

# **GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK**

Grace Lutheran Church and School  
7300 Division Street  
River Forest, Illinois 708-366-6900  
[www.graceschoolrf.org](http://www.graceschoolrf.org)

This handbook has been prepared to acquaint parents, students, and friends with the procedures, policies, and operation of Grace Lutheran School. Specific questions not answered in this handbook should be directed to your child's teacher, the school office, or the school principal.

Revised August, 2023

**2023-24**

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## **MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **Mission**

Our mission at Grace Lutheran Church and School is to bring in, build up, and send out disciples for Jesus Christ. Our school prepares children for a life of discipleship by helping them to grow in faith, knowledge, and character.

### **Philosophy**

Education at Grace Lutheran School is a shared effort between teachers, students, parents, and congregation. Together we seek a strong spiritual, academic, and moral foundation for our students, trusting in God’s promise in Proverbs 22:6: “Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.”

We seek to educate the whole student—mind, body, and spirit—and to develop in students a lifelong love of learning. We strive to provide an intellectually challenging environment that is responsive to the needs of all students. We believe that learning occurs in the classroom and beyond—on the playground and playing field, in worship, in song, and in service.

### **Goals**

These are our goals for Grace students:

*Faith Formation:* Students will develop a relationship with God that leads to on-going spiritual growth and active involvement in the Christian community.

*Academic Excellence:* Students will master a challenging and enriching curriculum that meets or exceeds established learning standards.

*Character Development:* Students will develop the moral integrity and sense of responsibility that guide a life of service to God and seek justice in God’s creation.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Grace Lutheran School is a mission of Grace Lutheran Church for the purpose of providing a Christian education for children from the congregation and the community.

The congregation's authority is exercised in meetings as described in the church's constitution and bylaws, which are available on the congregation's web site ([www.graceriverforest.org](http://www.graceriverforest.org)). The affairs of the school are executed through the Elementary Education Committee (EEC), which consists of seven members of Grace Lutheran Church and School approved by the Board of Discipleship. The Senior Pastor and the Principal as *ex officio* members. The school faculty offers its professional advice in the policies of the school, particularly in matters of curriculum and materials. All policy is approved by the EEC.

The Elementary Education Committee meets monthly. Check the church or school calendar at [graceschoolrf.org](http://graceschoolrf.org) for dates and times. Parents may contact the Principal or the parent liaison to the EEC with questions or concerns about school policy.

The school agrees to comply with any State and Federal law or regulatory requirement for non-public schools.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Enrollment in Grace Lutheran School is open to all children. Returning students, members of Grace Lutheran Church, and siblings of students already enrolled in the school are eligible to enroll for the next school year during the early enrollment period in January. Open enrollment for new students begins on February 10. An enrollment fee is due at the time of enrollment. Half of the book fee is due in March with the remainder due in July.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Grace Lutheran School 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, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school administered programs.

### **Entrance requirements**

Grace Lutheran School follows the guidelines set forth by the Illinois State Board of Education concerning age of entry into school. Children entering Pre-Kindergarten must be three years old before September 1 of the year of entry. Junior kindergarten students must have reached their fourth birthday before September 1 of the year of entry. Children entering Senior Kindergarten must have attained their fifth birthday before September 1 of the year of entry. All students entering Grace Lutheran School must be toilet-trained to attend school.

Parents of students applying for admission to Grace School will be asked to submit records and reports from previous schools. Other entrance requirements are available on the school website.

## **Medical examinations and health records**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) school code and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) require the following medical exams prior to school entrance:

- Preschool, junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, and sixth grade students must have a completed physical exam, dated within one year of the starting date of the school year.
- Senior kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade students must have a completed dental exam, dated within one year of the starting date of the school year.
- Senior kindergarten and first grade students who have not attended kindergarten must have a completed vision exam.

All students coming from out of state and all students entering school for the first time must provide medical, and vision exams dated within one year of the starting date of the school year. Those students transferring schools within Illinois may use forms from their previous school. Health records are required of all new students on or before the first day of school.

By state law, students who do not have the required health exam or immunizations completed and on file in the school office by October 15 must be excluded from school.



## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Grace Lutheran School is supported financially by the members of the congregation and the parents of pupils attending the school. When enrolling a child in the school, parents must submit an enrollment form, and pay the enrollment fee.

The tuition is determined each year by the Elementary Education Committee (EEC). This figure is included in enrollment information.

### **Tuition Payments**

Tuition payments are to be made in equal and regular installments from August – May. If a family’s situation doesn’t allow for equal and regular installments, it must be communicated with and approved by the Principal.

Families must be up to date on tuition payments in order to re-enroll for the following school year. Families who have not paid in full by June 30, and without prior approval from the Principal, will forfeit enrollment for the following school year.

If a family’s financial situation changes, affecting their ability to fulfill the family’s tuition amount, they must contact the Principal to discuss the situation and work out a plan.

Passed by EEC 9/20

### **Tuition Assistance**

Families who feel they are not able to pay the full tuition may apply for Variable Tuition through FACTS, a third party company that specializes in analyzing family financial capacity. After receiving an analysis from FACTS, the variable tuition committee of Grace Lutheran School determines the tuition for each family that applies. This committee also hears and decides on any appeals made by families.

Financial assistance is not offered for PM Kindergarten or for any School Fees.

## FORMS AND FEES

### Registration night

Several forms and demographic information is to be completed by each school family in August each year. These forms and any corresponding fees are completed online through the Gradelink website.

Registration night provides the opportunity for parents and students to see their classroom and meet their new teacher. Families may also register for extended care, band, and orchestra, submit medical forms, and learn about the many activities our Grace Parent Organization supports.

### Required forms

*Birth certificates.* In accordance with the Missing Children Records Act the school office needs a copy of your child's birth certificate. Illinois law requires that Grace Lutheran School receive a copy of a student's birth certificate within 30 days of enrolling at the school. If the family provides an original, school personnel will immediately make a copy and return the original to the family. In the case of a family not being able to produce a copy of the birth certificate, a passport, visa, or other governmental documentation of the child's identity, accompanied by an affidavit explaining the inability to produce a copy of the birth certificate is acceptable. If the family fails to provide this documentation within this 30 day time period, state law requires that Grace School immediately notify the Illinois Department of State Police and River Forest police. Grace School must also provide the family in writing that they have 10 additional days to comply. The school must also immediately report to the Illinois Department of State Police any affidavit received which appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content. In the case of a transfer student, Grace School may request directly from the student's previous school a certified copy of the student's record.

*Emergency contact form.* This should be reviewed and updated annually.

*Medical forms.* See page 6-7 for specific requirements.

*Photo permission form.*

### Additional Fees

*Classroom Materials Fee:* This book rental and incidental fee covers books, instructional materials and certain supplies. Parents of returning students may pay the full fee in April or half the fee in April and the remainder in July. This fee also includes an activity fee to defray the cost of field trips and class parties. All books furnished by Grace Lutheran School are to be returned at the end of the school year. When books, materials, or equipment are damaged, families will be asked to pay replacement costs.

*Milk.* Grace Lutheran School participates in the USDA school nutrition program that provides low-cost milk. White and chocolate milk are available for order. Milk for the entire school year is ordered and paid for at registration in August.

*Class Pictures.* Students' pictures are taken in the fall of each school year. Payment is made at the time pictures are taken. Eighth grade graduation portraits are taken in late winter.

*Field trips.* Parents will be informed of field trips during the school year through classroom newsletters. Parents will be asked to sign a single permission form at registration in August that applies to all field trips within walking distance of Grace School. A fee is collected at registration to defray the cost of field trips. Some field trips may involve additional fees.

*Athletic fee.* Students who participate in after-school sports pay an athletic fee. Fees defray the cost of officials and tournament entry fees. There is a maximum fee for the school year per child, or per family. Students will not receive a team uniform until the fee is paid.

***School Supply Fee.*** Grace Lutheran School will purchase a majority of the school supplies for students in Grades PK-6. We see three advantages to this.

- 1) By ordering the same items for every student in the class, it is more equitable.
- 2) For teachers, it is more time efficient during class. For example, when it is time to use scissors, it will be quicker for the teacher to pass them out than for every student to find theirs in their desk or locker.
- 3) By purchasing in bulk, it is more economical for everyone.

The fee will be determined in the spring prior to the new school year.

### **Fee payment policy**

Grace Lutheran School offers a wide range of services for families that enhance or enrich the educational program or assist families with childcare. The core educational program is supported and subsidized by the Grace congregation to be available to an economically diverse student body. The auxiliary services are not subsidized and fees must cover the school's operational expenses for these programs. *Failure to stay current with program fees will remove a student's eligibility to participate in these programs.*

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

### School hours

Pre-kindergarten	8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Junior kindergarten	8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
PM Kindergarten (PK & JK combined)	11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 11:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (Wednesday)
Grades SK through 8	8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 8:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (Wednesday)
Extended care	7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. 2:15 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Wednesday)

### Arrival

Before school care is available starting at 7:00 a.m. All students who arrive between 7:00 and 7:45 a.m. must go to before school care. Students who arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. will wait in a designated location. Students proceed to their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. A bell at 8:15 a.m. indicates that all students should be in their classroom. Students entering the school after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy.

### Dismissal

Pre-kindergarten and junior kindergarten students will be escorted by teachers to the west doors for dismissal at 11:30. Those students not picked up by 11:45 will be taken to the school office and must be picked up there. Parents will be charged the extended care rate of \$8.00 per hour for one child and \$12.00 per hour for two or more children.

Children in the multi-age early childhood afternoon programs and in grades SK-8 will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m. On Wednesdays, students are dismissed at 2:15 to allow time for faculty meetings. When school is in session for half a day, grades SK-8 are dismissed at 11:30 a.m.

Cars should line up southbound on Bonnie Brae and then eastbound on Division St. Cars should have a sign with last name and grade of students you are picking up. Students will be called out and get ready to enter cars when it is their time. If you wish to walk up, we ask that you stay on the sidewalk, set back from the entrance.

Families in which all students are in 6<sup>th</sup> grade or higher may park at Priory and have students cross Division Street to meet them.

Students in grades PK-SK will once again be picked up in the parking lot on the south side of the building.

Children should leave the school grounds promptly after dismissal unless they are involved in a school-related activity such as an athletic event or scouting. If children have not been picked up within 15 minutes following the end of their school day, they will be taken to extended care and

parents will be billed for the time they spend there. Students remaining at school because of a sibling's after-school activities must register for and go to extended care.

*Pick-up and parking.* All students not attending extended day care will be escorted to the Bonnie Brae doors for afternoon dismissal. .

*Other pick-up times.* Students who must be picked up before regular dismissal times must be signed out by an adult at the school office.

### **Extended Care**

Extended Care begins at school dismissal and ends at 6:00 p.m. Extended day care is available from 11:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on days in which there is a half day of school. There is no Extended Care on days when there is no school or on the first and last day of school. For specific information, please go to the school calendar on the Grace website. Extended Care fees are billed on a monthly basis. All bills are due by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Failure to stay current with paying fees may lead to a loss of Extended Care privileges.

### **Leaving school grounds**

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds or building during the school day unless accompanied by an adult.

### **Bicycles**

Students may ride a bicycle to school if they understand safety rules of the road. Bicycles are to be secured to one of the bike racks that are located at the southeast and southwest corners of the building. Students are responsible for their bicycles and should provide their own chain and lock. After a pupil has arrived at school, the bicycle is not to be used until classes are dismissed for the day.

### **Attendance**

Please notify the school office between 7:00 and 8:15 a.m. when a child will be absent or tardy. Unreported absences will be investigated to ensure student's safety. Students entering the school after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy.

Daily attendance is a requirement and expectation of Grace Lutheran School. Daily attendance is crucial for learning and academic success. When a child is absent often, instruction is missed and school work accumulates, putting them in a difficult position to succeed. The State of Illinois defines a chronic or habitual truant as a student who is absent without valid cause for five percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days. Absences at Grace are considered excused if they are due to illness, mental health, death in the family, a family emergency, a school sponsored event, or special circumstances approved by the principal on a case by case basis. All other cases are considered unexcused. A note from your doctor may be requested in order to verify illness. More than five unexcused absences or more than fifteen overall absences in a school year may put future enrollment at Grace in jeopardy.

A child who is not at school by 8:15 is considered tardy. When a child is tardy, they miss important morning procedures or announcements, and their arrival disrupts the classroom, the

teacher, and other students. Students who are tardy 18 or more times in a school year may put future enrollment at Grace in jeopardy.

While at school a child is expected to participate in all classes, including gym. However, if there are circumstances limiting participation, parents should communicate this in writing to the school. In some instances a doctor's recommendation may be required.

### **Family vacations**

Children who are taken out of school for family vacations miss academic material covered during their absence. We urge parents to plan vacations to coincide with vacation time on the school calendar. If vacations must be taken when school is in session, it must be with the understanding that teachers are not responsible for preparing assignments ahead of time, for preparing make-up work, or for rescheduling parent conferences.

### **Emergency school closings**

The principal may close the school, delay the start of the school day, or dismiss school early when such alteration in the regular session is required for the protection of the health and safety of students and staff members. In the event of a school closing or a delayed opening time, you will be notified by a text message. You can also check for school closing information on the school web site.

### **Crisis management**

The school administration has adopted a crisis management plan that includes, but is not limited to the following: fire, tornado and intruder drills, and severe weather precautions and procedures. The entire crisis management plan can be viewed upon request in the school office.

### **Telephone**

Students may use the school telephones in case of an emergency or when asked by a teacher to convey a message to parents. Students should not call home for permission to visit another child after school. Such arrangements should be made before coming to school.

### **Student Cell Phones**

Students who bring cell phones to school will need to leave them with their teacher throughout the day except when a teacher decides they are necessary for a lesson being taught. Phones will be collected around 8:15 and given back to students at the end of the school day. Because of this, please call the school office if you have a time sensitive message for your student. Smart watches are allowed until they are used as a communication device. At that point, the student will lose the privilege of wearing a smart phone throughout the school day.

### **Lunch procedures**

Please discuss with your children the amount of food included in their sack lunches. We do not like to see food wasted. Students eat lunch under the supervision of a staff member. Keeping the environment in mind, we encourage the use of reusable containers and utensils. We also encourage students to use the blue recycling bins.

## **Selling items at school**

Children are not permitted to solicit contributions or sell things at school unless the organization is sponsored by Grace or permission is granted by the principal.

## **Parties and treats**

Check with the classroom teacher prior to bringing a treat to school. Please do not bring treats containing peanuts, nuts, peanut byproducts, or nut byproducts. Accidental exposure to nut or peanut products may trigger a life-threatening allergic response in some children. Healthy snacks, such as fruit, popcorn, yogurt, bagels, muffins, crackers, fruit juice, or vegetable sticks, fruit bars, etc. are preferable to cupcakes, cookies, soda, and chips. Please also consider including non-allergen treats so all students in the class may enjoy regardless of allergy. A list of non-allergen options and number necessary can be provided for your child's class.

Invitations to after-school or weekend parties should not be handed out in school unless all the children in the class, or all the boys or all the girls, are invited. We encourage families to plan parties that emphasize including, not excluding, a child's fellow students. Grace Lutheran School and Church facilities are not available for personal parties.

## **Money**

Children are discouraged from bringing unnecessary money to school. If a parent considers it necessary for a child to carry a larger sum of money for use later in the day, parents should direct the child to leave the money at the school office until the end of the school day. The school is not responsible for lost or money gone missing during the school day.

## **Electronic devices**

Students are allowed to bring cell phones to school, but their use is restricted. Cell phones must remain turned off completely during school hours, from 8:15 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Any device that is used or goes off during school hours will be immediately confiscated. The parent/guardian must come to school to pick it up. Do not try to contact your son or daughter by cell phone during the school day or during after-school activities; please call the school directly.

Electronic entertainment devices may only be used before or after school and must be kept in lockers. Teachers may permit use of these devices during the day at times such as recess.

Students are discouraged from bringing tablets and other electronic devices to school. The school is not responsible if these are lost, stolen, or broken.

## **Lost and found**

Lost articles are turned in to the school office where they may be claimed by the rightful owner. Unclaimed articles are stored in the office area until the end of the school year. Unclaimed items are given to a charity.

## **Lockers**

Individual lockers are provided either outside or within the classroom and in the physical education program. Students' backpacks should fit into their lockers. Locks are provided to secure athletic clothing.

## **Visitors**

Visitors must enter the building through the Bonnie Brae entrance and must sign in at the reception desk. Homework, gym clothes, lunches, etc., brought to school by parents or others must be dropped off at the school office rather than taken to the child's classroom. Staff will ensure that the items are properly distributed.



## COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between school, teachers, and parents fosters cooperation, community, and student success. Parents, school, and teachers communicate in many ways.

**Web site.** The Grace Lutheran Church and School web site ([graceschoolrf.org](http://graceschoolrf.org)) includes information about school activities, news, and links to forms for parents to download, the school calendar, weekly news and events, and other important information.

**The Friday Principal Note** is sent to parents via email and posted on the Grace web site on Friday afternoons

**Tuesday Folders.** In grades 1-6, graded homework, classroom announcements, permission slips, etc., are sent home on Tuesdays in a designated folder. Parents are to sign the form inside the folder, indicating that they have seen the material, and send the folder back to school with the child.

**Classroom newsletters** prepared by teachers are sent home via email before or at the start of each school week.

**Gradelink** gives parents of students in grades 5-8 web-based access to teachers' records of student assignments, grades, and tests. Parents receive information about using Gradelink at the beginning of the school year. There is a link to the Gradelink login page under "Current Families" on the School home page.

**Phone and Email.** Teachers check their school voice mail and email daily. During the school day, the receptionist can connect callers to teachers' voice mail. When you leave a voicemail, please include information about the best time for a return phone call. Please do not expect a return call or email during school hours. Teachers are busy during the day teaching your student. Teachers will make every effort to return your call or email within 24 hours during the school week. You should not expect a return call or email on the weekend or over school breaks.

**School directory.** The school publishes a directory early in each school year. It includes contact information for student families as well as information about contacting Grace teachers and staff members. The school office must be notified at the beginning of the school year if a family wishes any of its contact information not to be published in the school directory.

**Weekly student intercom announcements** are made on Monday mornings (Tuesday if there is no school on Monday). Eighth grade students plan these announcements with the assistance of staff.

**Direct mailings and special emails.** Critical information, for example, report cards are sent by postal mail to parents. Emails transmit timely information about many topics. School parents also receive Grace Church newsletters, including *Grace Notes*, by mail or email.

## **HEALTH**

### **School nurse**

Grace School is served by a part-time school nurse. When the nurse is not on the premises, parents may leave messages for her with the school office.

### **Illness during school hours**

If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be contacted by phone for instructions. Emergency contact forms are submitted annually through Gradelink. Please keep the school office advised of changes in your contact information. It is assumed that the parent will provide for the child's transportation in the event of illness or minor injury. Due to federal regulations, children with minor cuts, scrapes, and bloody noses will be encouraged, under supervision, to provide care for themselves.

In a medical emergency, 911 will be called to provide ambulance transportation to a nearby hospital. The school nurse, principal, or other school personnel will accompany the child. Please keep school personnel and the school nurse informed should your child have an existing condition, i.e. asthma, life-threatening allergy, serious medical condition, etc., that could potentially lead to an acute episode.

### **Medication**

Grace Lutheran School policy forbids school personnel from administering any type of prescription or non-prescription medication to students without a signed order from a physician. Medication orders in need of renewal must be renewed annually at the start of the school year for the medication to be administered at school. Students are not allowed to bring medication of any type to school.

If medication is required during the school day, it must be sent to school in the original container or duplicate pharmacy container, labeled with the child's full name, name of the medication, dose, time, route, date of prescription, special directions for administration, doctor's name, pharmacy name, address, and phone number. The medication must be accompanied by a completed, signed physician order form that is also signed by the parent. The required form can be obtained from the school office or the school nurse. This includes but is not limited to asthma medication, epinephrine injectors, diabetes and seizure medication, and medical cannabis.

All medications are administered under adult supervision. In some situations, the parent may need to bring the medication to school to administer the dose to the child at the required time (for example, eye drops). The child will be excused from class to come to the office to meet a parent who will administer the medication. Students are allowed to self-administer and/or self-carry medication for asthma, diabetes, and seizures, as well as epinephrine injectors upon receipt of the necessary documentation from physicians and parents.

All medications will be sent home or discarded at the end of the school year.

## **School Policy on the Distribution of Medical Cannabis**

Public Act 100-0660, also known as Ashley's Law, provides the opportunity for students who have been prescribed medical cannabis to be administered it on school grounds under the following specific provisions:

- The student must be a registered qualifying patient in possession of a registry identification card from the Department of Public Health.
- Only a designated caregiver who is registered with the Department of Public Health and possesses a registry identification card may administer medical cannabis.
- It must be a cannabis infused product such as an oil, ointment, food, or other product that contains usable cannabis. Minors are not permitted to smoke or vape forms of medical cannabis.
- School administration will determine where the product will be administered so that it does not create a disruption to the school's educational environment nor would cause exposure of the product to other students.
- Medical cannabis cannot be stored on school grounds. After the student is given the medical cannabis-infused product, the designated caregiver must remove the product from the school premises.

Public Act 100-0660 also states that a school district, public school, charter school, or nonpublic school may not discipline a student who is administered a medical cannabis-infused product by a parent or guardian or other individual, and may not deny the student's eligibility to attend school solely because the student requires the administration of the product.

## **Sunscreen**

A student may possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription if the product is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

## **Hearing and vision screenings**

Hearing and vision screenings are done by the school nurse who is a certified vision and hearing technician. Vision screenings are done for students in preschool, junior kindergarten, second, and eighth grade. Hearing screenings are done for students in preschool, junior kindergarten, senior kindergarten, first, second, and third grade. New students, special education students, and students referred by teachers may also receive vision and hearing screenings. Parents can also request that their child be screened. All children who fail the first screening are re-screened. Results will be mailed to parents *only* if the child fails both the initial screening and re-screening, indicating a need for follow-up.

## **Communicable disease**

Good health and regular attendance are necessary for full achievement in school. Children should come to school rested, after a nourishing meal, and well. Basic hygiene measures such as covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing, and frequent and proper hand washing are taught and encouraged at school to minimize the spread of communicable disease. However, children with diagnosed communicable disease or acute signs of illness such as:

- temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher
- vomiting and/or diarrhea
- skin rash

need to stay home. Children may return to school when they feel well again, their temperature has been less than 100 degrees without the use of fever-reducing medication and have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours with resumption of a normal diet. It is appreciated when parents are specific about the reasons for their child's absence. Students with a skin rash or who have been hospitalized for any reason must have a physician note to return to school.

## **COVID-19**

Guidance from the IDPH and ISBE can change at any time as new data regarding the disease becomes available. Look under Current Families on the school website for the latest information regarding our school's handling of COVID-19.

## **Asbestos**

This is a notification that there is asbestos in our building. All asbestos is being properly inspected and maintained. A copy of the school's asbestos report is available for viewing upon request.

## **School Nutrition Non-Discrimination Policy**

As required by law, the school announces the following non-discriminating policy: The school nutrition program is available to all eligible participants without regard to race, color, national origin, handicap, sex, or age. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write to: Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Homework**

Homework serves an important function in the learning process. Research shows that homework leads to higher achievement. Through their homework assignments, students practice skills, reinforce concepts, and prepare for upcoming classroom experiences. As students handle both long and short-term assignments, they learn to manage their time.

Students are responsible for recording their assignments in their assignment notebook each day and carrying home all the necessary books and materials required to complete the assignment. There will be consequences in school for not completing homework; these will depend on the age and grade level of the student. Teachers will communicate with parents when incomplete homework becomes a persistent problem that jeopardizes a student's academic progress.

Parents can help students by providing a consistent time and place for homework to be done. Parents should provide supervision and support in the homework process, but students should do their own work. Parents of students in grades 5-8 can monitor their child's completion of homework by checking Gradelink (See page 14 for details.)

### **Honesty**

Grace Lutheran School values an academic environment of fairness and integrity. Academic dishonesty causes harm. The student who cheats or plagiarizes is harmed by receiving a false evaluation of their work. Classmates are harmed when cheating or plagiarizing lowers the value of honest work. Finally, cheating or plagiarism hurts all students by devaluing the integrity of a diploma from Grace Lutheran School.

DEFINITIONS- Plagiarism is theft. Plagiarism is using another person's words, ideas or expressions in your writing, intentionally or unintentionally, without crediting the source. Cheating is taking answers from another through means other than those permitted by the teacher.

Assisting in dishonesty occurs when a student helps another student cheat by giving answers or providing questions from a test or assignment in advance.

EXAMPLES- Examples of plagiarism or cheating include (but are not limited to):

- Copying another student's work
- Failing to use quotation marks or citations when using references
- Working with other students to complete an assignment when directed not to do so by a teacher
- Copying, or allowing someone other than the student, to complete a homework assignment, project, lab report or take-home test.
- Allowing another student to copy a student's work
- Texting or otherwise transmitting questions or answers to another student

CONSEQUENCES- It is the students' responsibility to prove that the work they submit is their own. A student may be asked to produce a rough draft, a works cited page, or copies of sources, or demonstrate their knowledge of the material through discussion or questioning by a teacher.

Students found responsible for plagiarism, cheating, or assisting others' dishonest behavior may be asked to redo the assignment for half credit or may lose all credit for the assignment, project, or test. Parents will be notified by a teacher or principal. The student may face a loss of privileges or suspension.

### **Reporting pupil progress**

Teachers keep up-to-date records of each child, and in grades 1-6, share the child's work with parents via Tuesday Folders, which contain students' work and comments from the teacher. Parents are asked to review the material in the folders. There may be assignments that need to be corrected or information about homework or classroom activities. Once reviewed, the folders are to be returned to school the following day. Parents of students in grades 5-8 can also monitor homework and tests using Gradelink.

### **Parent-teacher conferences**

Student progress is reported to parents in individual conferences in October and February. Scheduling information is sent home prior to the conferences. Progress reports are issued rather than traditional report cards with letter grades. Children's progress is evaluated in light of the child's potential and instructional learning level. Parents are discouraged from missing scheduled conference times. Conference requests for other times will be scheduled at the teacher's convenience. In this situation parents are not guaranteed a face-to-face conference with the teacher.

We encourage parents to meet with teachers about their children's progress at any time throughout the school year. Please contact your child's teacher to set up an appointment. Teachers can answer questions and discuss a child's progress more effectively in a scheduled meeting than in a chance encounter.

### **Assessments, screening, and testing**

An informal screening is administered to all new students prior to acceptance into the school. Once a student at Grace, if there is a need for additional testing, Grace's Special Education Coordinator will facilitate the process. The River Forest Public School District evaluates students in River Forest parochial schools after sufficient intervention measures have failed to produce results. The public school district also provides speech and language testing and remediation services at Grace.

### **Student records**

Cumulative records for all pupils are kept in the school office. At the close of the year, teachers complete records for the current year and return them to the office.

### **Procedures for promotion, acceleration, or retention**

Any change of placement for a child will be thoroughly studied by the child's teachers and principal prior to the discussion with parents. If a student is to be retained, this decision is usually made by the end of April. Documentation of all proceedings concerning any change in placement is provided for parents and students.

**Graduation Requirement: Successful completion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

If an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student accumulates three or more trimester grades below 65 in core courses throughout the year, graduation is contingent on successful completion of a plan put in place for the student by administration. At the end of the year, administration will make a recommendation to the EEC for their approval regarding whether or not the student should receive a diploma from Grace.

Note: Core courses are defined as any course that meets 4 or more times in a typical week.

## **BEHAVIOR**

It is impossible for good teaching and learning to take place in a classroom unless order is maintained. Students must adhere to a code of good behavior, not only for their own benefit, but also for the welfare of others.

Our intent is to create an atmosphere that is student-centered and mindful of diversity in which certain rules and procedures have to be followed. This requires a spirit of shared responsibility among students, teachers, parents/guardians, and staff. Shared responsibility promotes the growth of self-disciplined citizens in our educational community.

### **Discipline**

Christian discipline is the application of self-control and orderliness as motivated by the teachings and example of Christ. Teachers and parents nurture and supervise children in accordance with the Gospel. Discipline at Grace Lutheran School is understood to be a learning process aimed at the development of Christian character.

We strive to prevent problems by giving our students constructive direction and positive reinforcement. All efforts are made to work positively with our students and to shape their behavior by providing logical consequences to their actions. We believe that positive disciplinary measures help students develop self-worth and self-control, diminishing the need for other disciplinary actions.

*Student responsibility.* Initial responsibility for appropriate behavior belongs to the individual student. Each student is responsible for:

- Arriving at school on time ready for the activity of the day.
- Accomplishing assigned learning tasks; homework needs to be completed carefully, by the student and turned in on time.
- Enhancing personal learning opportunities as well as those of the class by helping to maintain a productive learning environment.
- Functioning in a safe and orderly manner at school and when traveling to and from school and beyond school on field trips or at athletic contests.
- Treating adults and fellow students with respect and consideration, and recognizing their rights and needs as members of the school community.

*School responsibility.* It is assumed that the principal, teachers and other staff members will exhibit respect toward all the people they encounter at Grace and will also be competent stewards of the property and materials provided. Principal, teachers, and staff will strive to create a disciplined environment by:

- Providing supervision to ensure a safe and secure atmosphere for all.
- Setting and enforcing limits at school that are fair and consistent and take into consideration the uniqueness of each student's needs.
- Acting as role models for students by exhibiting high personal standards of courtesy, respect, trust, honesty, and language.
- Communicating with students and parents about academic and behavioral concerns.
- Maintaining a school environment that will assure each child an opportunity to learn.



*Parent responsibility.* It is assumed that parents will exhibit respect toward all the people they encounter at Grace and will be competent stewards of the property and materials provided. Parents must model and practice Christian discipline at home. Cooperation between the school and home is essential for effective student behavior. Parents are responsible for:

- Seeing that their child arrives at school on time with the proper materials, in appropriate attire, clean, and in good health.
- Familiarizing the child with school rules and procedures.
- Monitoring the child's progress and behavior at school by reading the Tuesday folder, checking Gradelink (grades 5-8), and responding to communications from teachers, principal, or staff members.
- Supporting the school by discussing expectations for student behavior with the child.
- Working with the school in modifying the child's behavior when necessary.

*The administration.* The administrators work with students, teachers, and parents when problems with discipline occur. The administrators may also establish procedures for using additional resources in handling behavioral problems. Teachers, parents, and administrators may together initiate a plan for evaluating and modifying student behavior. The results of this plan may affect the student's future placement in the school.

Procedures for maintaining a Christian, well-disciplined environment in the school may include restorative actions within the Grace community, detention or suspension. Upon recommendation of the principal, the Elementary Education Committee may expel a student guilty of serious misconduct.

### **Communicating about behavior problems**

When a student continually misbehaves, the teacher has the responsibility to seek support from the administration and/or parents to help the child understand the problem and to implement a plan for modifying the behavior. When a student or parent has a concern about discipline; he or she should first discuss the issue with the teacher. If the problem is not resolved, the student or parent should present the concern to the principal. Parents are expected to use discretion in discussing discipline issues with other parents.

Day-to-day disciplinary problems (talking out of turn, running in the hallways, misuse of materials, late or missing assignments) will be handled individually by the teacher, and if necessary, the principal. Normally parents are not contacted about minor disciplinary problems. Parents will be contacted about continual disruptive behavior, destruction of personal or school property, use of profanity, violent behavior, and other behavior that causes the student to be removed from the class setting and which calls for more serious intervention. In most cases, parents will be informed and be part of the follow-up and consequences.

## STUDENT BEHAVIOR

### **Respect for property**

Students are expected to view school property as a gift from God that should be valued and treated with respect. Accidents do happen, but intentional damage or destruction to property of the school or others will have to be paid for by the offender.

### **Language**

It is expected that all students, teachers, and parents will use wholesome language when addressing one another. Cursing or taking the Lord's name in vain is not acceptable whether in school, on a bus, or away from the school.

### **Public Display of Affection**

Quick hugs are acceptable as students greet each other. Other forms of affection among students are not acceptable at school.

### **Computer and Internet use policy**

All students in grades one through eight, and their parent(s) or guardian, must sign an annual Acceptable Use Form to use Grace School computers and access the Internet through the school's network. The form, which is completed through Gradelink, is to be completed prior to the start of the school year. Computers are to be used for academic purposes only. If it is clear a student has been on other sites, the student will lose computer privileges.

### **Incidents involving Social Media**

The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy. The school may also require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's personal account or profile on a social networking website. This does not pertain to access to sites or email addresses provided by the school, or anything else owned and operated by the school. The school can still regulate its own equipment, monitor internet traffic, block social media sites with a firewall, etc.

### **Bullying**

Every student has the right to feel safe. It is the responsibility of the school staff to provide a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment in which learning can take place. No student should be subject to bullying, aggression, and violence. The school is committed to ensuring that a supportive, caring, inclusive, safe and civil environment exists in order for students to learn and achieve high academic standards.

Harassment or bullying is regarded as a serious matter and will not be tolerated. Please see the Grace Lutheran School Policy on Bullying (2023) in the appendix for specific information on

bullying. All students in Grades 1-8 will sign the Bullying Policy each year confirming their understanding and acceptance of the policy.

### **Incidents involving Physical Aggression**

Any incident involving physical aggression by a student will be investigated by the administration. Students found guilty of intentional physical aggression will have developmentally appropriate consequences which could include being suspended for a minimum of one day with possible consequences up to and including expulsion from school. Any student found guilty of intentional physical aggression three times over the span of two consecutive school years will be recommended for expulsion.

### **Drug Reporting Policy**

Grace Lutheran School does not tolerate the possession or use of illegal drugs. Any such act may result in a recommendation for suspension, expulsion, or termination. Faculty and staff who have knowledge of these behaviors are required to report the actions and file an incident report with the principal or his or her designee. In compliance with state law, the principal shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency of verified incidents involving drugs occurring on school grounds. The principal shall also notify the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS). School grounds are defined as the real property comprising any school, and conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by a school to transport students to and from school or a school related activity, or on a public way within 1,000 feet of a school.

### **Reporting Policy for Firearms and Other Weapons**

Grace Lutheran School does not tolerate the possession of firearms or other weapons on our property. Any such act may result in a recommendation for suspension, expulsion, or termination. Faculty and staff who have knowledge of these behaviors are required to report the actions and file an incident report with the principal or his or her designee. In compliance with state law, the principal shall immediately notify a local law enforcement agency of firearm incidents on school grounds. If a student is in possession of a firearm, then the school administrator shall also immediately notify the student's parent or guardian. The principal shall also notify the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System (SIRS). School grounds are defined as the real property comprising any school, and conveyance owned, leased, or contracted by a school to transport students to and from school or a school related activity, or on a public way within 1,000 feet of a school.

## CONSEQUENCES

### Explanation of levels of consequences

At each age level is a range of developmentally appropriate behavior and a range of possible consequences. When the behavior warrants administrative intervention, the administrator will use his or her discretion in assigning developmentally appropriate consequences, depending on the circumstances and frequency of the student's behavior.

Any behavior may be assigned a higher-level consequence for that behavior, based on progressive discipline and the seriousness of the offense.

All of the behavior standards in this document apply to students in school, on field trips, at athletic events and on school buses.

### Definitions

*Discipline referral.* Any faculty or staff member observing a student behaving inappropriately is expected to tell the student to discontinue the behavior. If the behavior continues, a staff or faculty member may send the student to the principal's office.

*Detention.* A period of time before school, after school, or during lunch that a student is separated from peers as a consequence for misbehavior. A detention may include a service oriented task to be determined. Detentions are to be served with the staff member who issued the detention. The location and time of the detention will be determined by the staff/administrator who assigned the detention.

*Suspension.* Time (one or more days) a student is prohibited from regular attendance at school. Suspensions are served at home or at a location decided upon by the parents/guardian. Students who are suspended are expected to complete schoolwork being done in classes that day. Students serving a suspension may not be on school grounds or participate in before- or after-school activities on the day(s) they are suspended.

*Expulsion.* The Elementary Education Committee may expel a student guilty of serious misconduct upon recommendation of the principal.

### Parent notification and involvement

Every attempt will be made to notify parents or guardians when initial attempts to change behavior are not successful. When the principal or teacher feel that a parent conference would be beneficial, every attempt will be made to arrange a conference.

## Grace Lutheran School – Student Dress Policy for the 2023-24 School Year

Cleanliness, appropriate dress, and safety are important ingredients for good school manners and healthy living. Parents are encouraged to teach their children the value of proper appearance, modesty, and cleanliness. Students' clothing choices are a means of self-expression, but these choices must be consistent with the values of the school community. We must also recognize that some clothing is too casual for the important business of education.

### **PK-4**

Shirts/Tops: Non-Midriff Baring. Logos must uphold our Christian values.

Shorts/skirts: Are allowed but must cover the buttocks and must be visible and not covered entirely by a long shirt or sweater.

**All tops and bottoms should have no holes and should not be see through.**

Shoes: Closed toe, closed heel with socks.

No hats, caps, bandanas, or jackets inside the school without special permission.

### **5-8**

Shirts/Tops: Non-Midriff Baring. No tank tops. Logos must uphold our Christian values.

Shorts/skirts: Are allowed but must cover the buttocks and must also be visible and not covered entirely by a long shirt or sweater.

Pants: Leggings are allowed but must be opaque.

Athletic shorts and sweat pants are allowed, but no pajama pants.

**All tops and bottoms should have no holes and should not be see through.**

Shoes: Grades 5-6 Closed toe, closed heel with socks.

Grades 7-8 Sandals with a heel strap are permitted. No flip flops or athletic slides.

Athletic shoes must be worn for PE.

Make Up should not be put on at school. Make up should be worn in moderation.

No hats, caps, bandanas, or jackets inside the school without special permission.

If students or parents need to determine if an article of clothing is acceptable, it should be brought (not worn) to school and presented to one of the staff.

If the dress code is violated, initial warnings will be administered. This will include a conversation with the student and email to parents. On the third offense, your child will be sent to the office and parents will be called. The student will remain at the office until appropriate attire is available.

## **MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Library Media Center**

Students in PK through 2nd grade come to the library for weekly story time and may borrow up to two items for one week. Students in grades three through six visit the library weekly for book selection and sustained silent reading. Third through eight graders may borrow up to four items for two weeks. Overdue notices are distributed when necessary. There are no overdue fines. If an item is lost or damaged, the student is charged the cost of the item, as printed on the overdue notice. This amount includes the cost of processing and cataloging the replacement. All grades may use the library for research purposes as the schedule permits.

### **Technology resources**

Students in SK have a dedicated iPad assigned to them for use in school. Students in grades 1-8 have a dedicated Chromebook assigned to them for use in school. Only students in grades 7-8 are allowed to take their Chromebook home with them.

## **WORSHIP AND MUSIC**

### **Chapel**

Students attend chapel once a week, usually on Wednesdays. There are daily chapel services during Holy Week. Chapel services are led by Grace's pastors, by teachers and students, and by various guests.

Children experience various leadership roles in chapel services: reading Scripture, ushering, receiving the offering, and singing. Younger students are assigned older chapel buddies, upper grade students who sit with them during worship and help them participate more fully in the service. Children are asked to bring an offering every week to chapel. The offerings gathered are given to designated benevolence ministries.

Holy Communion is celebrated in the worship services that open and close the school year, on Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday and at other times throughout the liturgical church year. At Grace Lutheran Church and School we believe that the crucified and risen Christ is present in the Lord's Supper, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. We welcome all baptized Christians who participate in Holy Communion in their home congregation to the table where Christ himself is host.

### **School choirs**

All children in grades 1-8 participate in choir. Choirs are organized by units. In grades 1- 4, choir is part of general music instruction. For students in grades 3-8 choirs rehearse twice a week during the school day. Students in grades 7 and 8 may choose to participate in the hand bell ensemble in place of choir.

Grace School choirs sing for the congregation's Sunday morning worship services four to six times during the school year and in Wednesday evening worship services during Advent and Lent. Choirs also lead the Children's Christmas Eve Service on December 24. Children in grades 5-8 sing for Easter and for the graduation service at the close of the school year. A choir schedule is published at the beginning of the school year with dates for all choir performances. *Grace students are expected to be present when their unit choir sings for worship services outside the school day.*

### **Instrumental music**

Grace Lutheran School offers a band program, in cooperation with Walther Christian Academy, and an orchestra program. Students in grade 4 and up are eligible to participate in band, and students in grade 1 and up are eligible for orchestra. Private lessons are available during the school day for an additional fee. The band and orchestra perform at concerts and special events during the school year. *Failure to pay fees within 30 days of the billing date will remove a student's eligibility to participate in these programs.*

## AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

### Athletics

Athletics play an important role in Christian education. One way children worship God is through the development of their talents. Our athletic program emphasizes individual achievement as well as responsibility to the group and growth in mind as well as body. Winning is secondary to the realization that God-given athletic ability is used to the glory of God.

Grace offers a variety of extra-curricular sports for students in Grades 3-8. Teams compete after school against other Lutheran schools and participate in weekend tournaments. Grace teams frequently earn invitations to state tournaments sponsored by the Lutheran Sports Association ([www.luthsports.org/](http://www.luthsports.org/)). The table below provides more information about extra-curricular sports teams and seasons.

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Season</b>
Cross country	Girls and boys in grades 3-8	September through mid-October
Volleyball	Teams for girls and boys in grades 5-8	September through early November
Basketball	Teams for girls and boys in grades 7-8	November through March
	Teams for girls and boys in grades 5-6	November through February
Track	Girls and boys in grades 3-8	April and May

Students who participate in after-school sports pay an athletic fee. Fees are set prior to the start of the school year and approved by the EEC. Fees defray the cost of officials and tournament entry fees. There is a maximum fee for the school year per student or per family. The fee must be paid at the beginning of the sports season. Students who have not paid the athletic fee will not receive a team uniform.

### Transportation to Athletic Events

Grace Lutheran School does not provide transportation to athletic events. It is the parent's responsibility to arrange transportation for their child.

### Concussion Policy

Parents and students must read, sign, and return to the school office the ***Concussion Information Sheet*** to be aware of signs and symptoms of concussions. This must be done prior to participation.

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game/practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. This student will be reported to the concussion oversight team, who will oversee the process for the student to Return to Play and Return to Learn. If a concussion happens outside of school the parents will notify the school and thus the concussion oversight team.



The concussion oversight team will communicate with the parents and make sure all documents are collected and steps are followed before the student Returns to Learn and Returns to Play.

### **Concussion Oversight Team**

The principal will appoint the members of the Concussion Oversight Team. The Concussion Oversight Team will be responsible for ensuring the student does not Return to Learn or Return to Play without the proper documentation. If a concussion is suspected but not diagnosed, documentation should be in the form of a letter from a physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant stating that a concussion was not suffered. If a concussion is diagnosed, documentation includes collecting a ***Post-Concussion Consent Form*** along with a written statement from the treating physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant that clears the student for Return to Learn and Return to Play.

### **Practice and Competition Requirements**

Before participating in any practice or competition, all student athletes must have completed and given to the school office an annual sports physical clearing the student to participate in interscholastic activities and concussion form signed by the student and parent(s). Physicals are good for 395 days.

### **Ineligibility Policy**

It is important for students-athletes to understand that participating in athletics at Grace School is a privilege and that academics must always be our first priority. With this in mind, the following policies has been established.

Student-athletes may ~~also~~ be held out of practice or competition or removed from a team due to reoccurring inappropriate behavior at any time during a school day or after school event.

In Grades 3-6, at the discretion of faculty members, a student may be held out of a practice or competition for an incomplete major project or if incomplete daily assignments become a reoccurring problem. The teacher, coach, or athletic director will communicate with the parent if this occurs.

In Grades 7 & 8, a student will be considered ineligible to participate in athletic practice and competition for one week under the following conditions.

- More than one class has a grade below 65
- Grades will be checked on Tuesday each week and students that do not meet the acceptable standard will be ineligible beginning Tuesday through the following Monday.
- If a student is deemed ineligible they will be allowed to call parents at lunch to inform them of their status and if necessary, make transportation arrangements.
- This process and determination will begin after a minimum of 10 school days have passed at the beginning of each trimester and continue each week until the trimester ends.
- Students that are ineligible based on final trimester grades will remain ineligible until the first check of the next trimester. (ex: if two grades are lower than 65 on the

final grade report for the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester, the student can not practice or compete until the first official check for everyone a minimum of 10 school days into the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester)

Note: Consideration is made for students that have been absent.

### **Spectators at games**

All students are invited to attend athletic events at Grace as spectators. Arrangements should be made prior to the event for the students to be picked up promptly after the event has ended. All spectators are to remain in the gym or entry area. Children who are not a member of the competing team, but planning to stay for home games are to remain in extended day care until the scheduled start time for the games.

All student spectators are to go into the gym spectator area and remain in the gym until the end of the game. If they need to leave the spectator area, they are permitted to use only the facilities adjacent to the gym. They are expected to return to the gym after a reasonable amount of time. The faculty hall attendant will supervise. All students must behave in a manner that demonstrates respect and sportsmanship to all participants.

### **After-school Activities**

Children are not to leave Grace School premises to buy food or soft drinks and then return for after-school activities unless given written permission by a parent.

### **Enrichment classes**

The Grace Parent Organization offers after-school enrichment classes in a variety of areas. The Friday Principal Note and the school web site contain more information about classes and schedules.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

### **Grace Parent Organization (GPO) and Room Parents**

The Grace Parent Organization and the Room Parents for each grade level work together. They exist to:

- Enrich the academic experience at Grace through extracurricular activities, support programs, and social events while promoting the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth of our children.
- Foster fellowship, volunteerism, and communication between families and Grace Lutheran Church and School.
- Engage parents and teachers in working together to implement and support programs that enrich the learning environments beyond the core curriculum.
- Create fund-raising programs to sustain these enrichment activities as well as to help meet needs of the school not funded by tuition and fees.

The Grace Parent Organization and Room Parents sponsor a variety of programs and events throughout the school year including after-school enrichment classes and social events for parents and children. Information about meetings and activities can be found on the school calendar at [www.graceschoolrf.org](http://www.graceschoolrf.org)

### **School volunteers**

Grace Lutheran School expects parents and encourages other interested adults to volunteer at the school. A list of parent volunteer opportunities is included with the forms completed at the beginning of the school year. Classroom newsletters and the Friday Principal Note frequently contain information about specific volunteer activities. If you have specific interests or skills to offer as a volunteer, please talk to your child's teacher or the principal.

Volunteers serve an important role in the education of the students at Grace. Volunteers are involved in activities such as *Walk with Grace*, lunch supervision, leading classroom parties, chaperoning field trips, and assisting the GPO with social gatherings. At times, people from outside of Grace School are hired to teach after-school enrichment classes. The names of all school volunteers or paid non-employees who are expected to have contact with children go through a background check process which includes being checked against a public database of sex offenders.

### **A Graceful Evening**

Grace Lutheran Church and School sponsors an annual dinner and auction called A Graceful Evening. This event raises funds for the school and provides an evening of fun and fellowship shared by school parents and congregation members. The event typically takes place in March. Many volunteer hours are needed to make the evening a success. Parents of students at all grade levels are encouraged to volunteer for committees as well as attend the event.

## APPENDICES

### GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING (2023)

Grace Lutheran School is committed to ensuring that a supportive, caring, inclusive, safe and civil environment exists in order for students to learn and achieve at their highest level. To this end, Grace Lutheran School will not tolerate bullying. We expect the behavior of our students, teachers, staff, administration, and volunteers to demonstrate Christ's love in all we say and do. However, we understand that at times unkind actions can occur. We expect that in these cases, all people mentioned above will speak up about the situation and not remain silent bystanders.

#### Bullying Defined

Bullying is defined as the **repeated intimidation** of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. It may include, but not be limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs. It may include ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs, retaliation, stalking, public humiliation, exclusion from peer groups, or extortion of money or possessions.

Four main types of bullying are:

**Physical:** When one person or a group picks on or harasses another person in a physical way.

**Verbal:** Persistent put-downs related to appearance, ability, gender, race, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, academic status, pregnancy or homelessness.

**Emotional/Social:** Rejecting, humiliating, ranking, isolating or embarrassing others.

**Cyber:** Repeatedly hurting someone through the use of technology.

Such behavior is considered bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus. It is important to recognize that bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that is repeated. **Isolated incidents should not label one a bully.**

Normal Conflict Compared to Bullying	
Normal Conflict	Bullying
Equal power between friends	Display of power, not in friendship
Occasional	Frequent
Accidental	Purposeful
Demonstrates concern	Demonstrates pleasure
Takes responsibility	Blames others
Tries to solve problem	No effort to resolve issue
Occurs anywhere	Occurs where bully feels safe

<b>Teasing Compared to Bullying</b>	
<b>Teasing</b>	<b>Bullying</b>
Swaps roles with ease	Based on an imbalance of power
Not intended to harm	Intent to harm
Maintains dignity	Meant to humiliate, demean
Pokes fun in lighthearted, clever ways	Comments or acts are bigoted or cruel
Innocent in motive	Threatening in motive
Only part, not all, of friendship interaction	Continuous action against others
Discontinued when person teased becomes upset or objects	Continues, increasing when target becomes distressed or objects

### **School Response**

Bullying related acts are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion. Law enforcement will be notified when criminal intent is obvious.

Level 1: Warning: When a minor incident occurs, the teacher will take the opportunity to help students understand how their actions relate to our definition of bullying and inform parents of their child’s actions.

Level 2: Confer with parents and principal. Gather staff persons to discuss the situation.

Options for action at this stage include:

Drawing up a behavioral contract

Refer students for counseling or therapy

Detention

Level 3: Suspension from school: After consultation with school personnel, the student may receive up to a three day suspension. Behavioral contract is updated or established.

Level 4: Expulsion: When reasonable efforts to correct the inappropriate behavior have been exhausted, and after consultation with the Elementary Education Committee, a student may be expelled.

The School requires the principal and/or the principal’s designee to be responsible for receiving the complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to the principal or principal’s designee. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers, and visitors are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy.

All parents or guardians of students involved in alleged bullying incidents will be informed within 24 hours after administrators learn of it. The School requires the principal and/or the principal's designee to be responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of the bullying policy. In so doing, the principal and/or the principal's designee shall conduct a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation of each alleged incident. The investigation is to be completed within three school days after a report or complaint is made.

The School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the principal and/or principal designee after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances of the act.

The School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person found to have falsely accused another of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

### **Communicating Bullying Policy**

The School requires school officials to annually disseminate the policy to all school staff, students, and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all applicable acts of bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions, or on a school bus. The principal and/or principal designee shall develop an annual process for discussing the school's policy on bullying with students and staff. The school shall incorporate the information regarding the policy against bullying into each parent and faculty handbook.

## **NOTIFICATION OF GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL RECORDS**

### **(SCHOOL INFORMATION POLICY)**

These guidelines explain parents' and guardians' rights to your child's records maintained by Grace Lutheran School. These rights include:

*Right to inspect.* You have the right to view all of your child's records maintained in the official school file.

*Right to prevent disclosures.* The school will not disclose anything to third parties from your child's records unless (a) you consent in writing prior to the disclosure, or (b) the information is directory information which you have not requested be kept confidential, or (c) the request for the information meets one of the limited circumstances described in the guidelines.

*Right to request correction.* You have the right to present evidence that the school should amend any part of your child's records which you believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise violates a student's rights. If the school decides not to change the record, you may insert an explanation in the record. Once your child turns eighteen or begins attending a post-secondary institution, these rights will only be accorded to the student.

*Record Request:* Any time the school office receives a record request for any current or former student, the school's administrative assistant must check public records to make sure the person has not been reported as missing before sending the records as requested. If the individual has been reported missing, the school will contact the Illinois State Police and ask what should be done.

When a Grace student plans to transfer to a new school, Grace must send unofficial records to other schools within 10 calendar days of the request. However, Grace may refuse to send official transcripts due to unpaid tuition or fees for education received.

When a new student transfers into Grace, certified copies of the student's records must be requested within 14 days of enrollment.

### **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

The State of Illinois, by law, requires all school personnel, as mandated reporters, to report to the Department of Children and Family Services any allegation/suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

## FUNDRAISING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Fundraising is a fact of life in every school, and especially in private schools. Fundraising provides money for a variety of things that would otherwise put an undue or inappropriate burden on a school's operating budget. The proceeds of fundraising enable us to advance the mission of our school. They enable programs and activities that deepen our students' and teachers' experiences. We are grateful for the gifts of our benefactors and supporters. The richness of God's blessing is evident in the abundant resources we have at Grace Lutheran School.

The purpose of this Fundraising Philosophy Statement is to convey the principles that Grace Lutheran School believes should shape and guide school fundraising activities, and to help frame the choices that Grace families make in supporting the School. We believe that fundraising activities must be aligned in spirit and conduct with the objectives of a Christian education, and the values shared by members of the Grace Lutheran School community. We intend to approach fundraising in the context of Christian ministry.

In that context, we will encourage Grace Lutheran School children to organize and participate in fundraising that benefits others (such as the Uptown project or Misericordia) so that they understand fundraising as an act of stewardship.

Since the School, students, and their families should give higher priority to matters other than fundraising, we will strive to conduct fewer fundraising activities with higher proceeds (rather than a greater number of activities with lower proceeds) to achieve our fundraising goals.

Fundraising for extra-curricular opportunities should be organized and conducted by persons other than the School faculty and staff members, and must be approved by the School Administration in consultation with the Elementary Education Committee.

Participation in and contributing to fundraising is voluntary. We believe that every family in the Grace Lutheran School community should find a way to give of their time and talent to helping with fundraising each year. However, no student or family should be compelled to engage in fundraising if it causes financial strain or personal hardship.

When children are asked to take an active role in fund-raising, the role should be age appropriate, and supported/supervised by an adult.

We believe that, as members of the Grace Lutheran Church and School community, families need to understand the goals and processes of fundraising, and are entitled to clear communications on this topic. School fundraising committees will provide resources for, coordination of, and communication regarding fundraising activities on an ongoing basis.