

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

7300 Division Street
River Forest, Illinois 60305
708-366-6900
www.graceschoolrf.org

Updated: August 2024

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.

THE
MAY 1944

Mission:

Bring in, build up and send out disciples for Jesus Christ.

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:

- **Faith Formation** - Students will develop a relationship with God that leads to ongoing spiritual growth and active involvement in a Christian community.
- **Academic Growth** - 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 guides a life of service to God and seeks justice in God's creation.

Governance:

Grace Lutheran School is a mission of Grace Lutheran Church. The program of Grace Lutheran School is designed to aid both Grace Lutheran Church and the community in fulfilling a ministry to the Church and to the world.

The Elementary Education Committee (EEC), senior pastor and school principal make up the decision-making body for all major policies of the school. The day-to-day affairs of the school are executed through the school administration.

Some decisions of the EEC need to be approved by Grace Church's governing body. The EEC reports to the Church Council through the Board of Discipleship.

Administration of Grace Lutheran School

(2024-2025)

David Lyle, Senior Pastor

Taylor-Imani Gates, Principal

Mike Cariaschio, Interim Principal

Kristi Underhill, Assistant Principal

Jessica Allen, School Administrative Assistant

Ana Garcia, Director of Enrollment & Marketing

Barbara Van Heukelem, Front Desk Receptionist

Eileen Maggio, Front Desk Receptionist

Jim McClanahan, Business Manager

Jose Meza, IT Coordinator

Dave Pfeiffer, Facilities Manager

Elementary Education Committee (EEC)

Joanna Schubkegel, Chairperson

Jade Augustine

Janel Bishop

Jessica Bullock

Ed Kelly

Ed Mason

Jane Wilcox

Faculty

Jennifer Brayton, Pre-Kindergarten (PK)

Sarah Gruendler-Ladner, Pre-Kindergarten Aide

Kim Hoffman, Jr. Kindergarten (JK)

Julie Brown, Jr. Kindergarten Aide

Jackie Johnson, Sr. Kindergarten (SK)

Angela Nero, Sr. Kindergarten Aide

Megan Galeener, 1st Grade

Lisa Maloney, 1st Grade Aide

Caroline Huttner, 2nd Grade

Carrie Walsh, 3rd Grade

Jaymi Raad, 3rd Grade Teacher Assistant

Ruthi Brucato, 4th Grade

Lisa Nelson, 5th Grade

Christina Starrick, 6th Grade

Brian Schultz, 7th Grade

Lisa Wolfanger, 8th Grade

Julian Tyus, Art Teacher

Keary Bramwell, Librarian

Michael Costello, Cantor

Johanna Johnson, Music Teacher

Beth Parker, Special Education Coordinator

Erika Lyle, German Teacher

Sarah McCabe, Physical Education Teacher

Breah Ponce, Jr High Math Teacher

Dr. Helen Elayan, School Counselor

School Calendar

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Monday, August 19 | Back to School Night/Supply Drop Off, 4:30-6:30 |
| Tuesday, August 20 | Opening Day of School, dismissal at 11:30 – No GLS+ |
| Monday, September 2 | No School – Labor Day |
| Wednesday, September 4 | Curriculum Night, 6:30-8:00 |
| Monday, September 16 | Fall MAP testing begins, Grades 2-8 |
| Friday, October 4 | Walkathon, 11:30 dismissal, GLS+ until 6:00pm |
| Thursday, October 10 | Parent-Teacher Conferences, 11:30 dismissal, GLS+ until 6:00pm |
| Friday, October 11 | No School – Fall Break |
| Monday, October 14 | No School – Fall Break |
| Friday, November 8 | End of first trimester |
| Wed., Nov 27 – Fri., Nov 29 | Thanksgiving Break (No School) |
| Friday, Dec.13 | Early Childhood Christmas Pageant 10:45-11:15 (PK-SK dismissed at 11:30, NO Lunch Bunch or afternoon SK |
| Monday, December 23 | 11:30 dismissal – Grades 1-8 Final Christmas Eve rehearsals for participants only, No PK, JK or SK, No GLS+ |
| Tuesday, December 24 | Children’s Christmas Eve Service, 4:15 & 6:00pm (grades 1-8 participate) |
| December 25 – January 7 | Christmas Vacation |
| Tuesday, January 7 | No School – Teacher Professional Development |
| Wednesday, January 8 | School Resumes |
| Monday, January 20 | No School – MLK Day |
| Monday, January 27 | Winter MAP Testing begins, Grades 2-8 |
| Monday, February 17 | No School – Presidents Day |
| Friday, February 21 | End of second trimester |
| Thursday, February 27 | Parent-Teacher Conferences, 11:30 dismissal, GLS+ until 6:00pm |
| Friday, February 28 | No School |
| March 10-14 (updated) | Lutheran Schools Week |
| March 14 (updated) | VIP Day (Event Participants only/No classes – Building closes 11:30 – No GLS+) |
| March 15 (updated) | Graceful Evening |
| March 24-28 | Spring Break |
| Friday, April 11 | No School – Fine Arts Festival |
| Friday, April 18 | No School – Good Friday |
| Monday, April 21 | No School – Easter Monday |
| Monday, April 28 | Spring MAP Testing begins, Grades 2-8 |
| Monday, May 26 | No School – Memorial Day |
| Wednesday, May 28 | Graduation, 6:00 pm |
| Friday, May 30 | Last Day of School, Closing Worship at 2:00, Dismissal at 3:00, No GLS+ Summer vacation begins **No GLS+ on the first or last day of school*** |

The School Year

Here is a little more information about what to expect from some of the events listed in the calendar.

- **Back-to-School Night**
 - This is an open house that occurs the day before the first day of school and serves as an opportunity for students to drop off supplies and medication, meet their teachers, check out spirit wear, learn about after school enrichment options, and more. There is usually an orientation session for new families as well.
- **Curriculum Night**
 - This is usually scheduled during the first few weeks of school. During this evening, parents come to one of two 25-minute sessions during which teachers explain classroom procedures and expectations for their classes. Administration also prepares a presentation for parents.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences**
 - Conferences are two times a year (October and February)
 - Conferences are conducted in 15 minute intervals and are held in classrooms.
 - Progress reports will be issued prior to these dates.
- **Christmas Eve**
 - All students in grades 1-8 have the opportunity to participate in one or two of the Christmas Eve services. This is a special, long-standing tradition at Grace.
**More information about this topic found under "Worship and Music"*
- **Open House**
 - This is an opportunity for recruiting new students. It typically is scheduled in January. Teachers will be in their classrooms to answer questions of prospective families. If you know of anyone looking for a new school home, this is a great time to have them check out the school.
- **Graduation**
 - Eighth grade graduation takes place as part of a worship service on the last Wednesday of the school year. The 5th-8th grade choirs sing at the service and there is a reception afterwards.

ENROLLMENT

Students who are currently enrolled will automatically be re-enrolled in January and charged the \$100 enrollment fee. Families choosing not to re-enroll need to inform the school office by January 30 to avoid the re-enrollment fee. **Early enrollment** (in January) is available to members of Grace Lutheran Church and siblings of students already enrolled. **Open enrollment** for new students begins on February 10. An enrollment fee is due at the time of enrollment. Half of the materials fee is due in March with the remainder due in July.

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 (PK) must be three years old before September 1 of the year of entry.
- Junior Kindergarten (JK) students must have reached their fourth birthday before September 1 of the year of entry.
- Children entering Senior Kindergarten (SK) 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:

- PK, JK, SK, and 6th grade students must have a completed physical exam, dated within one year of the starting date of the school year.
- SK, 2nd grade, and 6th grade students must have a completed dental exam, dated within one year of the starting date of the school year.
- SK and 1st 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

Tuition is an essential support for Grace Lutheran School. Additional support is provided by the members of the congregation. The tuition amount is determined each year by the Elementary Education Committee (EEC). This figure is included in enrollment information. When enrolling a child in the school, parents must submit an enrollment form, and pay the enrollment fee. Other fees (e.g. materials and technology) are also assessed and must be paid as part of a payment plan.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payments are to be made through the use of our Payment System, FACTS. Payment Plans may be chosen by families using this system. Enrollment in the FACTS system is a requirement for attendance at Grace. No other payment methods are available. If a family's situation doesn't allow for any of the plans available in FACTS, the family must pick one of the existing plans and work with the School Office to arrange for modifications that work for the school and the family.

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 Tuition Assistance through FACTS, a third-party company that specializes in analyzing family financial capacity. After receiving an analysis from FACTS, the tuition assistance 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. Applications for tuition assistance must be submitted each year for consideration. There is a minimum tuition requirement that must be paid that is based on the number of students in a family.

FORMS AND FEES

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

Additional Required forms

- *Birth certificates*
- *Medical forms.* See page 6-7 for specific requirements.
- *Sports physical (if participating in Grace athletics) - good for 13 months*
- *Concussion form (if participation in Grace athletics) - filled out once a year*

Fees

- **Materials** - This fee covers books, instructional materials, technology resources, and certain supplies. It also includes an activity fee to help offset the cost of field trips and class parties. Parents of returning students may choose to pay the full fee in April or split the payment, with half due in April and the remainder in July. All books provided by Grace Lutheran School must be returned at the end of the school year. If books, materials, or equipment are damaged, families will be responsible for covering the 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 upon registration.
- **Athletics** - 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.
- **Instrumental Music** - Grace Lutheran students who choose to participate in the instrumental programs we offer will need to pay the required fees. (payments made to instructors, not Grace)

Failure to stay current with program fees will remove a student's eligibility to participate in these programs.

*****All fees are paid online through the school payment system.*****

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

School hours

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Pre-Kindergarten (PK) | 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. |
| Junior Kindergarten (JK) | 8:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. |
| Lunch Bunch (PK & JK combined) | 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 11:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (Wednesday) |
| Senior Kindergarten (SK) through 8 | 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 8:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. (Wednesday) |
| GLS+ | 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

Any student arriving before 7:45 MUST go to GLS+. Students who arrive between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m. will wait in the atrium and wait to be dismissed to their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. Classes begin at 8:15. Students entering the classroom after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy and will require a tardy pass from the school office to be admitted. (Students who are consistently tardy will be subject to disciplinary action.)

Dismissal

- **PK and JK students** (not staying for Lunch Bunch) will be dismissed at the south entrance (near the playground) at 11:30. Those students not picked up by 11:45 will be taken to the school office and must be picked up there. Students staying for Lunch Bunch will be picked up at 3:00 on the south side of the building.
- For **1st-8th grade** students, dismissal is a drive-through system. Please have a sign with the last name and grade of the students you are picking up. Please **DO NOT** get out of your car if you are in the drive-through lane.
- If you wish to walk up to the school, please **DO NOT** park in the carpool lane of traffic (eastbound Division and southbound Bonnie Brae).
- Families in which all students are in 6th grade or higher may park at Priory (or elsewhere) and have students walk to meet them.
- **6th-8th grade students walking or biking home** must have parent permission.
- After repeated late pick ups students will be sent to GLS+ and families will incur those fees.

GLS+

Grace has partnered with a program called Right at School to provide extended care hours under the name GLS+. Registration and pricing information is on the Grace School website under 'community'.



- Before school care starts at 7:00am.
- After school care ends at 6:00pm.

Leaving school grounds

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds or building during the school day unless accompanied by an adult. If a student needs to leave school early for any reason, the student must wait in the classroom (or at the school office) until the responsible adult is present.

Bicycles

There are bike racks located at the southeast and southwest corners of the building. Students are responsible for their bicycles and should provide their own lock.

Attendance

- Please notify the school office before 8:15 a.m. if a child will be absent or tardy. The school office will reach out to you if an absence is unreported. Daily attendance is a requirement and expectation of Grace Lutheran School.
- Excessive absences in a school year may put future enrollment in jeopardy.

Family vacations

If vacations are 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

In the event of a school closing or a delayed opening time, you will be notified by a text message and email.

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.

Cellphones and Electronic Devices

- **Smart phones**
 - PK-2nd: please leave devices at home
 - 3rd through 8th grade: All phones will be collected. If a student is found using a device during the day, it will be turned into the school office. Parents will be required to pick up the device at the end of the day.
- **Smart Watches**
 - PK-2: please leave devices at home
 - 3rd-8th: devices can be used for display purposes (time, weather, etc.) Students using them for other purposes will have the devices collected and turned into the school office. Parents will be required to pick up the device at the end of the day.

Parents should get messages to their students through a call or email to the School Office.

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

Lunch procedures

Students eat lunch under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Grace does not have a school cafeteria. Each student is responsible for bringing a lunch each day. (Please do not send items that require a microwave or refrigeration.)

An optional **hot lunch** is available for pre-order through a program called Marla's Lunch. On these days lunch will be delivered to the school and students will eat with their classmates as usual.

- Wednesday - hot lunch available for **PK-8th** grade (pizza from Spizzico)
- Friday - hot lunch available for **1st-8th** grade (rotating selection of restaurants)

Remember to place hot lunch orders by noon on the PREVIOUS Wednesday.

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

Always check with the classroom teacher prior to bringing a treat to school. Allergen-free snacks are always preferred so that all students can enjoy the special treat.

Please avoid sending party invitations along with your student to school.

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.

Lost and found

Lost articles are turned in to the school office where they can be claimed. Unclaimed articles are stored in the office area until the end of the school year at which point they are donated to charity.

Lockers

Individual lockers are provided either outside or within the classroom. Students' backpacks should be small enough to fit into their lockers. Students in 5th-8th grade are assigned gym lockers. Locks are provided to secure athletic clothing.

Visitors

All guests of the school must check-in at the school desk. You will receive a lanyard to wear, signaling you as a visitor to the school. All visits need to be pre-arranged with a teacher or staff member in advance. This includes before the school day begins, lunch supervision, classroom party leadership, and after the school day ends.

Guests who are here for a chapel service may go directly to the sanctuary and do not need a visitor pass.

COMMUNICATION

Regular communication between school, teachers, and parents fosters cooperation, community, and student success.

Website - The Grace Lutheran Church and School website (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 Wednesday Grace School Newsletter** is sent to parents via email and posted on the Grace website on Wednesday 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 (PK-6th) are sent home via email (or hard-copy) before or at the start of each school week.
- **Gradelink** gives parents of students in grades 5-8 web-based access to their student's gradebook and school calendar. 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 voicemail and email daily. During the school day, the Front Desk can connect callers to teachers' voicemail. Please do not expect a return call or email during school hours. Teachers are busy during the day teaching your students. Teachers will make every effort to return your call or email within 24 hours during the school week. You should also 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 Grace teachers and staff members. Please notify the school office at the beginning of the school year if you do not wish to have your family information included in the directory.

HEALTH

School nurse

Grace Lutheran School does *not* have an on-site nurse. We do have a part-time nurse who manages all the medical documentation requirements for our school. 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. For this reason, please make sure that your emergency contact information is always up-to-date in Gradelink.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation in the event of an illness or minor injury. In a medical emergency, 911 will be called to provide ambulance transportation to a nearby hospital. The 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.

If your child has a condition requiring medication (ex. asthma, seizure disorder, anaphylactic allergy) you must provide the school with the medical action plan.

Medication

Teachers are not allowed to administer any type of medication to students. If a student requires any medication (prescription or non-prescription) during the day please do the following:

- Bring the medication to the school office in the **original container**.
- The medication must be accompanied by a completed, signed physician order form that is also signed by the parent. The required form can be found under the 'current families' tab on the Grace School website.

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. The school incurs no liability when administering asthma, epinephrine, or opioid antagonists.

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.

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 PK, JK, 2nd, and 8th grade.
- Hearing screenings are done for students in PK, JK, SK, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd 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 rescreening, indicating a need for follow-up.

Communicable disease

If your child has any of the following symptoms the child MUST stay home.

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

Children may return to school when:

- their temperature has been less than 100 degrees without the use of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.
- they have not vomited or had diarrhea for 24 hours.

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-discrimination 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. Students practice skills, reinforce concepts and prepare for upcoming classroom experiences through their assignments. Through managing both long term and short term assignments, students learn time management skills as well. Students who graduate from Grace are typically more than prepared for the rigors of the high school curricula they encounter.

Students at Grace can expect to spend at most 10 minutes/grade level each day. For example, a fourth grader should expect to spend no more than 40 minutes on homework daily.

Parents of students in grades 5-8 can monitor their child's completion of homework by checking Gradelink

Students in grades 2-8 take the MAP test three times each school year (September, February and May).

Academic Honesty

Grace Lutheran School values an academic environment of fairness and integrity. Academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, copying, using AI-generated materials, etc.) will not be tolerated. If a teacher suspects that a student's work is not their own, it will be brought to the attention of the administration for further action.

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.

Consequences are determined by the teacher in consultation with Administration. Parents will be notified. The student may face a loss of privileges or suspension depending on the situation.

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 8th grade

If an 8th grade student accumulates three or more trimester grades below 65 in core courses throughout the year, the student will be given an academic improvement plan. Graduation is contingent on successful completion of the plan. *Note: Core courses are defined as any course that meets 4 or more times in a typical week.*

BEHAVIOR

Student responsibility - 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 by the student and turned in on time.
- 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.

School responsibility - 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 expectations 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 - Parents are responsible for:

- Seeing that their child arrives at school on time and ready to learn.
- Familiarizing the child with school rules and procedures.
- Monitoring the child's progress and behavior at school by reading the Principal note, checking the Tuesday folder, checking Gradelink (grades 5-8), and responding to communications from teachers, principal, or staff members.
- Working with the school in modifying the child's behavior when necessary.

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.
- 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. 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.

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

Cursing or taking the Lord's name in vain is not acceptable and is subject to disciplinary action.

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 misusing the device, the student will lose computer privileges.

Bullying

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 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.

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.

Reporting Policy for Battery Against School Personnel

In the event of a written complaint from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel, the Principal shall immediately notify local law enforcement officials. The Principal shall also notify the Illinois State Police within 3 days of each incident of battery through the School Incident Reporting System in IWAS.

Student Behavior Policy

Discipline at Grace Lutheran School is understood to be a learning process aimed at the development of Christian character. The chart on the following page will help you understand what teachers and administrators will be assessing:

| TEACHER-Managed Behaviors | ADMINISTRATION-Managed Behaviors |
|---|--|
| Minor | Major |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate language (i.e.: not abusive) ● Disrespect (ex: putting head on desk, failure to follow simple directions) ● Non-compliance (ex: off-task, not turning in homework, not being prepared for class) ● Disruption (ex: excessive talking) ● Possession of electronics (ex: cell phones, other) after being told to put them away ● Hands-off (ex: horseplay, inappropriate physical contact) ● Teasing (verbal) ● Tardy to class (tardies 1-3 make parent contact) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate language (abusive or threatening), Profanity ● Gross disrespect (ex: socially rude interactions) ● Repeated non-compliance (ex: challenging authority) ● Repeated disruption (ex: repeated severe offenses) ● Use of electronics (ex: texting or talking on cell phone, taking pictures during school) ● Physical Aggression (ex: fighting and inappropriate touching and/or comments, lewd notes or comments) ● Bullying (ex: verbal and/or physical) and/or excessive teasing ● Excessive tardies (after 5 tardies refer to office) ● Forgery/Theft (ex: lying/dishonesty on forging a parent name) ● Cheating/Plagiarism ● Dress code (ex: no PE uniform) ● Property Misuse (ex: inappropriate use of computers, websites and classroom materials and equipment) |

**For every office referral, the administration will contact the student's parents and copy the teacher.*

Dress Code

Students:

- **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 shorts must have a 3" inseam or longer. All tops and bottoms should have no holes and should not be see-through Shoes: Closed toe, closed heel with socks. No Crocs. 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. All shorts must have a 3" inseam or longer. Pants: Leggings are allowed but must be opaque. Athletic shorts and sweatpants are allowed, but no short running shorts or 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, Crocs, or athletic slides. Athletic shoes must be worn for PE.
- Makeup should not be put on at school. Makeup 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.

Every **Friday students are encouraged to wear Grace spirit wear, or dress in the Character Counts color.**

If the dress code is violated, initial warnings will be administered. This will include a conversation with the student and an 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-6th grade have library class once a week. Students in 7th and 8th grade have the option to eat in the library for lunch on select days. The library is open in the morning from 8:00-8:15 for students to check out/return books.

All students may check out books from the library for two weeks at a time. If there are no holds, students may renew them for another two weeks. Overdue notices will go out monthly or more frequently as needed. Once a student has a book that is lost or 5 overdue books, they may not check out more books until it is returned or paid for. Students are responsible to pay for lost or damaged books.

- **PK-SK students**
 - 1 book checked out at a time
 - SK students may take 2 at a time
 - Max of 5 books
- **1st and 2nd**
 - 2 books at a time
 - Max of 10 books
- **3rd-8th**
 - 4 books at a time
 - Max of 10 books

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. In the case of damage or loss of the device, families will be responsible to pay the appropriate fines.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Chapel

Students attend chapel once a week 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.

Chapel services provide leadership roles for students: reading Scripture, ushering, receiving the offering, and singing. Students at Grace are assigned chapel buddies. This is a way of pairing younger students with older students. Not only do these students sit together during chapel services, they also get together on a regular basis during the school year to do projects, read or play games together.

An **offering** is collected at each chapel service. Students are encouraged to contribute each week. The monies collected throughout the year are given to a benevolence ministry that is designated at the beginning of each school year.

Holy Communion is celebrated in several chapel services: the first and last chapel services of the year, Ash Wednesday, 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. Please direct any questions or concerns about this practice to the Grace Lutheran Church pastoral staff.

School choirs

All students in grades 1-8 participate in choir. 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 during the school year as well as Wednesday evening worship services during Advent and Lent. All students in choir 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. Participation in these worship services is part of your student's grade.

Instrumental music

Grace Lutheran School offers a band and orchestra programs

- **Band** - available for students in grades 4-8. This program is in cooperation with Walther Christian Academy. An instructor comes to the school once/week to provide private lessons.
- **Orchestra** - Private lessons are available for students starting in 1st grade.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Enrichment classes

The Grace Parent Organization offers a variety of after-school enrichment classes. The Wednesday Principal Note and the school website contain more information about classes and schedules. Additional registration and fees will be required for these classes.

Athletics

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.

| Sport | Participants | Season |
|---------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 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 & Field | Girls and boys in grades 3-8 | April and May |

Each sport has a required participation 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.

Spectators at games

All students are invited to attend athletic events at Grace as spectators, but must be under adult supervision. All spectators are to remain in the gym or entry area (wandering around the school is not allowed). All students are expected to behave in a manner that demonstrates respect and sportsmanship to all participants.

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 each year prior to participation in any sport.

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.

Ineligibility Policy

Participating in athletics at Grace School is a privilege and academics must always be our first priority. With this in mind, the following policies have been established.

- Student-athletes may be held out of practice or competition or removed from a team due to recurring 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 recurring 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 if more than one class has a grade below 65.
 - Grades are checked every Tuesday. Students who 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 1st trimester, the student can not practice or compete until the first official check for everyone a minimum of 10 school days into the 2nd trimester)

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.

Information about meetings and activities can be found on the school calendar at www.graceschoolrf.org

School volunteers

Volunteers serve an important role in the education of the students at Grace. Grace Lutheran School expects parents 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 Wednesday Principal Note frequently contain information about specific volunteer activities. If you have interests or skills to offer as a volunteer, please talk to your child's teacher or the principal or a member of the GPO.

Volunteers opportunities include: *Walk with Grace*, lunch supervision, leading classroom parties, chaperoning field trips, and assisting the GPO with social gatherings.

A Graceful Evening

Grace Lutheran Church and School sponsors an annual dinner and auction called A Graceful Evening. This event provides an evening of fun and fellowship shared by school parents and congregation members and serves as the school's largest fundraiser of the year. The event typically takes place in March at the end of Lutheran Schools Week. 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 |

| Teasing Compared to Bullying | |
|--|---|
| Teasing | Bullying |
| 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. The richness of God's blessing is evident in the abundant resources we have at Grace Lutheran School. We will encourage Grace Lutheran School children to organize and participate in fundraising that benefits others so that they understand fundraising as an act of stewardship. Participation in and contributing to fundraising is voluntary. No student or family should be compelled to engage in fundraising if it causes financial strain or personal hardship.

