



**GRACE
CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY
Policy Manual**

(Approved by Grace School Board on
June 14, 2012)

Grace Organizational Structure

Grace Christian Academy is a 501C3 registered service organization whose primary purpose it to provide quality Christian education to the children of the “Little Village” and its surrounding communities.

Grace Christian Academy is headed by two boards. The first is the Board of Directors who is in charge of hiring/firing of the Principal/COO as well as financial oversight. The other is our Grace School Board whose responsibilities include but are not limited to hiring/firing of teachers, creating/implementing school policies and procedures, and curricular oversight.

Policy Procedures

Grace Christian Academy policies can be found in three different places. We have our parent handbook which includes our non-discrimination policy along with other policies that directly affect parents/students. We have a teacher handbook that has policies that apply to the faculty/staff at Grace Christian Academy. Finally, we have a Grace Policy manual that has general polices for the school. This policy manual is available upon request by teachers, parents, board members, etc.

Non-Discrimination

Grace Christian Academy serves the entire community. We admit students of any race, color, sex, disability or national ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational and employment policies and athletic or other school administered programs.

Grace Christian Academy takes its non-discrimination policies seriously. It is printed in all handbooks, in its promotional materials, and in its admissions packets. The School Board of Grace Christian Academy is responsible for implementation of the non-discrimination policy and addresses any concerns n this area.

Missing Student Report

All Children attending Grace Christian Academy are enrolled in the Student information system of GCA's IWAS account.

At the beginning of each semester, the principal checks the Missing Children's list in the student information System of GCA's IWAS account.

- If missing child is attending Grace, the principal gives notice of this fact by Email to the Department of State Police at missing@isp.state.il.us and to the Chicago Police Department.
- If a child is listed as missing that Grace believes should not be listed as Missing, the principal contacts the Illinois State Police.

School Records & Records Transferring

Establishment & Maintenance of Student Permanent Records

Grace Christian Academy student records will be divided into temporary and permanent files. The permanent files will contain the following information: student name, birth date, address, grades and level, parent's name, attendance records, and graduation date. The temporary files will contain all of the other information about a student not contained in their permanent file. This file may contain the following, but is not limited too: Standardized test scores, special education records, evaluations, and disciplinary forms. These records will be stored in separate lockable cabinets in the school office. The principal will act as the records keeper and will keep a log of all access requests and items added to the file. The principal will also review the files annually to check for misleading or unnecessary information. Both the permanent and temporary records will be maintained and stored in the office until 5 years after each student transfers or graduates. After which time, the permanent files will be moved to alternate storage for no more than an additional 55 years and the temporary files will be destroyed. A letter will be sent to the parent of a student before their student's temporary file is destroyed (Illinois General Assembly).

Access to Student Records

Permanent records may be inspected or copied by a biological parent, legal guardian, or the student. Temporary records may only be inspected by, or with written permission of the biological parent or legal guardian. All Requests must be made in writing and will be granted within 14 schools days. Access to a student's file may be denied if a parent has an order of protection or court order which prohibits it. Teachers may be granted

access to both a student's permanent and temporary records if the principal feels it is in the educational interest of the student. Access to records without parent consent may be granted to, but not limited to: law enforcement officials, juvenile authorities, and social service agencies. The Illinois School Student Records Act will be used as a guide for any questions concerning access to student files.

Student Record Dispute

A parent and/or guardian has the right to inspect and copy both the temporary and permanent files. If during inspection, a perceived inaccuracy or comment is found a grievance may be filed. The grievance must be in writing and be sent to the president of the Grace Lutheran School Board for review. The president will decide if the grievance is valid and make the appropriate changes if necessary.

Record Transfers & Holds

A request for transfer must be in writing and also have a signed release of records form. Records may then be picked up by the parent, or faxed/ mailed to the appropriate school. Records will be available ten school days after the request is received. Students that have an account balance will have a hold put on the release of their records (Friedman Foundation). Once the balance is paid in full, the release of records and written request have been received, the records will be released within 10 school days. New students applying for admission to Grace Lutheran School are required to obtain a copy of both their permanent and temporary records to be considered for admission. Certified copies of transfer records must be requested from the child's former school within 14 days of admission to Grace Christian Academy.

School incident Reporting

When any incidents listed below occur on the school, the principal, or his/her designee, immediately notifies the Chicago Police Department; and the principal, or his/her designee within three days of each incident notifies the Illinois Department of Police through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

- Drug Violations
- Firearms incidents
- Written complaints from school personnel concerning battery committed against school personnel

Patriotism

Grace Christian Academy provides instruction in American Patriotism, the principles of representative government, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the constitution of the State of Illinois, the proper use and display of the American Flag. Students are required to pass an examination on these subjects in order to graduate from the eighth grade. Students daily recite the pledge to the American flag as part of morning announcements.

Personnel Policies

The principal is responsible to prepare and maintain a Personnel File for all teachers. The file shall include application for employment, contract or called document, teaching certificate, transcripts that verify completion of requirements for a Bachelor's Degree or higher, criminal background (fingerprint) results, I-9 Employment Eligibility Form, TB skin test verification form, signed DCFS Mandated Reporter Form, signed Child Protection with registry checked, Medical Examination Form with results of tuberculin test and (or) X ray, signed verification of Blood pathogen training, and signed Hepatitis Vaccine Declination Form or record of vaccination.

The principal is responsible to prepare and maintain Personnel File for all support staff. The file shall include application for employment, contract, certification as required, criminal background (fingerprint) results, I-9 Employment Eligibility Form, signed DCFS Mandated Reporter Form, signed Child Protection with registry checked, Medical Examination Form with results of tuberculin test and (or) X ray, signed verification of Blood pathogen training, and signed Hepatitis Vaccine Declination Form or record of vaccination.

Requirement for criminal background check results is for employees on or after July 1, 2007.

Child Protection Policy

It is the intent and goal of the members of Grace Christian Academy to provide a safe, secure, protected, and caring environment for all children and students entrusted in our care. Grace Christian Academy has developed the following procedures and guidelines to enhance a safe and secure environment for the protection of all children, students, employees, and volunteers.

- A) Child Abuse is defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a child under the age of eighteen or whose mental capacity is that of a minor.

- B) This policy shall apply to all current and future employees and volunteers of Grace Christian Academy who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of children and students in any way.
- C) Employees and volunteers of Grace Christian Academy are aware of and follow these guidelines:
- 1) An employee or volunteer is not to remain alone with a child in a private area. A private area is defined as one in which occupants of the room cannot be seen by others.
 - 2) When an employee or volunteer meets with a child or group of children, the meeting is to be held in a public traffic area, or an area that is visible through a window or open door, or an area that is monitored by a second adult.
 - 3) Employees and volunteers are to limit their physical contact with children and be aware that physical contact may be misinterpreted.
 - 4) Employees and volunteers who are discovered to spend a considerable amount of time during non-school with the same child or children (who are not their children) may be subject to appropriate investigation and action by the principal, and/or supervisory personnel.
 - 5) Parents and volunteers are encouraged to report suspected abuse or questionable behavior to the principal or teacher. All such reports will be investigated thoroughly. Parents, volunteers, and employees are to keep reports of suspected abuse confidential to protect the privacy of the individuals involved and to eliminate the potential for the spread of incorrect or misleading information.
 - 6) Employees of Grace Christian Academy are required by state law to report cases of suspected cases of child abuse, either physical, sexual, or emotional, to the Illinois Department of Child & Family Services (DCFS) at 1-800-25-ABUSE or 1-217-524-2606
- D) A criminal background check will be conducted for all employees (at or before the time of employment) hired on or after July 1, 2007. A criminal background check will be conducted for school volunteers (at or before assignment) who are not current/previous school parents. A check of the Illinois State Sex Offender Registry (<http://isp.state.il.us/sor>) is made for all employees and volunteers of Grace Christian Academy. Some employee and volunteer positions may require additional reference checks and/or background checks.
- No individual who is found to have a criminal record involving conduct that raises concern about the person's ability to be with children or who is found to be a registered sex offender may be employed by Grace Christian Academy or serve as a volunteer for any school programs.
- E) All Employees and volunteers are required to submit to the school office a signed copy of the Child Protection Policy as verification and proof that they have knowledge and understanding of this policy.

Staffing & Review Procedures

Contract renewal of teaching and other staff of Grace Christian Academy are the responsibility of the principal. The principal shall inform the Grace School Board when the process is about to begin and solicit any input the board or its members. The principal may consult with the board if such action is deemed useful or appropriate. At the end of the review process, the principal shall report completion to the board.

Review of the administrator is conducted annually by a person appointed by the Grace Board of Directors. The appointee shall prepare a written report to be filed in the school office.

The principal shall maintain the standards of academic excellence as mandated by the Grace School Board and/or accrediting agencies, either public or private. Periodic staff evaluations will be done to assure this is being accomplished. The principal will supervise and direct classroom work, to assure that teachers are following satisfactory lesson plans and using methods designed to achieve the goals set by the Grace School Board in ways that are consistent with Christian values and assure that all students are progressing satisfactorily, with remedial help provided when appropriate. The principal will regularly visit classes to monitor the teacher's effectiveness and will counsel personally with teachers regarding improvement, techniques, activities, resources, and other pertinent items.

Student Support Services

When a student is experiencing repeated difficulty in school, it may be advisable to seek a diagnostic evaluation so that a plan for remediation may be devised to meet the specific and unique needs of the student. This applies to academic, behavior, speech, and other concerns identified by a parent or teacher. It is important that teachers and parents communicate such concerns to each other so that positive action is taken. Contact the classroom teacher or principal for available resources.

In some instances, students may be eligible for educational testing, speech therapy, and special under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Regulations and procedures change frequently. Contact the classroom teacher or principal for up-to-date information.

If a serious incident occurs that has a marked impact on the emotional state Grace's students and/or staff, outside intervention works may be contacted to provide counsel for students and/or staff. The decision to involve outside personnel will be made by the principal.

Wellness Policy

The School Board of Grace Christian Academy is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness: helps to reduce childhood obesity; supports nutrition education, physical activity and other school based activities designed to promote student wellness; provides nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day; and designates one or more persons with operational responsibility for this policy.

Goals for Nutrition Education

Students in Pre-school through grade 8 shall receive nutritional education. The program will be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and aimed at influencing students' knowledge attitudes and eating habits.

To maximize classroom time and to achieve positive changes in students' eating behaviors, nutrition education shall be integrated into other school subjects like math, science, language arts, physical education, etc.

Goals for Physical Education

Students in Pre-School through grade 8 shall participate in daily physical activity which will include either supervised recess or physical education period.

Nutrition

These nutrition guidelines are for school meals and beverages available on the school campus during the school day.

Food providers shall offer a variety of age-appropriate, appealing foods and beverage choices and employ food preparation, purchasing and meal planning practices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (e.g. provide a variety of fruits and vegetable choices; serve low fat and fat free dairy products, ensure that whole grain products are served)

Classroom/Student Safety

Every Student, Teacher, visitor is required to wear an industrial quality eye protective device when participating in or observing activities that involve cutting, sawing, grinding, or stamping of any solid materials; tempering or kiln firing of any other materials; use of chemical, caustic, or hot liquids or solids.

Toxic art supplies, as defined in section 105/135 of the Illinois School Code, are not used in Grades K-8 grade. Art supplies containing toxic substances should be used in grades 7 and 8 only if materials are properly labeled as required by section 105/135 of the Illinois School Code.