the same.
- Pupils admitted from other schools to GCS must have a good conduct record and have put forth acceptable effort academically.
- New families and students will be asked to provide past testing scores and transcripts. If needed, testing in reading and math will be required.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Grace Christian Schools admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to GCS students. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of our educational policies and procedures, scholarship awards, athletic or other school-administered programs.

We do, however, reserve the right to deny admission to any individual who cannot benefit from enrollment based on past academic achievement, disqualifying learning difference or physical limitation, or whose personal or family lifestyle is not in harmony with the Statement of Convictions of Grace Christian Schools.

Admissions Process

Our Admissions Team follows a 5-step admissions and application review process.

1. **Pre-application Submission:** GCS encourages families to begin the pre-enrollment application process online. Once you have submitted a pre-enrollment application our staff will receive a notification.
2. **Enrollment Application Invitation:** Our team will conduct a preliminary review of your pre-enrollment application and invite you to complete an official enrollment package if applicable.*
3. **Interview:** Applicants will be scheduled for an interview and an informal academic screening for the proposed student.*
4. **Admissions Team Review:** The Admissions Team will then review the application, interview, and screening prior to offering enrollment.
5. **Enrollment Offer:** Once the Admissions Team recommends enrollment, an email will be sent to the family with the enrollment package. The student's birth certificate and immunization record (or religious exemption form) will be required to complete enrollment. Enrollment Fee is \$50.00 per child. *Tuition, discounts, and payment plans will be discussed during this step.*

*If at any time during the enrollment process, the applicant doesn't seem to be a good fit for the school, an email will be sent explaining the reason why admission has been denied at the time.

Reenrollment for Returning Students

Priority registration will be given to current students of GCS. Parents may hold their students' place by submitting their reenrollment and application fee on a first come basis beginning in February of 2024 if they intend to enroll their child at GCS for the following year. However, places cannot be reserved if there is outstanding debt from the previous year.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition payments are critical to our school. Tuition is our financial lifeline. Support from our community and donors are also essential to meet the school's needs. GCS's primary fiscal needs are related to payroll, payroll taxes, curriculum, materials, and maintenance of the facility. We prioritize our finances in this order.

GCS offers families the ability to pay their tuition online, via the school's website, or in-person at the school office. Families will be able to pay their tuition in one of two ways:

1. *Monthly Payments.*
 - i. Over a period of 10 months; beginning August 1st and ending May 1st
2. *Quarterly Payments.*
 - i. Tuition is due by the 1st of August, October, February, April

Annually, tuition and discounts will be determined by the Board and published separately, including on the school's website.

Delinquent Accounts

We have established the following delinquent accounts process for two primary reasons: 1) to help parents keep up regular payments and prevent occurrence of an insurmountable past due balance, and 2) to enable GCS to meet its financial obligations in a responsible fashion. Please make regular payments a priority.

- Accounts 10 days past due are considered delinquent and will receive a phone call from the school. A late charge of \$25.00 will be assessed on your account.
- Accounts 30 days past due will be referred to the school board and the family will receive a call.
- If an account is 60 days past due the student may be suspended from school and all student records will be held until the bill is paid.
- Families who are more than 90 days past due are subject to withdrawal from school.
- Students may not register for the next school year if there are any past due amounts, until the account is paid in full.

Fundraising

GCS encourages fundraising through the Parent Teacher Organization to help meet the general budget needs. Throughout the year we will host fundraisers and new ideas are always welcomed. To keep tuition rates down and affordable, GCS has a goal to raise funds through donations and fundraising; We encourage each family to support and participate in fundraising. This alone is how we can keep tuition costs down, continue to grow, and provide the best possible education for all students at GCS. Thus, we rely on each family to participate and support GCS fundraising events.

GCS is a Non-Profit organization and encourages additional donations from families, friends, churches, and other organizations.

PARENT / FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The success of GCS is directly related to the involvement of its parents. The Board, administration and staff are highly committed to their ministry to each child and expect that parents likewise will make a commitment to that ministry. Once children are enrolled, parents are encouraged to make a genuine commitment to the work of Godly parenting. It is evidenced by the support of parents through words, actions, prayer, and attendance at school functions, pursuit of financial obligations to the school.

By adhering to the following expectations, we will all be successful in the raising of Godly children:

- Request attendance of weekly church services as a family. It is important for the Word of God to be confirmed daily in the lives of our children.
- Become familiar with the pledges and uphold the school's policies: Adhere to the handbook Mission, Vision, and Statement of Convictions.
- Commit to frequent parent/teacher communication. Meet with your child's teacher regularly to encourage your child in his or her work.
- Meet financial obligations to the school and help with fundraisers when you are able.
- Volunteer as time allows: Become involved in the PTO and seek out ways to assist the school. The front office or Principal can share ways that anyone can help through volunteer work.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is required by GCS. Students are expected to be present and punctual each school day. A record of attendance for each student will be included on the student's report card.

It is the responsibility of the student to complete all assignments during any time that may be missed. Due dates will be established by the teacher and approved by the principal.

Planned absences should be pre-arranged with the teacher so that assignments may be provided or be completed prior to the absence. Parent/teacher partnership for assignments and absences is a key part of our educational philosophy; it is expected that parents will serve the role of educator or teacher during a planned absence. GCS teachers will partner with parents by providing the assignments and any background information parents may need to facilitate teaching the material during planned absences.

If a student is absent for any reason, the school office must be notified by phone between 8:15 and 8:45 a.m. Due to safety concerns, the school enforces this provision to the fullest extent possible, including calling parents at home to verify the child's absence.

In the event a student is absent from a class or from school for more than seven days during a term (unless the absence is pre-planned) the student's parents will meet with the Principal and teacher to determine whether the student will receive a letter grade or an (I) Incomplete; the Principal, teacher, and parents will work together to determine if a grade replacement program should be implemented or if the grades will stand as given.

The following absences will be considered excused: illness; involvement in an accident; bereavement; funeral in the immediate family; medical appointments; participation in school approved programs outside the school. Any pre-arranged absences must be approved by the principal for make-up assignments to be made available. All other absences are unexcused. GCS follows the State of Arizona truancy laws.

Tardiness

Students who consistently arrive at school on time are establishing a responsible pattern for life. While we understand that occasional situations arise that cause delays, students are fulfilling their end of a contract with the school by adhering to the school's schedule. A student is declared tardy when arriving after the starting time of the school day. The consequences of repeated tardiness will be determined by the principal.

Leaving Early

Parents who wish to remove their child during the school day are required to report to the office and sign the student out. If possible, parents are asked to inform the office of their intent prior to removing the child from the campus. In the event that a parent needs to designate another person to pick up a child during or after school, a written note or telephone call verifying the change is required.

Closed Campus Policy

GCS is responsible for maintaining the safety and well-being of its students from the time they arrive until they leave for home. Therefore, all students are required to remain on campus during school hours, including lunch. Should students need to leave during the school day, a written note from the parents must be submitted to the office prior to their departure. Students in grades K-6 will not be allowed to leave campus unaccompanied.

School Hours

School hours 8:15 am – 3:00 pm Monday-Thursday. Students should not be dropped off before 8:00 am. Parents are expected to pick up their child/children no later than 3:20 p.m.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As Christians, we are to honor God and His creation. People are created in the image of God; therefore, part of honoring Him entails respect for others and their property. Since discipline is a part of the Christian life, the goal is to lead students from merely having outward constraints to having inward control through the filling of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

GCS is committed to providing a safe, nurturing learning environment for all its students. This includes an atmosphere conducive to studies and free from disruptions as well as making school a place where students feel loved and accepted. GCS strives to train students in Christlikeness by encouraging them to consider each other precious and to esteem others above themselves. (Philippians 2:3-5; John 13: 34-35; Proverbs 22:6)

Principles of Discipline

GCS has adopted the following principles for the discipline of its students:

- Discipline is defined as the training process that helps young people mature into Godly Christians. It is not just a punishment system. Discipline involves teaching, nurturing, counseling, training, planning, praying, introspection, and family commitment, all of which are as important, if not more important than any punishment. (Proverbs 22:6; Hebrews 12:5-11)
- Respect and love are taught throughout the scriptures as being required by God, to Himself, to those men and women in authority, and to those around us. (Mark 12; 30-31)
- Decency and order are clearly commanded as a priority in Christian life. (1 Corinthians 14:40)
- Obedience and submission to God and those in authority should be a given assumption in any system used by Christians. (Hebrews 13:17)
- Proper motives, not just proper actions, are crucial in the scriptural priority system. (James 4:1-3)
- Hearsay, rumors, or unsubstantiated reports are not a scriptural basis as the sole rationale of any discipline. Teacher observation (or student confession) is the best basis for discipline. (Deuteronomy 19:15)
- Because of our natural inclination to sin, we don't automatically love, respect, and honor each other. Therefore, discipline is administered in the context of scripture with repentance, forgiveness, and restoration as our three-fold goal. We must remember that God wants immediate and complete obedience without challenging, complaining, or questioning. (Philippians 2: 14-16; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

Rules for Student Conduct

It is impossible to make rules to govern every type of infraction. Good behavior must come from the heart in love and obedience to Jesus Christ; it should not be mere conformity to man-made regulations. Nevertheless, the following behaviors are expected to be demonstrated by students:

1. Students will demonstrate respect for each other and all school staff at ALL times. (ex. Being punctual, coming to class prepared, using courteous and polite manners, etc.)
2. Improper (coarse, vulgar, abusive, swearing) language will not be tolerated.
3. Students will be considerate of each other in attitudes, words, and actions.
4. Total abstinence and absence (use and possession) from alcohol, non-prescribed drugs, or tobacco shall be expected of all students at all times. Violation of this standard is cause for suspension or expulsion.
5. Students who, in any way, deface and damage school buildings, furnishings, vehicles, property, or equipment will be liable for damages to the extent of replacement and/or repair costs.
6. Students will follow classroom, playground, vehicle, and building procedures and rules.
7. Students will practice truthfulness and honesty in word and life.
8. Students will practice Biblical love, respect, decency, and order regarding themselves and others.

Minor Offenses

Appropriate staff members will be responsible for the administration of consequences for minor offenses. The following violations are typical of minor offenses:

1. Actions that violate classroom, vehicle, and playground rules.
2. Minor disturbances that prevent classroom order and instruction, including excessive or unexcused tardies.
3. Disrespectful actions or attitudes to other students.
4. Willful disregard for the safety of others, such as, shooting rubber bands, running in crowded areas, pushing and shoving while standing in line, etc.

Consequences for Minor Offenses

Minor offenses will result in but are not limited to one or more of the following consequences:

1. Loss of free time or privileges.
2. Removal from the classroom.
3. A note sent home or a call home by staff. A note may be sent home with the student to be signed by a parent and returned the following day.
4. Loss of special events participation. Student will not participate in field trips, parties, etc.
5. Teacher and or administrator conference. Student will confer with a teacher and or administrator.
6. Additional work: student will complete additional assignments during free time, before, or after school.
7. Cleaning of school bathrooms, vacuuming, whatever activities needing done that are assigned by the teacher or Principal.

Serious Offenses

The principal will be responsible for the administration of consequences for serious offenses. The administrator may vary the consequences to suit each student's individual needs. Regardless of the consequence imposed, the administrator will notify parents of the incident and if appropriate, the student will apologize to the teacher, individual, or class and ask to be readmitted to the class. Serious offenses include but are not limited to the following:

1. Actions and attitudes that demonstrate disrespect for authority: This includes verbal or nonverbal communication indicating rejection of an adult's communication or direction.
2. Rebellion or mocking which remains unchanged after much staff effort, including but not limited to: blatant or repeated lack of respect for authority, passive rebellion, continual negative attitude, behavior or influence that prevents classroom instruction.
3. Cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated.
4. Unacceptable/inappropriate verbal and nonverbal language: Profanity, vulgar language, gossip, filthy words; unkind words proceed from an unclean heart and grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Foul, abusive, or inappropriate language is barred from use at all times. Students are to use wholesome language that is encouraging, uplifting and edifying. (Ephesians 4:29, 5:4)
5. Inappropriate displays of affection. In respecting each other and God's guidelines for relationships, displays of affection between members of the opposite sex in public are not appropriate at school. This applies to all school functions on school property. Participation in immoral sexual behavior is strictly prohibited.
6. Willful disregard for property (i.e., damaging chairs, desks, equipment, vehicles, clothing, buildings, etc.)
7. Actions or use of objects that endanger or threaten the safety of others: A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit objects or unsafe prank items that may reasonably be considered dangerous or could

be used as a weapon (i.e., sling shots, matches, knives, razor blades, firearms, explosives such as smoke bombs or firecrackers.)

8. Possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or inappropriate literature is strictly prohibited.

Consequences for Serious Offenses

Depending upon the severity of the offense, violations of a serious nature will result in but are not limited to one or more of the following consequences.

1. Confiscation of inappropriate or unlawful items. Objects will be secured and may not be returned.
2. Teacher and/or administrator conference. Student will confer with teacher and/or Principal.
3. Parent/Administrator conference. Administrator and parents will convene to discuss incident and consequences.
4. In-school suspension. A student on in-school suspension reports to the school office each day of the suspension immediately upon arrival on school property, where he or she is isolated for the entire day. The student is excluded from participating in any extracurricular activities or functions suspension.
5. Out-of-school suspension. Student may be suspended from school. He or she is prohibited from coming on school property at any time during the suspension. A student who is suspended will be excluded from all extracurricular activities. A parent-administrator conference will be necessary for the student to return to school. Specific changes in the student attitude and actions will be required prior to re-admission.
6. Any schoolwork assignments missed during either in- or out-of-school suspension is treated as an unexcused absence and is to be made up at the discretion of the individual teacher involved.
7. Recommendation for expulsion. Expulsion is the exclusion of a student from school for an indefinite period of time. Severe and or unrepentant behavior and attitude problems, including while on a probationary period, may warrant expulsion. A student may be expelled from school only by the School Board if the offense warrants such action. Because of the severity of the situation, the Administrator has the right to suspend a student until the Board can convene. If a student is expelled, the parents are obligated to pay the current quarter's tuition and fees.

Since Christianity is a lifestyle, biblical standards of behavior are expected of students at school and away from school. All students are expected to show appropriate respect and cooperation toward faculty, substitute teachers, and staff members always. It is understood that teachers may address misconduct in and around school buildings, vehicles, and school sponsored events, on and off campus.

The classroom teacher has the primary responsibility and authority for discipline and may use such measures as may be necessary to maintain control in the above areas. Teachers are expected to make every effort to take care of discipline issues themselves without referral to the principal. However, if problems occur repeatedly or if any single incident of a more serious nature occurs, a referral may be made. If necessary, physical force to restrain a student may be used to prevent harm or injury to any school personnel, other students, the student himself, or to prevent vandalism or destruction of school property.

PROCESS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

There are times when conflict arises among the body of believers. As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict. (*Luke 6:27-36; Galatians 5:19- 26; Matthew 5:9*) GCS believes that conflict

provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow in Christ (*1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1; Romans 8:28-29; James 1:2-4*). In response to God's love and in reliance on His grace, GCS has established the following policy for the school family to follow when conflict arises. Based on Matthew, Chapter 18, the goal of this process is to resolve conflict, restore fellowship, exhibit love, and demonstrate a proper response to authority. The main principle of this process is that God is sovereign, all authority is from God, and we are all under His authority.

Biblical Steps to Conflict Resolution (The Peacemaker's Pledge)

Glorify God

Instead of focusing on your own desires or dwelling on what others may do, seek to please and honor God by: depending upon His wisdom, power, and love; faithfully obeying His commands; and seeking to maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.

Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye

Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, take responsibility for your own contribution to conflicts: confess sin, ask God to help you change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seek to repair any harm you have caused.

Go and Show Your Brother His Fault

Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, choose to overlook minor offenses, or talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, ask others in the body of Christ to help settle the matter in a Biblical manner.

Go and Be Reconciled

Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation, forgiving others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, and seek just and mutually beneficial solutions to your differences.

Reprinted or adapted from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, Ken Sande (Baker Books, 2nd ed. 1997). Peacemaker® Ministries (www.HisPeace.org).

Proper Channels for Resolving Conflict

1. The Board strongly believes that conflicts should be resolved at the lowest possible level within the school structure. Anyone with a specific problem or complaint should first contact the person who is the cause of the concern or complaint in an attempt to identify, clarify, and resolve the differences giving rise to conflict.
2. Complaints that remain unresolved may be moved through the chain of authority by contacting the Principal and then the Board by contacting the School Board President. The Board will hear appeals only if the complaint has been moved through the chain of authority.
3. At its discretion, the Board may act upon the recommendation of the Principal or may hold hearings regarding the matter. The Board will hear appeals only if the complaint has been moved through the chain of authority. Complaints taken to the Board must be placed on the agenda by contacting the Principal and/or the Board President in written form at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

Appeals Process

If any student, group of students, or parent(s) feel aggrieved on account of any policy of the GCS School Board or actions of its agents or employees, said students or parents shall be entitled to use the following method of obtaining redress:

1. The appeal must be made according to the Process for Conflict Resolution.
2. The students or parents or their agents shall file a written request with the administrator of GCS setting forth in detail the action or policy which is the basis of the grievance. The administrator may initiate a hearing or discussion on the basis of this written request.

3. If the grievance is not settled after being filed with the administration, the aggrieved party or parties may at any time subsequent to fourteen (14) days after filing with the administration, file a written notice or copy of said grievance with the Board of Directors requesting that the Board review the same. The Board of Directors or a committee appointed by it shall determine within seven (7) days whether a formal hearing shall be held.
4. While the Board is reviewing any grievance, the policy or action being appealed shall be enforced, unless it is modified by order of the Board.

SCHOOL WIDE RULES

The grounds, buildings, property, equipment, and vehicles belonging to GCS are gifts from the Lord to equip us to do His work. Therefore, each student is to take personal responsibility for their care and maintenance. In practical terms, this means taking the initiative to maintain cleanliness, pick up trash and dispose of it properly, use all equipment for its intended purpose only. Treat books, desks, and other school assigned items with extra care and respect. The following rules are established to help students learn to be good stewards of all the Lord has blessed them and GCS with:

- Hallways and Sidewalks: No running, pushing, loud talking, or disruptive behavior.
- Restrooms: May be used with permission from teacher during school hours. Loitering during class time is not permitted; loud voices are not to be used in the restroom, and water and paper are to be used for their intended use only.
- Playground: Students must wait for a teacher to excuse them to the outside. Students are not permitted to throw objects (rocks, sticks, bark, sand, etc.) while on the playground. Students may not leave the playground without permission. Pushing, yelling, or aggressive play fighting is not permitted. Students may not jump down or throw objects from playground equipment.
- Transportation vehicle rules: students are to obey the driver, always demonstrating courtesy and respect. Students are to be properly seated and buckled at all times. Students are to be quiet and self-controlled at all times. Hands, arms, and objects should remain inside the vehicle at all times.

It is important that students develop and maintain an attitude of respect for each other and adults. All students shall address a teacher or adult with the titles of “Miss” “Mrs.” “Mr.” or “Coach”. This standard is applicable at all times.

BULLYING POLICY

The State of Arizona has defined bullying to mean any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student this is persistent, severe, or repeated and that:

- causes a student physical harm, damages a student’s property, or places a student in a reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student’s property,
- creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student’s access to an educational opportunity or benefit, and/or
- substantially and materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

The term includes retaliation against a victim or witness who reports information about an act of bullying and includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school-sponsored organizations or groups.

As a Christian school with the goal of servanthood and Christlikeness as our foundation for growth and development, GCS will not tolerate any form of bullying and if it is determined by the Principal that bullying behavior as defined above is occurring, the perpetrator of the bullying will be punished with one week suspension and the School Board will consider expulsion based on the merits of the case.

ACADEMIC POLICY

GCS is committed to providing its students with a high-quality, well-rounded education from a Christ centered perspective. Homework is a valuable aid in helping students make the most of their school learning experience and will be assigned when a teacher determines that additional practice is necessary for a student or students to move forward in their learning.

Grade Reports

GCS issues report cards at the end of each quarter.

Grading scales used to report achievement on report cards and mid-term reports are as follows:

A= 90-100%	= 4.0
B = 80-89%	= 3.0
C= 70 -79%	= 2.0
D= 60-69%	= 1.0
F= 0- 59%	= 0.0

Awards

Christian Character Award

This award is determined by each classroom teacher on an annual basis and will be recognized at the year-end awards ceremony.

Perseverance Award

This award is designed to recognize a student who has overcome or shown great progress in areas of difficulty.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled once a year at the middle of the second quarter. Conferences serve as an opportunity to discuss students' educational, emotional, and spiritual growth. Parents are encouraged to call or e-mail at any time that they believe a conference is necessary with any or all of their child's teacher(s). Teachers may schedule conferences at any time to discuss academic and/or spiritual challenges of their students with their students' parents.

45-Day Screening

All new students will be screened in the areas of communication, academic skills and social skills within 45 days of their enrollment. Any concerns identified by this screening will be followed up with the parent by the teacher and/or Principal.

Promotion and Retention

Students who are not progressing at their grade level expectations will be considered for retention. Parents will be updated on progress regularly and will be included in consultations with the staff and pastor. Recommendations will be made and discussed with parents. Ultimate decisions rest with parents. Considerations:

1. Retention should occur as early in the child's school career as possible, preferably in kindergarten and no later than second grade.
2. Retention may be considered for students in grades 3-6 when half (50%) or more of the student's grades are failing.
3. If deficiencies can be corrected through summer education, private tutoring, or other intervention efforts, the student may be permitted to advance to the next grade in the fall.

Withdrawal

Parents are required to contact the Principal if they choose to withdraw their child from the school for any reason. Students who withdraw from school before the end of the semester might not receive credit for that term. If a student is withdrawn after halfway through the quarter, payment will be required for the full quarter. If the student departs before the halfway point, the tuition will be prorated.

COMPUTER / NETWORK POLICY

There are pros and cons to the use of any technology; computers and the use of the internet are no exception. GCS considers technology to have legitimate educational value and has committed to using computers sparingly to improve the quality of its educational program. While it is impossible for the school to eliminate all potential to access controversial material, we are committed to maintaining Biblical standards of morality and as such take every reasonable precaution to mitigate threats found in the use of this resource.

Students are expected to use the school's computer technology in a manner consistent with its educational objectives and are prohibited from inappropriately using computers and or the network and internet. A student shall not use the school's computers, network, or internet to:

- Purchase or sell goods, advertise or solicit sales and services, or conduct business.
- Transmit or receive information containing obscene, violent, abusive, inappropriate, or threatening language, bullying and/or images; including music, videos, games, or other content deemed educationally inappropriate.
- Plagiarize, share, transfer, or alter content, materials, property, or passwords of others.
- Compromise the integrity of or alter any computer security features or access privileges by hacking, logging on as another identity, or exploiting security problems and/or demonstrating them to others.
- Access chat rooms and/or e-mail without teacher permission.

The following rules shall be in effect for all students using any computer on school premises at all times:

1. No overriding or disabling firewalls, filters, or other security features.
2. No hacking.
3. No vandalism.
4. No theft or sharing of passwords.
5. No accessing inappropriate information, graphics, music, or games.
6. No spreading viruses.
7. No illegal activity.
8. No using school resources for personal or financial gain.
9. No using the network for political purposes.
10. No storing of non-academic data on the server.
11. No copying of copyrighted material.
12. No playing video or arcade games at any time.

Students who violate the school's computer use policy may be denied access to the school's computer system and are subject to additional disciplinary measures as described in the school's Student Conduct/Discipline Policy, which may include suspension or expulsion depending upon the severity of the infraction. Students may not bring food or beverages near computers. Students who willfully damage hardware or software face disciplinary consequences and may be required to pay for replacement of damaged items, including technical service time required to make repairs. Those students may also lose privileges of using school computers. Due to the ever-changing nature of technology, the administration reserves the right to modify these rules on an as-needed basis.

STUDENT APPEARANCE STANDARDS

In attire and appearance, we desire to comply with the following scriptural principles:

- To dress modestly (I Timothy 2:9a)
- To strive for internal rather than external beauty (I Peter 3:3-4)

General Information

The dress code is intended as a guideline in assisting all students in developing a Christ-centered attitude toward their outer appearance and a maturing view toward the appropriateness of certain attire for certain occasions. It is not intended to be an exhaustive listing of acceptable and unacceptable attire. Rather, the dress code is an outgrowth of our experience in maintaining an atmosphere consistent with the instructional goals of the Academy. It is not meant to take the place of parental rules, which may be more restrictive than those set down here. Nor is it meant to relieve the student of the opportunity to grow in personal responsibility for his or her own appearance.

We need parental help to maintain modest dress on Campus, please read and address these standards with your child. Violations may require parents coming to the school to bring appropriate clothing, the child being sent home, and/or being written up per the standard disciplinary practice of any violation of school policy. Thank you for helping in this matter.

The Administration reserves the right to make the final decisions concerning compliance with the standards. Repeated failure to comply with dress code standards constitutes rebellion and could result in disciplinary action.

General Standards

- Students should dress and groom themselves in a manner that is neat, modest, and respectful.
- Students should **not wear** any clothing that display messages inconsistent with the Christian lifestyle.
- Garments that are tight fitting, clinging, semi-transparent or “see-through”, are **not permitted**.
- Hats are not to be worn during classes. Hoods and hats that cover any portion of the face should not be worn during school hours.
- Clothing that is “shredded” to look ripped or torn **should not be worn**.
- Low necklines, enlarged armholes, bare shoulders/back/midribs, or tops that show bare midsection are **not allowed**. Age-appropriate modesty is expected.
- Shoes are to be worn at all times and should be properly tied or fastened. Sandals are allowed if they **fasten behind the heel**. Gym shoes are required for physical activity.
- Undergarments should **not be seen** at any time.
- Shorts must be **mid-thigh or longer** for **ALL** students and **may not be** skintight, i.e. spandex, yoga shorts, etc.
- **No** pajama pants.
- Leggings may be worn by female students when under a shirt that **extends past the bottom or under a dress**.
- Enrolled students should not get tattoos or additional piercings while enrolled at school.
 - Exception, young ladies may wear earrings and have their ears pierced. No other studs, or jewelry of any kind may be worn in piercings during the school day.
- The same appearance standards are expected for special days, such as **Spirit Week**.

Specific questions concerning applications of the dress code should be addressed to the Administration.

Our desire is that the students dress in such a way as to please the Lord. Our outward appearance is to be a constant reminder to those around us of our desire to honor God.

Dress standards for school field trips, team travel and extra-curricular or program activities will be established by the supervising teacher or administrator, and given in advance so parents may be informed, and students may be prepared. Any school sponsored function which involves wearing a swimsuit will require a one-piece swimsuit for girls and regular shorts-style swim trunks for boys.

Dress Code Enforcement

Students who knowingly or repeatedly violate the dress code shall be disciplined and parents will be contacted. The student dress code shall be in effect at all times and at all events or activities in which students are in attendance. Teachers have the authority to establish additional guidelines for the attire of their students based on the needs of the classroom and student safety. Activity sponsors may impose additional requirements for students participating in school activities and adherence to these guidelines is necessary for participation in the activity or sport. The Principal has the final authority to evaluate styles in clothing and grooming to determine their appropriateness for school functions. The Principal may waive certain dress requirements for educational activities, extenuating circumstances, and special school functions or occasions when appropriate.

- First Offense: The student and parents will be notified of the infraction.
- Second Offense: Parents will be notified and asked to bring approved clothing for the student.
- Third Offense: Parents will be notified and asked to bring approved clothing or take the student home to change.

Students who continue to break the school's dress code may earn a suspension. In the event of a "judgment call," the Principal reserves the right to make the determination on whether a student has violated the school's dress code.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

School Hours

School is in session daily Monday through Thursday except for scheduled holidays, breaks and conferences. School begins **promptly** at 8:15 am. For our students' safety, the doors will be locked during classroom hours. Please check-in at the Church Office if you arrive after 8:15 am.

Arrival and Dismissal

Parents are responsible for the daily transportation of their children to and from school. Because there is no adult supervision in the morning, parents are requested not to drop off their children before 7:45am.

Parents should make every effort to pick up their children by their dismissal time. If a student needs to stay later than 3:15 pm, parents should make prior arrangements with the teacher. Parents must notify the office whenever a student will ride home with someone other than his/her parents.

Field Trips

Periodically classes take field trips to interesting and educational places. Field trips are positive experiences that are encouraged by the school. Teachers arrange field trips and send information home notifying parents in advance. A permission form signed by a parent or legal guardian is required before a student may leave school grounds, and teachers may possibly have a single form covering several trips.

Lunch

Common courtesy dictates that students use proper dining manners during lunch (leave other's food alone; no throwing of food, bag popping, burping, etc.). Students are also expected to talk softly and stay in their seats while eating and to clean up all messes and properly dispose of trash. Plates and silverware are not provided so please bring your own flatware and silverware for lunch if needed.

Gum, Candy, and Drinks

Gum, candy, and drinks are not permitted in class unless otherwise stated by a teacher.

Recess

Recess is a scheduled part of the regular elementary school day. Recess provides students with the time to expend energy, stretch, activate their bodies, and develop social skills. All students should be adequately dressed for Arizona weather. Students will either go outside for recess if the weather permits or play structured indoor games. Adverse weather conditions are monitored closely by teachers. If conditions worsen during a recess period, the teachers will bring the children inside.

Visitors

Parents, family, friends, and prospective students are welcome to visit students and/or observe classes. All visitors are required to report to the school office and sign in upon entering the premises. Unscheduled visitors will not be permitted to access classrooms without an appointment or to see students without a parent's permission. In the case of divorced or separated parents, the school cannot grant a non-custodial parent (must be on file) the right to see his/her child without a court order.

Telephone Use

Students may use school phones in case of emergency only or with a teacher's permission when deemed necessary. Arrangements for after-school activities or personal business should be made at home, not by the use of school phones. Parents are discouraged from calling the school to talk to students or give messages during school hours unless absolutely necessary. Because of time restraints, it is difficult for office personnel to deliver messages to students or teachers. Unless it is an emergency, teachers and students will not be disturbed during class periods.

Electronic Devices

Due to their disruptive nature cell phones, tablets, and all other electronic devices should not be used for personal use in the classroom. If permission is given by a teacher, they may be used for research or other educationally valid reasons. If a cell phone or smart watch rings during class or found outside of a student's backpack, the phone or watch will be confiscated and stored in the school office until the end of the day and will also count as an offense of the cell phone policy. Cell phones and smart watches are NOT authorized for use in school by students and shall be kept in backpacks. Offenses will be dealt with as follows:

- First offense: Verbal warning and directed to return phone to backpack/cubby.
- Second offense: Phone will be held in the office until the end of the school day.
- Third offense: Phone will be held in the office until parents retrieve it.
- Fourth offense: The student will not be allowed to have a cell phone in the school.

Lost & Found

The school cannot overemphasize the importance of students assuming personal responsibility for the safekeeping of their personal articles and those assigned to them by the school. Students are responsible for their personal possessions and are encouraged to label items of value with their first and last names. Articles thought to be lost or stolen should be reported to a teacher immediately. Should an article be found, it will be taken to the office. Unclaimed articles will be given to a worthy cause at the end of each grading period.

EMERGENCY, HEALTH & SAFETY PROCEDURES

Fire and Disaster Drills

The school will conduct fire and emergency drills at least once each quarter using procedures approved by the Board and local fire authorities. Should the need to evacuate the grounds become necessary, teachers will lead their classes to the parking lot in front of the school.

Emergency School Closures

Your child's classroom teacher will contact each family via text, and we will also post announcements on our website and send email when possible.

Student Illness

Parents are requested to inform the school office when their child is sick and not able to attend school. Children who become ill at school will be evaluated by the teacher/office and a call will be made to the parents. Children with a temperature greater than 99.8 and/or not feeling well will be sent home and should remain home until they are fever-free for 24 hours, **without** receiving Tylenol/Ibuprofen. Children with flu-like symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, chills and/or body aches) even though fever free, should remain home until they are well. Any questions regarding student illness may be directed to the office.

Students with physical impediments and/or illness preventing them from participating in physical activities may be excused with a parent's note although extended times may require a doctor's note.

Injury

Parents of students who are injured will be contacted immediately. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, 9-1-1 will precede all other telephone calls. In such cases the school will call medical and emergency personnel and follow their instructions. The school will then notify parents. If a parent cannot be contacted immediately, the school will make efforts to find out which physician is to be secured or where the child should be taken. This information must be on file in the office for each student in the event that parents cannot be reached. A representative of the school faculty or staff will stay with the child until parents can assume responsibility.

Medication

Medication is defined as all drugs, whether prescription or over the counter. In such cases, parents must notify the classroom teacher and register the medication with the school office by completing a Notification of Medication Use form. This form authorizes school office personnel to assist with the administration of medicine to the student during the school day. These forms will be kept on file in the office and new forms must be submitted each year.

All medications must be brought to the school in their original containers in only the quantity necessary for the day's doses and given to the office staff immediately upon arrival at school for storage. Students are requested to not carry or store medication, with the exception of children with asthma who may carry and self-administer asthma medication while in school or at a school-sponsored activity. Asthma inhalers must also be registered at the school office.

School personnel will not directly administer medication except for life-threatening conditions such as allergic reactions to bee stings or other pre-existing conditions requiring school personnel to administer medication. No student may at any time give medications to another student. Strong disciplinary action may result if this occurs.

STUDENT RECORDS

GCS maintains records on each student to facilitate the instruction, guidance, and educational progress of its students. These records contain information about the student and his/her education, which may include but is not

limited to the following types of data: identification data, attendance data, record of achievement, family background, aptitude tests, honors and activities, discipline data, objective counselor or teacher ratings, observations, and external agency reports. The records of each student are located in secured files in the school's office and remain confidential in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents/guardians and eligible students (age 18 or older) certain rights with respect to a student's educational records. FERPA gives the parent, guardian, or eligible student the right to:

1. Inspect and copy the student's education record within a reasonable time of the day the school receives a request for access. Students less than eighteen (18) years of age have the right to inspect and copy their permanent record.
2. Request an amendment of the student's education record that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, or improper.
3. Permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education record, except to the extent that FERPA or state law authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. Copy any school student record proposed to be destroyed or deleted.
5. Prohibit the release of directory information concerning the parent's/guardian's child.
6. File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

Address Changes

It is important that the school office maintain up-to-date address and telephone records for each student in case of illness, emergency, or accident. Parents are requested to contact the school office immediately should a change in address, telephone number, etc. occur during the year.

Transfer of Records

Student records cannot be transferred to another school unless a Transfer of Records Request form has been properly submitted by a parent or legal guardian to the school office. All tuition accounts must be paid in full before records can be mailed to the receiving school.

GCS FAMILY COMMITMENT PAGE

Student Name: _____ Current Grade: _____

General Objectives for Student Conduct

1. Be honest and kind in actions.
2. Respect all people and treat them honorably.
3. Respect all personal and school property because it belongs to God and is cared for by all people.
4. Keep the mind, speech, and actions clean and above reproach.
5. Be on time and in the right place at the right time.
6. Honor classmates and school staff by using activity-appropriate volume and tone when speaking.
7. Respect myself by dressing appropriately for participation in the environment.
8. Follow all the teachers' instructions right away, all the way, and with a good attitude every day!
9. If conflict arises, talk directly with the other person in loving way. Seek support from an adult if efforts aren't working.

As with any activity our children undertake, our interest and involvement as parents has a tremendous positive influence on their performance. GCS requests parents and students to sign this page signifying that they have read, can accept, and will support the policies contained in the GCS Parent-Student Handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Every student should understand that attendance at Grace Christian Schools is a privilege and not a right. By signing here, the student is agreeing to be held responsible for being familiar with and maintaining the Student Code of Conduct.

Student Signature

Date

Date Received by School Office: _____

Received by: _____