

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK



GRACE RIVER
ACADEMY

2024-2025

Our Mission

Grace River Academy exists to provide classical, Christian education by restoring academic excellence based on God's truth. Students will know their God, know His Word, and know His purposes, transforming their lives spiritually, academically, physically, and emotionally; thus, preparing them to impact their world for Christ.



GRACE RIVER
ACADEMY

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Vision

At Grace River Academy we envision students who think clearly and listen carefully with discernment and understanding; who reason persuasively and articulate precisely; who can evaluate their entire range of experience in the light of the Scriptures; and who do so with eagerness in joyful submission to God. We envision our students being able to recognize cultural influences as distinct from biblical, and to be un-swayed towards evil by the former. We envision our students being well prepared in all situations, possessing both information and the knowledge of how to use it. We envision our students being socially graceful and spiritually gracious; equipped with and understanding the tools of learning; desiring to grow in understanding, yet fully realizing the limitations and foolishness of the wisdom of this world. We envision our students having a heart for the lost and they distinguish real religion from religion in form only; and that they possess the former knowing and loving the Lord Jesus Christ. We envision our students knowing their God, knowing His word, and knowing His purposes for their lives thus impacting their family, community, and world for Christ.

Grace River Academy Goals

Know Their God, Know His Word, Know His Purposes

Our goals are simple. As we partner with parents, the Grace River family, our teachers and staff, each student will know their God, know His Word, and know His purposes for their life. We will achieve this through a "Classical and Christ-centered Education."

CHRIST- CENTERED

In all its levels, programs, and teaching, Grace River Academy seeks to:

1. Develop Christian worldview thinking, so that students learn to evaluate their entire range of experience in light of Scripture.
2. Teach all subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures at the center. (II Timothy 3:16-17)
3. Provide a clear model of the biblical Christian life through our Staff and Board. (Matthew 22:37-40)
4. Encourage every student to begin and develop his/her relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 19:13-15)

CLASSICAL

In all its levels, programs, and teaching, Grace Academy seeks to:

1. Emphasize grammar, logic, and rhetoric in all subjects (see definitions below).
2. Emphasize the development and flow of western civilization: history, science, math, government, art, literature, philosophy, and the historic Protestant faith.
3. Encourage every student to develop a love for learning and live up to his/her academic potential.
4. Provide an orderly atmosphere conducive to the attainment of the above goals.

Educational Philosophy

Although most Christian schools would agree on certain fundamentals, it is imperative that parents scrutinize the foundational beliefs of any school in which they may enroll their child(ren). Therefore, below are the most important elements that we at Grace River Academy believe distinguish our unique approach to education.

1. We believe that the Bible clearly instructs parents, not the church or state, to "bring children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). As a school, we operate in partnership with parents, providing an educational service to families. Therefore, we seek to teach and discipline in a manner consistent with the Bible and a godly home environment.
2. We believe that God's character is revealed not only in His Word, but also in every facet of Creation. Therefore, we teach that all knowledge is interrelated and instructs us about God Himself.
3. God wants us to love Him with our minds, as well as with our hearts, souls, and strength (Mat. 22:37). Therefore, we seek to individually challenge children at all levels and teach them how to learn, through a proven classical method.
4. We want to help parents teach their children that all they do should be done "heartily, as unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). Therefore, we seek to encourage quality academic work and maintain high standards of conduct. This includes biblical discipline principles.

Our overarching goal is to provide a holistic educational environment that challenges our students to live and think from a Christian worldview.

Statement of Faith

Grace River Academy is a Protestant Christian school which does not teach a specific denominational set of beliefs. The following is the foundation of beliefs on which Grace River Academy is based. They are also the key elements of Christianity that will be unapologetically taught in various ways through all grade levels. The substance of these statements is that which will be considered *primary doctrine* at

Grace River Academy. Secondary or divisive doctrines and issues will not be presented as *primary* doctrine. When these types of doctrine or issues arise, they will be referred to the family and local churches for final authority.

GRACE

We believe all people have sinned and have fallen short of God's standard of holiness. God in His amazing grace has provided a way for every person to receive eternal life, and that way is only through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Salvation cannot be earned through personal goodness or human effort. It is a free gift that must be received by humble repentance and faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

GOD'S WORD

We believe the Bible is God's unique revelation to every person. It is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and it is the supreme and final authority on all matters upon which it teaches (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

THE TRINITY

We believe there is only one God, Creator of heaven and earth. He exists eternally as three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; each fully God and yet personally distinct from each other (2 Corinthians 13:14).

PEOPLE

We believe every person is created in the image of God and every person is of immense worth to God. Central to the message of the Bible is the understanding that God loves every person, and God invites each person to live in communion with Him and to live in community with other believers (Romans 5:12).

JESUS

We believe Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was born of the Virgin Mary and lived a sinless life. He willingly took upon Himself the punishment for every sin through His death. He overcame sin and death through His bodily resurrection, and He ascended to Heaven and is at the right hand of the Father serving as our advocate and mediator (Matthew 1:18-25; Colossians 2:9).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and He dwells within every believer. He convicts the world of sin and He draws people to Christ. The Holy Spirit is available to empower believers to lead Christ-like lives, and He gives believers spiritual

gifts to serve the church and to be witnesses of Christ to the world (Acts 2-4; Ephesians 4:30-32; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

OUR FUTURE

We believe in the second coming of Christ for the living and the dead. At the final judgment, unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. Believers will be received into God's loving presence for eternity and will be rewarded for their faithfulness to Him in this life (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 20:11-15).

OUR COMMUNITY

We believe all believers are members of the body of Christ, the one true universal Church. Spiritual unity is to be expressed among Christians by their love for one another across ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, national, generational, gender, and denominational lines (Acts 16: 15; Hebrews 10:25).

DISCIPLESHIP

We believe discipleship is an ongoing process whereby a believer continues to grow in Christlikeness. The local church is a congregation of believers who gather for worship, prayer, instruction, encouragement, mutual accountability, and community with each other. As disciples of Christ in the local church, believers invest time, energy, and resources to fulfill the Great Commission (Acts 2:40-47).

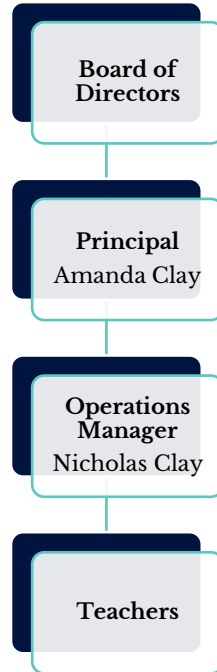
RENEWAL

We believe water baptism by immersion is an outward expression of an inward decision to follow Christ. We believe in the commemoration of the Lord's Supper with the use of bread and juice as symbols for Christ's broken body and His shed blood that He offered up as a payment in full for every person's sins (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

FAMILY

We believe that God defines marriage as the life-long covenant between one man and one woman, and that all forms of sexual activity outside of marriage are sin. We believe that God immutably creates each person to reflect His image as male or female.

Organizational Chart



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors serves the school by setting policies that define and maintain the goals of the school. The Board of Directors examines the school's goals, policies, programs, and curriculum in light of biblical principles and those of classical education. It is a corporate body comprised of up to seven active directors at any one time. Because of the corporate nature of the Board of Directors, an individual director has no authority over the school in any capacity.

DIRECTORS:

John McCloud, D.Min., M.Div.
Dianne McCloud
Amanda Clay, M.Ed.
Nicholas Clay, MA

PRINCIPAL

The Principal reports to the Board of Directors and is the head administrator over the entire school. He oversees the management of the school and is directly involved in policy development and implementation, finances, curriculum development, teacher supervision and training, student discipline, curriculum implementation, and school programs.

Curriculum Goals

VERITAS PRESS CURRICULUM

Grace River Academy utilizes the Veritas Press curriculum designed for classical, Christian schools. This material does not only teach students the information needed to pass an assessment, it provides a foundational learning experience, preparing them to learn how to think and communicate in the upper grades. Additionally, as Latin is added to the curriculum in 2-5th grades, students gain a tool of leverage for mastering the English language, its vocabulary, and its grammar. Veritas Press desires to see students assimilate "Godly principles, critical thinking skills, Christ-centered values, integrated knowledge, and God-given potential," making them the perfect partner for what God is doing at Grace River Academy.

BIBLE – We seek to:

- Clearly integrate the Scriptures and a biblical worldview in an obvious and intentional way in all aspects of every class.
- Encourage parental responsibility for purposefully teaching God's Word to their children (Proverbs 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 6:4).
- Encourage local churches to equip and motivate parents to teach their children God's Word.

ENGLISH – We seek to:

- Equip every student with the skills necessary for good writing, including spelling, grammar, style, clarity, etc.
- Put a major emphasis on good writing by requiring the students to write often and correctly in each subject area.
- Encourage clear thinking by the students through requiring clear writing.
- Introduce the students to many styles of writing using the Bible and other high-quality literature.

HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY – We seek to:

- Teach the students that God is in control of History and He will determine its ultimate outcome.
- Enable the students to see God's hand in the history of the world and the United States.
- Broaden the students' understanding of history and geography as the students mature.

- Specifically, begin with local history and geography in 1st grade, Old Testament in 2nd grade, New Testament and Ancient Egypt in 3rd grade, Middle Ages in 4th grade, and 1520 to present in 5th grade.
- Make history and geography “come alive” for the students using many forms of information and research (i.e., biographies, illustrations, field trips, guest speakers, music, art, foods, architecture, etc.).

SCIENCE – We seek to:

- Develop in the students an increasing appreciation of the orderly and wondrous way God has designed the universe, and the laws which govern it.
- Impart to the students the grammar of Physics, Biology, Earth Science, and Chemistry through the method of *doing science*.
- Teach the students the scientific process by practicing it numerous times in each grade, so that by the time the students enter logic/rhetoric-level science they should be very familiar with the scientific method.
- Encourage the students to think, to question, and to test their own theories.
- Develop the students’ skills of observation and abilities to record and analyze information.
- Encourage the students to apply their scientific knowledge to daily life.
- Develop the students’ appreciation and knowledge of great scientists, especially Christian scientists, of the past.
- Use many forms of instruction to teach scientific concepts and methods (i.e., a large variety of experiments, demonstrations, research projects, illustrations, field trips, guest speakers, etc.).

MATHEMATICS – We seek to:

- Ensure that the students have a thorough mastery of basic mathematical functions and tables.
- Put an emphasis on conceptual, as well as practical understanding of math through the frequent use of story problems.
- Illustrate God’s unchanging character through the timeless, logical mathematical systems He gave to man through His gift of reason.

READING – We seek to:

- Use phonics as the primary building blocks for teaching students to read.
- Encourage the students to read correctly as soon as possible (normally in kindergarten or first grade).
- Introduce the students to high quality children’s literature as soon as possible through our Literature program.

- Carefully monitor the student’s reading abilities to ensure they are at a reasonable level, are comprehending adequately, and are reading fluently—both orally and silently. This includes the proper use of word-attack skills.
- Foster a life-long love of reading and high-quality literature after being taught to recognize the characteristics of such literature.

ART – We seek to:

- Develop classes receiving formal art instruction once a week where they will be trained to draw, paint, sculpt, etc., knowledgeably, joyfully, and skillfully unto the Lord.

MUSIC – We seek to:

- Develop classes receiving formal music instruction where they will be trained to sing knowledgeably, joyfully, and skillfully to the Lord on a regular basis.
- Enrich the teaching of Scripture through the teaching of many classic, meaningful hymns.
- Encourage (through a variety of options) students to select some area of music, vocal or instrumental, to pursue on their own.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – We seek to:

- Provide Physical Education classes once a week for Grades 1-5.
- In cooperation with the families, encourage the students to knowledgeably establish and maintain good health and nutritional habits.
- To enhance Biblical patterns of behavior through activities requiring cooperation, teamwork, and general good sportsmanship.

Latin Education

Latin curriculum begins for students at Grace River Academy in the second grade. Latin students are higher achievers, and that is no surprise. About eighty percent of English vocabulary comes from Latin and Greek, with over fifty percent of our vocabulary coming from the Latin. Two examples should suffice in making the point. The Latin word *sisto* means *I stand*, or *I stop*. From it we derive *consist* (stand together), *desist* (to stop), *insist* (to stand upon), *exist* (to stand out), and *persist* (to stand through). The Latin word *panis* means bread. From it we get *companion* (one who shares your bread), *accompany* (same thought), and *pantry* (a place to keep bread). Even though English is not a Romance language, the effect of Latin on our daily discourse has been immense. When we consider that successful people often share only one thing, and that one thing

is a large vocabulary, the reason for our desire for a rigorous Latin program should be obvious.

The study of Latin also supplies students with a firm understanding of grammar. By studying a language not their own, students are forced to learn on a conceptual level the differences between parts of speech, noun functions, types of clauses, and all sorts of grammatical concepts. Mastery of grammar in general gives students a greater facility in writing and speaking than a study of English alone can do.

But most importantly, Latin is essential to classical Christian education because it enables students to read a wide array of Western literature, including some of the best literature ever written. The works of Latin authors such as Virgil and Cicero portray the goodness, truth, and beauty of God's created order, and it is worth learning Latin simply to be able to read these works in the original language.

BASIC OBJECTIVES

SECON & THIRD GRADE: Foundational vocabulary, word endings, grammatical cases, and word form variations.

FOURTH GRADE: More vocabulary, beginning grammar work, basic verbs, simple sentences.

FIFTH GRADE: More sentences, vocabulary, beginning translation work, phrases, grammar.

LATIN REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW STUDENTS

Tutoring in Latin will be required for students entering grades 4 and 5 who have not had formal Latin training. The student's tutoring must be with the parent or a Grace River Academy approved tutor and is the financial responsibility of the Parent. Summer Latin Camp may also be required.

Homework Philosophy and Guidelines

PHILOSOPHY

Grace River Academy may assign some amount of homework to many of its students at any given time. Below are the primary reasons or causes for homework being assigned:

1. Students often need some amount of extra practice in specific or new concepts, skills, or facts. In certain subjects (e.g. math or languages), regular practice at home may be necessary for mastery. Therefore, after reasonable in-class time is spent on the material, the teacher may assign homework to allow for the necessary practice.
2. Repeated, short periods of practice or study of new information is often a better way to learn than one long period of study.
3. Grace River Academy recognizes that parental involvement is critical to the success of a child's education. Visiting the classroom, regularly communicating with his teachers, and checking on homework are just a few ways for parents to actively assist their child in his studies. This will also keep the parents informed as to the current topics of study in the class.
4. Homework may also be assigned to students who, having been given adequate time to complete an assignment in class, did not use the time wisely. The homework, in this situation serves a punitive, as well as practical, purpose.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNING HOMEWORK

The necessity for doing homework will vary from grade to grade and even from student to student. The guide below should be regarded as *average times*, not as required minimum times, and then only if homework is assigned. The chart below is an estimated time of homework assigned to the average student at Grace River Academy. Individual times may vary according to individual ability and work habits.

GRADE	APPROXIMATE TIME PER NIGHT
Kindergarten	20-30 minutes
First, Second	30-40 minutes
Third	30-45 minutes
Fourth, Fifth	45 minutes

Promotion and Retention Policies

STUDENT PROMOTION POLICY

The following policy regarding promotion is to be applied to all entering and continuing students in grades 1-5. (Students entering Kindergarten must meet only the age and maturity requirements outlined in previously established guidelines.)

New students must meet the following criteria to be accepted to Grace River Academy at grade level:

1. New applicants may be given an admissions test, developed by Grace River Academy, to determine basic skills levels (reading, math, English, and Latin, where appropriate) and grade placement.
2. Applicants will provide standardized test scores, work samples, and transcripts showing successful completion of the previous grade by a demonstrated proficiency of at least 75% or higher in reading, math, and English. They also should have satisfactorily (60% or higher) completed science and history and/or geography within the previous curriculum.
3. The results of admissions testing will be considered with the applicant's report card and standardized testing scores to determine the best grade level at Grace River Academy for that student to enter. If the combined results are not strong enough to warrant placing the student in the desired grade, the parents will be apprised of this and be encouraged to consider having their child enter at their previous grade.

Current students must meet the following criteria to be promoted to the next successive grade:

Pass each subject, reading, math, and English with at least a 70% final grade average, and have no more than one grade in any subject below 70% in a trimester.

Readiness for promotion from the student's current grade is determined by cumulative mastery of curriculum objectives with at least a 70% grade on the student's report card in the core subjects of reading, math, and English. In younger grades, a student's behavioral maturity is also considered. In the event that a student has a test average in a subject that is less than 70%, summer remediation or tutoring may be recommended.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RETENTION

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to increase the communication from the school to the home in the instance of a child possibly needing to repeat a grade. Considering and recommending a student for possible retention in a grade is always a very serious matter, and every step of the process should be well documented.

CONSIDERATION: Several similar questions have emerged in our experience which may help in the initial stages of considering whether a student may need to repeat a grade. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but it includes samples of some pertinent questions the teacher may want to document and go over with the parents:

How old is the child? (Age plays a tremendous role in a child's ability and maturity to succeed in school. The more mature, the easier school tasks become.)

What is the sex of the child? (Very frequently, boys will have a harder time adjusting to school patterns than girls will. Boys often need more time to mature than girls do.)

Did the child attend kindergarten? (Certain school habits and behaviors are begun even in kindergarten. Depending on where and whether the child attended can reveal some insights to the behavior and aptitude causing the current concern.)

What is the home life like for the child? (Things to consider include church life, family devotions, single parent, divorce, remarriage, working parents, etc. Essentially, is the child's home life one that instills security and love, with predictable patterns of living? The importance and influence of the home is without equal in the life of a child.)

Are reading and the love of books evident in the home? (No other single academic factor plays a greater role in the success of a child in school. Do the parents like to read and do/did they read to the child frequently?)

Is the cause for concern here primarily behavioral, academic, or a combination of both? (If possible, the primary cause for concern should be singled out. Behavioral problems may still indicate retention is necessary but identifying the concern will help determine the best plan for correction.)

Has the child had to repeat a grade before? (If not, this is moot. If so, when and why did the child repeat? Due to the rapid physical growth of a child, we do not recommend a child repeating the same grade more than once. It is also unlikely that repeating two grades would really address the problem.)

What are the specific indicators the teacher has identified that give rise to the current consideration? (These should be documented as indicated in the Recommendations section below.)

RECOMMENDATIONS: This section includes the formal communications that, in addition to the normal reporting schedule, should be made when a child is being

considered for possible retention. NOTE: The first three (K-2) years are the most critical years for a child to set the patterns and learn the basic skills that will be built upon in later school life. Retention should be a greater possibility in these years, rather than in 3rd, 4th, or 5th grade, to give the child more time to mature and master the basic skills before going on. Therefore, the following timeline and recommended procedures are aimed at the primary grades especially, although not exclusively.

At the time of reporting for:

THE FIRST QUARTER there will be a Parent-Teacher Conference Day. At that time, a child who has had difficulty (as compared to a normal rate of progress) should have a short, written summary made, in addition to the report card. This summary should identify the specific concerns the teacher has. A copy should go to the parent and the original to the student's file. Any suggestions for additional help the parent may be able to provide should also be noted. Obviously, this summary should be gone over with the parents at the conference.

THE SECOND QUARTER Parent-Teacher conference for the child in question should focus on any progress on the items documented to date. If, in the teacher's opinion, inadequate progress has been made, the teacher should make that clear to the parent, with as much documentation and examples as possible. A written summary of the conference should be made by the teacher and filed. *Unless the child cannot meet the criteria for passing the grade (as described in the Promotion) it is not recommended that retention be planned at this time.* If there is *any* possibility that the child *could* satisfactorily pass the grade, planning retention at this time would be premature.

THE THIRD QUARTER another conference should be held with the parents to seriously consider retention if inadequate progress has been made. If the Promotion requirements have not been met, retention will likely be required. If there is some question, the teacher should document his/her recommendation regarding both retention and activities the parents could assist the child in over the summer. *In questionable cases, the **parents** will make the final decision regarding retention.* The teacher's recommendation will go into the child's school file along with a documentation of the parents' decision.

Admission, Re-Enrollment, and Withdrawal Procedure/Requirements

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

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

1. All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
2. Upon return of a completed application, application fee, and supporting materials, a family interview and academic testing (if necessary) will be arranged. Both parents and the applicant are to attend the interview.
3. If the applicant is approved for admission, the school will provide written notice of acceptance along with any other pertinent information regarding enrollment. A \$100.00 non-refundable enrollment fee (\$200.00 cap per family). This enrollment fee is due 15 days after notice of acceptance is given to confirm student's enrollment. If the fee is not paid on time, students' spots may be forfeited.
4. Many factors are considered and weighed when determining grade placement and teacher assignment. Our goal is to determine the best possible fit for each child. While parental input is important, because there are many factors involved in the decision-making process, the administration reserves the right to place each child at our discretion. Input regarding the needs of children is welcome. For communication purposes, it is best to provide this in writing.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDENT

1. A child should reach the age of five years by September 30th of the fall in which he/she enters kindergarten. Children entering kindergarten should be able to demonstrate appropriate age maturity and letter recognition and some sound association. They are expected to recognize numbers 1-10, be able to count to 20, and know their address, telephone number, and birth date.

2. Parents of children with known special needs or disabilities applying to Grace River Academy should make an appointment with the school to discuss their educational program.
3. It should be noted that the academic program at Grace River Academy will be a challenge with varying degrees of difficulty for students coming into the program. Should a student have had academic difficulties in their previous program, the likelihood of compounding that difficulty would be great were they to be placed in the next successive grade at Grace River Academy. The administration reserves the right to place each child at our discretion. Appeals for diverging from or waiving the requirements of this policy should be submitted to the school.
4. The child should understand that their parents have delegated their authority to the school. Therefore, they are subject to the instruction and discipline of the teachers, staff, and Principal in their prescribed roles at Grace River Academy.
5. The school may withdraw acceptance at any point during the admissions process when it becomes apparent that Grace River Academy will not be a suitable environment for a particular child or family.
6. All students who have not had formal Latin training will participate in tutoring until successfully able to work at grade level instruction (70 percent). Please see *Latin Education* pages 7-8 of this handbook for complete details.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PARENTS

1. Though not required to be Christians, the parents of students at Grace River Academy should have a clear understanding of the biblical philosophy and purpose of Grace River Academy, including the school's mission, vision, and Statement of Faith. This understanding includes a willingness to have their child clearly taught the school's Statement of Faith in various and frequent ways within the school's program.
2. The parents must be willing to cooperate with all the written policies of Grace River Academy and interpretations of governing documents by the Board of Directors. This is most important in the areas of discipline (see *School Rules and Discipline Policy* on pages 30-32), schoolwork standards, and communication with the respective teachers and Principal.

RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

1. Re-enrollment packets will be sent out to current families in March 2024. Parents who wish to re-enroll their currently enrolled students for the following school year must complete the packet and submit the \$100.00 registration fee in the FACTS Family Portal.
2. The Principal will provide written notice of denied re-enrollment by April 1, along with any other pertinent information.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

1. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdrawal their child from Grace River Academy, notice shall be provided to the Principal in the form of a signed letter or email. The student's withdrawal date shall be determined as 30 days after notice is received by the Principal.
2. Parent/guardian's FACTS Tuition account will be refunded based on a rate of \$37.36 per school day left in the current school year after student's withdrawal date.

Attendance Requirements

A student enrolled at Grace River Academy is expected to be present and on time every day school is in session.

SCHOOL HOURS: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (arrival time: 8:00 a.m., late after 8:20 a.m.)

SHORT TERM ABSENCES

If a student needs to be absent from school for one to two days, for any reason, the parents should contact the school office and the student's teachers in writing or email as soon as possible (email address may be found on the school's website). Absences are only marked as excused for reasons such as illness, scheduled appointments, and educational trips. Other circumstances may be preapproved by the offices of the Principal. In the instance that Grace River Academy administration is not made aware of the reason for the absence, it will be marked as unexcused.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

If a student needs to be absent for three or more consecutive days, the parents should notify the school in writing or by email explaining the circumstances. This will permit

the administration to inform the appropriate teacher(s) and to compile the necessary schoolwork, which the student would otherwise miss. Notification should be made as soon as possible to limit the amount of missed schoolwork.

We will gladly cooperate with families taking their children from school for vacations, trips, etc. However, when extended absences are voluntary (versus emergency or illness) we expect all schoolwork to be completed within the time specified by the teacher. We recommend that students complete their assignments prior to planned, extended absences. This eliminates the need to work on vacation and complete make-up work.

Frequent, non-consecutive absences are sometimes unavoidable due to illness but can interrupt a student's ability to keep up in school. We recommend that families communicate with teachers when concerns arise.

In the event a student is absent from school for more than ten days during one quarter (*for any reason, planned or unplanned*), the appropriate administrator and teacher(s) will meet to determine whether the student will receive a letter grade or a grade of P (pass) or F (fail) on his report card. A parents' conference will be scheduled immediately, and the student might not receive credit for that quarter.

If a student misses more than thirty days of school during the year, they may be at risk of being retained in their present grade for the following academic year.

A student must complete final exams before advancing to the next grade level. A student who is absent during a final exam will receive a grade of I (incomplete) in the pertinent course until the missed exam is completed.

Upon request from parents, the school board is authorized to waive requirements set by other provisions of this policy. In doing so, it shall take into account the Principal's recommendation, the student's mastery in all subjects, attitude toward work and study, and disciplinary record at school.

MAKE UP WORK

Students may take make-up tests and submit any other make-up work before or after school. It is expected that the child or their parents discuss these arrangements with the teacher and take the initiative in completing the missed work.

LATENESS

Students are required to arrive by 8:20 a.m. Students arriving after the required time should report to the office for a late pass before entering their classroom. Parents should recognize that one student's lateness affects an entire class and that the responsibility to arrive on time is theirs. Therefore, out of Christian charity and consideration for their classmates and teachers, please make every effort to be punctual. Please refer to the second paragraph of Section 3 above ("Extended Absences") for clarity on missing part of the day because of lateness.

SIGNING STUDENTS OUT/IN

When it is necessary to sign students out (and consequently back in, e.g., for a doctor's appointment) during the school day, parents are requested to go to the office and sign out/in with the "Sign Out Log." Parents are asked to provide the date, time out/in, student's name, teacher, and parent signature.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Students in grades K-3 must remain in classrooms until picked up by an authorized adult or older student.

Students in grades 5 may be authorized, by parents in writing, to pick up students in K-3 and escort them to the parking lot. Students in grades 4+ will be dismissed directly from their classrooms at 3:00 p.m.

Closings/Delays/Early Dismissals

For notification of school closings, delayed openings, and early dismissals, Grace River Academy offers three options:

1. Sign up to receive a text message alerts through FACTS (contact Amanda Clay for details on setting up your account at amandac@graceriveracademy.org)
2. All parents receive an email from the school office.
3. Log on to Grace River Academy's web page, www.graceriveracademy.org, where all urgent announcements are posted on the front page.
4. Grace River Academy will follow the emergency closing schedule of Virginia Beach City Public Schools for the first two days of closure. In the rare instance of

multiple days closed, Grace River Academy administration will determine whether to open school on subsequent days.

Communication

The relationship between school and home is a delicate one requiring the utmost respect for the authority in the home and the authority of the school. Once enrolled in the school, the family must be willing to submit to the school's authority in governing its affairs. Yet, the school must also uphold the family's authority in governing its affairs. Given these two realms of authority and considering the vastness of the responsibility in training and educating our children, disagreements are inevitable. They may be small or great, but they will inevitably occur. We believe that God can be glorified during these disagreements through the peacemaking actions of those involved. Every parent must be willing to seek proper resolution to any conflict. Sometimes this means simply overlooking the action (Proverbs 19:11), and sometimes it means speaking the truth in love. Harboring bitterness or keeping records of offenses is neither biblical nor profitable (1 Corinthians 13). We encourage every family to attempt to be at peace with all men and have outlined the proper lines of communication between the school and home according to the biblical principles found in Matthew 18. We believe that scripture teaches that conflicts should be handled discreetly and carefully, while believing and speaking the best about everyone involved. Grace River Academy staff and Principal will abide by these same principles in communicating with parents and students.

PARENT TO PARENT: If an issue should arise regarding the conduct of children outside of school, or if there appears to be a personal conflict between families, the families should each seek to make peace with one another by discussing their concerns in a loving, biblical manner. The school has no authority over its students outside of school and will not become involved in personal conflicts beyond their effects in the classroom. If mediation is necessary, the school would urge families to seek the help of their church.

PARENTS TO TEACHER: If an issue should arise regarding individual teacher rules or procedures, the parents should speak to the teacher before discussing the matter with those in authority over the teacher. Sending an email is often the best means of communication with teachers. Parents may also call the teachers directly by dialing their classroom phone number or by calling the front office.

PARENTS TO PRINCIPAL: If an issue should arise regarding school rules, procedures, curriculum, programs, facilities, or finances, the parents should speak to the Principal before discussing the matter with the Board of Directors. Parents may also present concerns about individual teacher rules or procedures if the matter was not resolved with the specific teacher.

PARENTS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS: If an issue regarding any policy, curriculum, program, or staff member has not been satisfactorily resolved with the Principal, the parents may present their concerns to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will discuss the matter and seek the best resolution possible. Typically, the Board of Directors will not hear a matter that has not been presented to the Principal. Parents may address their concerns in writing to the Board Chairman through the Principal.

IN CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVING ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL HARRASSMENT OR ANY TYPE OF ABUSE: In cases involving complaints of potential sexual harassment or any other type of abuse, the Principal shall be the officer to whom all such complaints are directed. Parents, students, and staff members are encouraged to report harassment that they experience or witness. Any school parent, student, or staff member who receives a complaint of harassment or abuse should report it immediately to the Principal. If the complaint involves the Principal, the report should be made directly to the Chairman of the School Board. All complaints will be investigated.

Dress Code

PHILOSOPHY

In a culture in which personal expression is exalted, beauty is held in question, the good of our neighbor is subordinated to the desires of the individual, and even biological gender of men and women as created in the image of God (male and female) is brought into question, it is the desire of Grace River Academy to glorify God in both the character and culture of the school. As ambassadors for Christ to each other and to a watching world, the following principles should guide our choice of attire:

1. Our actions and our attire should point to the Lord that we serve.
2. Our actions and our attire should portray a heart of both modesty and humility.
3. Our actions and attire should seek to reflect respectful conformity to our biological gender.
4. Our actions and our attire should not seek to exalt the outward beauty of the individual student but rather seek to invest in and protect the virtue and character of that portion of the Body of Christ that finds itself at Grace River Academy.
5. Our actions and our attire should support the orderly operation of our school.

6. As we seek to invest in each other, our actions and our attire should support a school culture that requires a decreasing level of oversight in contrast to a culture of the individual that requires increased regulation and oversight and the loss of the freedom that we have in Christ.

Considering the above, we ask that the parents and students support a manner of dress that reflects the Christian, classical, and scholarly image of Grace River Academy. As such, Grace River Academy students should appear neat, clean, and modest during the school day, seeking not to distract others or solicit oversight by their appearance.

GENERAL GROOMING AND DRESS

Students are expected to look neat, clean, and modest always. The following requirements apply:

HAIR: Hair should be neat and not covering the eyes. Hair for boys should not cover the eyes, ears, or collar. Heads may not be shaven, either completely or in part. Hair may not be dyed either completely or in part. Hair accessories for girls and young ladies should be simple and not distracting to themselves or others.

BODIES: Girls' and young ladies' jewelry, if worn, must be simple. Large hoop earrings (larger than a nickel, for example), nose rings, ankle bracelets and multiples of earrings, bracelets and necklaces are not permitted. Earrings are to be worn only in lobes of ears. Boys and young men may not have piercings or wear choker style necklaces. Boys may wear one wrist bracelet. Tattoos of any kind are not permitted for any students.

OUTERWEAR: Students are not permitted to wear outerwear in the building during school hours. The one exception to this policy is that students may wear outerwear in the cafeteria during lunchtime before going out to recess.

OTHER: The hem of girls' skirts must fall at the knee. Parents are responsible to monitor skirt length with growth spurts.

Health Requirements/Policies

It is expected that students are sent to school healthy, well rested, and ready for class. Students who are lethargic, tired, and unable to do their schoolwork will be sent home for needed rest and recuperation. Grace River Academy does not operate a health suite. Students who are not able to do their schoolwork will be sent home.

Parents should provide the school with updated emergency numbers, using the Emergency Contact Form, of friends and/or family who can pick up their child from school if the child becomes ill. This form will also be used to contact people who may need notification in a medical emergency and includes a signed waiver to facilitate necessary surgical action.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to submit proof of immunizations showing up-to-date immunization history as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Parents may use our *Immunization Record Checklist* to ensure that proof of all required immunizations are on file. Students will not be required to have the COVID-19 vaccine unless they become required by the Commonwealth.

CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS

Students with fever, diarrhea, contagious viruses, severe colds, strep throat, and the like should remain at home to avoid infecting others. They should not return to school until they are symptom-free and without a fever for at least 24 hours prior to re-entering the classroom (fever-free without the aid of medication).

COVID-19: With the onset of the novel coronavirus COVID-19, it is to be understood that there is inherent risk of being exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending Grace River Academy and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. In an effort to protect our students, staff, and teachers, the following steps will be taken by Grace River Academy, our students, and their parents.

1. Students who feel or appear unwell will have their temperature taken upon arrival or throughout the day. Any student with a fever (as defined by the CDC as 100.4° F or higher) will be sent home.
2. Students exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, chills, muscle pain, headache, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell without a physician's release will be sent home and will not be permitted to return to school until after a 10-day quarantine period (beginning the day of the first symptoms).
3. If students are exposed to COVID-19 at Grace River Academy, students will be asked to remain at home until after a 10-day quarantine period (beginning the day of exposure). Any matter of tuition reimbursement as a result of known exposure at Grace River Academy will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Principal and the Board of Directors.

4. Parents will keep their child home if the child, the parents, or any other family members living in the same household becomes exposed to or infected by COVID-19.
5. Students will wash hands often and utilize hand sanitizer stations around the facility.
6. Parents will be asked to sign and return a “COVID-19 Family Commitment” document that outlines these precautions and understanding of risk before their child begins classes.

HEAD LICE

In the case of head lice on any child, a general notification will be sent to all families at respective campuses. Every discretion will be used in communications. *To avoid spreading lice, infected children should be kept home from school until they are free of lice and nits.* Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is lice and nit free.

MEDICATION DISTRIBUTION

Parents are to administer medication to their own children before and/or after school hours as necessary.

Parents must complete a “Permission to Administer Medication” form (included in enrollment packet) and have the *signed physician’s orders on file* for each prescription medication requested to be administered by Grace River Academy. No medication will be given without the physician's signed request.

All medication taken by students must be administered by one of the following:

- a. Parents of the student.
- b. A Virginia Medication Administration Training (MAT) certified staff member of Grace River Academy.

No student will be permitted to administer any form (prescription or over the counter) of medication to themselves or any other student (except for medicinal inhalers and Epi-Pens, see below).

Students who require medication on an as needed basis through the use of an inhaler or Epi-Pen will be permitted to self-medicate if the following conditions have been met:

- a. A physician has determined that the student should carry the medicinal inhaler or Epi-Pen on his or her person and self-administer the medication. Physicians' orders must be on file with the school office.
- b. Parents must complete the "Permission to Administer Medication" form and indicate that: "the student is able to self-administer and carry the inhaler/Epi-Pen and has been trained in its use."

Grace River Academy will keep a supply of Acetaminophen that may be administered after written permission is granted by the parent in the "Permission to Administer Medication" form.

ABUSE INDICATIONS

As required by law, any students who show signs of abuse or neglect will be reported directly to the proper authorities.

Parent Involvement

Grace River Academy seeks to assist parents in their efforts to bring up their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

As a support and extension of the family unit, Grace River Academy considers the family to be of first importance to a child. God, through His Word, the Bible, indicates that the family is the most important human institution He designed, since He compares it to the relationship believers have with Christ and the Father. Therefore, at Grace River Academy we are continually seeking ways to actively involve the parents, siblings, and grandparents of our students.

Following are just a few of the more common ways this is done. You may:

1. Assist in the classroom, regularly or infrequently (arrangements should be made with the teacher concerned).
2. Help in the classroom as a classroom parent.
3. Assist with school programs.
4. Accompany the class on field trips.

5. Support a teacher or administrator through regular prayer.

School Rules and Discipline Policy

SCHOOL RULES

The following school rules are those essential policies that we require all our students to be aware of and adhere to. Each teacher is free to add to this list those rules that allow his/her classroom to run more smoothly and efficiently.

1. Students are expected to cooperate with and embrace basic Christian standards of behavior and conversation.
2. There should be no talking back or inappropriate arguing with teachers or staff. Prompt and cheerful obedience is expected. Instructions from the teacher should not have to be repeated.
3. No chewing gum, electronic games, or devices in school during normal school day.
4. No guns or knives are allowed on the school grounds.
5. Students are expected to be aware of and avoid the off-limits areas of the building or grounds. *Children should not play in parking lots before or after school.*
6. Students are expected to treat all the school's materials or facilities with respect and care. This includes all textbooks distributed to the students. (Students will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks.)
7. Students are expected to treat one another with kindness and respect. Teasing, criticizing, and name-calling are not permitted.
8. Students are expected to treat worship, prayer, and class discussion with proper reverence. Jokes, songs, or behaviors that treat the Lord's name or character with triviality are not permitted.
9. Public displays of affection (i.e., holding hands, kissing, etc.) are not permitted at school.

10. It is expected that students work diligently and concentrate fully on their work while in school.
11. All work is to be completed within the time specified by the teacher. Repeated failure to complete assignments on time is considered disobedience and will be addressed in an office visit and possibly suspension.
12. Restrooms are only to be used in conformity with one's biological gender.
13. All Grace River Academy employees, along with any family members volunteering in the school, must undergo a criminal history background check.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

"...He who loves his son is careful to discipline him" (Proverbs 13:24b).

Grace River Academy seeks to provide an environment where the students are encouraged and challenged to exemplify Christian behavior in all aspects of the school day. It is imperative that our school be a haven of safety for all children. Actions that jeopardize the safety of others are dealt with promptly.

The kind and amount of discipline will be determined by the teachers and Principal. The discipline will be administered considering the student's problem and attitude. All discipline will be based on biblical principles, e.g., restitution, apologies (public and private), swift and appropriate punishment to bring about restoration of fellowship without lingering attitudes, etc. As part of our belief in the authority of the family, parents will be made aware of concerns or warnings given to a student by a teacher or the Principal, as well as of any disciplinary action taken as soon as possible after each incident.

Most of the day-to-day discipline should be conducted by the classroom teacher. However, there are instances where a stronger warning or more severe penalty is needed. Such cases will be dealt with by the Principal. There are five basic offenses that will automatically necessitate such action. They are:

1. Disrespect shown to any staff member. The staff member will be the judge of whether disrespect was shown.
2. Dishonesty in any situation while at school, including lying, cheating, and stealing.
3. Rebellion, i.e., outright disobedience in response to instructions, including repeated failure to follow teacher directions or to complete tasks as assigned.

4. Fighting, i.e., striking in anger with the intention to harm another student.
5. Unkind, obscene, vulgar, or profane language, as well as taking the name of the Lord in vain.

The Principal may require immediate suspension for the remainder of the day, restitution, parental attendance during the school day with their child, or other measures deemed appropriate. In severe cases where there is no change in the student's actions or assistance from the parents, the child will be expelled for the remainder of the school year.

SUSPENSION

The Principal will normally follow the protocol below. In cases where change is evident and the student appears repentant, exceptions are possible. These exceptions will be determined by the Principal. Appeals for exceptions will not be recognized.

FIRST OFFENSE: Any of the above-mentioned behaviors and others where the child is clearly disobeying authority will result in a warning, restitution/apologies, and/or suspension for one school day. Missed work must be turned in when the child returns to school or a grade of zero will be recorded.

SECOND OFFENSE: A second offense will result in restitution/apologies and/or suspension for two school days. Missed work must be turned in when the child returns to school or a grade of zero will be recorded.

THIRD OFFENSE: A third offense will result in restitution/apologies and/or suspension for five school days. Missed work must be turned in when the child returns to school or a grade of zero will be recorded.

FOURTH OFFENSE: A fourth offense will result in expulsion for the remainder of the school year.

EXPULSION

The Grace River Academy Board realizes that expelling a student from school is a very serious matter and should always be carefully dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Forgiveness and restitution (repairing the damages through work, apologies, etc.) are fundamental to our total discipline policy. However, should a student and his parents not be able to eliminate behavioral problems before a fourth offense occurs, the student will be expelled.

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

Should a student commit an act with such serious consequences that the Principal deems it necessary, the protocol defined above may be bypassed and suspension or expulsion imposed immediately. Examples of such serious misconduct could include acts endangering the lives of other students or staff members, gross violence/vandalism to the school facilities, violations of civil law, or any act in clear contradiction of scriptural commands. Students may be subject to school discipline for serious misconduct which occurs after school hours.

RE-ADMITTANCE

Should the expelled student desire to be readmitted to Grace River Academy at a later date, the Principal or his delegated committee will make a decision based on the student's attitude and circumstances at the time of reapplication.

Before and After-School Care

Grace River Academy understands that, in today's economic climate, it is unreasonable to expect a parent or guardian to be positioned to drop their student off at school as late as 8:00 a.m. and still arrive to their place of employment on time. As such, before and after school care is included in the tuition cost and available to any family who wishes to use it. The following section will outline the hours and late pick-up policies.

HOURS

Students may be dropped off as early as 6:30 a.m. Parents or guardians will ring the doorbell at either entrance to the building and wait for a teacher to unlock the door. Parents or guardians of K-3 students will escort their child to the before-school care classroom. 4th and 5th grade students may escort themselves to the classroom.

At the end of the school day (3:00 p.m.), students not utilizing after-school care may be picked up by their parent or guardian. Students utilizing after-school care will remain with the after-school care teacher. Parents must pick up their child by 5:30 p.m.

LATE FEES

Students picked up later than 5:30 p.m. will incur a \$10.00 charge for the first 15-minute period. After 5:45 p.m., students will incur a \$1.00 charge per minute. Fees will be applied to the students FACTS account.

Tuition & Fees for 2024-2025

APPLICATION FEE: \$22.00 due with application (non-refundable).

TUITION:	Kindergarten	\$6,750*
	First Grade	\$6,750*
	Second Grade	\$6,750*
	Third Grade	\$6,750*

DEPOSIT: **Re-enrolling students** will be sent a re-enrollment form through FACTS and asked to verify that student information is correct. At this time, you will be asked to pay the \$100 enrollment fee.

New students will use their FACTS application account to fill out the enrollment packet and pay the \$100 enrollment fee.

***Enrollment fee is discounted (50%)** for students who enroll before April 1.

***Tuition paid in one lump sum** will qualify for a 10% discount.

***Family discounts** *may* be available for families with two or more children enrolled at the same time.

PAYMENT PLANS: Tuition may be paid in full, semi-annually, or through ten monthly payments. Please see the chart below for options and fees associated with each payment plan. New families will set up their payment plan in the enrollment packet. Siblings of current students will be added to the existing payment plan.

Pay in Full					
Payment Method	Number of Payments	Starting Month	Available Payment Days	Last Day to Enroll	Payment Plan Enroll Fee
Automatic Payment	1	Aug.	10 th 25 th	7/27/23 8/11/23	\$25.00
Invoice	1	Aug.	10 th 25 th	7/18/23 8/2/23	\$25.00

Semi-Annual					
Payment Method	Number of Payments	Starting Month	Available Payment Days	Last Day to Enroll	Payment Plan Enroll Fee
Automatic Payment	2	Sep. Feb.	10 th 25 th	8/29/23 9/13/23	\$25.00
Invoice	2	Sep. Feb.	10 th 25 th	8/16/23 8/30/23	\$25.00

Monthly					
Payment Method	Number of Payments	Starting Month	Available Payment Days	Last Day to Enroll	Payment Plan Enroll Fee
Automatic Payment	10	Sep.	10 th 25 th	8/29/23 9/13/23	\$55.00
Invoice	10	Sep.	10 th 25 th	8/16/23 8/30/23	\$55.00

PAYMENT WITH CARD: Grace River Academy asks that all payments be paid with card through their FACTS account. Questions about paying through FACTS may be directed to the Administrative Assistant. FACTS charges up to 2.95% in processing fees.

WAITING LIST: In the event of a full class, a child may be placed on our waiting list after all other admission requirements have been fulfilled.

TUTION ASSISTANCE: Limited funds are available. Tuition assistance will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the Principal and Board of Directors.

RETURNED CHECKS: A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for dishonored checks.

LATE FEES:

A late charge of \$30 will be assessed on all monthly payments made past the due date.

For lump sum payments due: A late charge of 1.75% per month (21% annual) will be assessed for all accounts remaining unpaid as of due date.

Parents of students whose tuition is beyond 60 days past due will receive formal notification that all accounts must be resolved within 15 days. If accounts are not brought up to date in that time period, the Principal is authorized to dis-enroll at that time.

Academic Calendar for 2024-2025

August 26	First Day of Quarter 1
August 30 & September 2	Labor Day (School Closed)
November 1	Staff Day (No School for Students)
November 4	First Day of Quarter 2
November 11	Veterans Day (School Closed)
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Break (School Closed)
December 23 - January 1	Winter Break (School Closed)
January 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (School Closed)
January 27	Staff Day (No School for Students)
January 28	First Day of Quarter 3
February 17	President's Day (School Closed)
March 31 - April 4	Spring Break (School Closed)
April 18	Good Friday (School Closed)
May 26	Memorial Day (School Closed)
June 6	Last Day of School
June 9	Staff Day (No School for Students)