



GRACE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS POLICIES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR 2016-17



The following policies insure that Grace Community Schools will have a good relationship with you and your child:

ABSENTEEISM:

Student tuition will be charged for all absences less than one week. All absences one week or longer (for sickness, vacation or any other reason) will be charged 40% of their current tuition rate.

ADMISSIONS:

Grace Community Schools do not discriminate in its admission policies by race, color, or national origin. Children are accepted from the age of six weeks through age 11 years (at some locations). We are sorry, but we cannot accept special needs children.

Grace Community uses a state of the art biometric/fingerprint scanning system for security drop off and pick up procedures. Upon enrollment, each person with permission to pick up the child will be asked to scan a fingerprint into the computer for access. This scan will be used to keep track of attendance and to view your account.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE:

Some of the Grace Community Schools offer before and after school care to public school students. Please check with the school nearest you for availability and cost. All students who are transported to and from their schools will be required to sign a bus activity form.

BOOK FEES:

Book fees will be required for Kindergarten and First Grade (at some locations). Any additional book fees will be assessed as made necessary by the child's progress. These fees are due at the beginning of the school year or enrollment and may be paid in installments. There is no refund for the cost of books should the child transfer to another school during the school year.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:

God is the greatest teacher of Character. We support your child's learning of character with Bible verses and stories. We help your child learn how to resolve conflicts and make friends. The children learn to respect their parents and teachers.

DANCE: Dance instruction is available for ages 2 and up (not available at all GCS schools). The class consists of one half hour lesson per week monitored by a professional instructor. The cost for the lessons will be added to your account.

DISCIPLINE:

Our main method of discipline is to get your child so excited about learning that problems are few. We do this by moving quickly from one activity to the next. Since we recognize that many discipline problems are caused simply because the child needs more personal attention, we lavish the children who are listening to the teacher with the attention they seek.

We use a highly original reward and praise system. If the problem is not solved by the above method (most are), we will give your child a time-out period to calm down. Our final method to solve problems is to call a conference with you, the parent.

Grace Community Schools strictly forbid its staff and teachers from using corporal punishment in any form. If you believe one of our faculty has broken this rule, tell us and we will investigate it thoroughly. Staff who violate this policy can face dismissal. Please tell us of any unlawful discipline first and in private. The Bible reads "...if any brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone..." (Matt. 18:15)

DISMISSAL:

We reserve the right to dismiss a child at any time after a continued effort to search the reason why the child is too unruly (i.e. disrupts the class, undesirable language, physical abuse of self, teacher, or other children, etc.) or if the child or parent is not satisfied with our school.

DRESS CODE:

There is no dress code for children in the preschool. However we would prefer that they dress appropriately to play outside depending upon the weather, such as a jacket or sweater with long pants on chilly days or short-sleeved top with shorts for hot days. Shoes appropriate for playing on monkey bars would be helpful. **Please no open-toed shoes, flip-flops, sandals, or heels.** On Fridays, we have School Spirit Day, and we show our school spirit by wearing our school logo whale shirt. You are welcome to wear the whale shirt on other days as well.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

Emergency evacuation drills are conducted at least once a month to be sure that staff and children are familiar with the procedures. A complete Emergency Preparedness Plan is available in the office for parents to review.

HEALTH RECORDS:

It is mandatory for each child to have on file in the school office an up-dated school record (blue form 680), a Florida physical (yellow form 3040), and a copy of the child's birth certificate. Please take care of this matter before admission. These records are checked periodically by county, state, and accrediting agency inspectors. It will be necessary to dismiss a child who does not have the above records on file.

HOLIDAYS:

Holidays during the year have been taken into consideration at the time prices were established. Therefore, no deduction can be taken for holiday absences. There will be no adjustments made in case of a hurricane or other natural circumstances not controllable by us, such as power outages, water, etc. We will follow the same operating procedures as the public school system under those circumstances.

The Grace Community Schools will be closed for the following holidays this school year:

Labor Day - Sept. 5
Thanksgiving - Nov. 24 & 25
Christmas Break - Dec. 26th-January 2nd (no charge for the week we are closed)
Good Friday - April 14
Memorial Day - May 29
Independence Day - July 4

ILLNESS:

We have to consider all the children in our school, and we wish to make sure that they are all protected from illness. Therefore, if your child becomes sick at school, we will inform you immediately. Please make sure that the phone numbers we have on file are current. We do want to notify you as soon as possible if your child is not feeling well.

To help prevent illness from spreading, children will be excluded from the classroom if any of the following symptoms or conditions occur:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or above
2. Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain,

3. Diarrhea,
4. Unusual drowsiness or tiredness,
5. Sore throat, colored mucus, acute cold, or persistent cough (non allergic),
6. Red, inflamed, or discharging eyes,
7. Swollen glands around jaws, ears, or neck ,
8. Impetigo, until 24 hours after an acceptable antibiotic treatment has been started and documented,
9. Any skin sore oozing fluid, yellow pus in blisters, or pus which has an odor,
10. Other undiagnosed skin condition

If your child begins to exhibit these symptoms during the school day, he or she will be excluded from the classroom and brought to our rest area for ill children in the front office. You will be promptly notified and required to make arrangements for pick up immediately. When you pick up, you will be given a Medical FYI documenting the symptoms your child exhibited. You may also receive a Medical Referral if your child requires a pediatrician's authorization before returning to care.

We will notify parents, in a written notice, of any contagious diseases.

If your child requires medication to be administered by prescription, it is your responsibility to make arrangement for the administration thereof. Grace Community School **DOES NOT** administer medication of any kind (prescription or non-prescription), this includes any topical ointment . Please do not ask our staff to administer medication as it is in direct violation of this policy.

Please be aware that Grace Community has a no nit policy regarding head lice. Should your child have head lice it must be treated and all nits removed before your child returns to school.

Basic Rule of Thumb: *If your child is not well enough to play outdoors, the child is not well enough to come to school.*

KARATE:

Karate instruction is available for ages 3 and up (not available at all GCS schools). The class consists of one half hour lesson per week monitored by a professional instructor. The instructor will reward the child's progress with stars and belts. The cost for the lessons, stars, and belts will be added to your account.

LATE PAYMENT FEES:

Tuition payments are due every Monday, but can be paid as late as Tuesday morning without a late fee. If paid on Wednesday or thereafter, a **\$25.00 fee will be added to your account**. All unpaid accounts will be turned over to a collection agency.

LATE PICK UP FEES:

All GCS locations close at 6:00 pm. Any parent arriving for pick up after 6:00 pm. will be charged. The fee for a **late pick-up is \$1.00 per minute, per child**. This fee will be added to your account. Please make arrangements to pick up on time. No exceptions will be made. If we have not been notified or able to contact a parent/authorized contact of a child one hour after closing, the authorities will be notified.

LUNCHES/SNACKS/BREAKFAST:

Free breakfast, lunch and snack are provided. We offer the USDA approved National School Lunch Program. Menus are posted weekly in the office. See your Grace Community location for a list of the food serving times. No lunch is needed. No more packing and cleaning lunch boxes. Leave it all to us! If your child has special dietary needs you are welcome to pack lunches/beverages for your child. You will need to pick up lunch/beverage packing guidelines from your school office. **No bubble or chewing gum permitted on the school premises.**

OPEN DOOR POLICY:

Grace Community School practices a complete access open door policy. Children are available for visits and pick-up at any time to parents or family members that are on the permitted pick up list. You may be asked to produce a valid photo ID as well as use the fingerprint/biometric finger scanning computer system.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

We encourage parental involvement at all times. We recognize that parents are a child's first teachers. We encourage strong links between home and school. Together we can help ready your child for their full potential. We have Christmas and Kindergarten graduation programs each year. Feel free to schedule a parent-teacher conference throughout the year. A school book is free of charge annually as well as weekly photos of your child at play. In addition to the above we also have school parties and book fairs scheduled throughout the year.

PARTIES (Birthdays & Holidays) : Grace Community loves to party!! We have parties throughout the school year celebrating the holidays. We will send home a list of items needed for the party and ask parents to donate what they can. We are sorry but the Health Department does not allow items brought in baked at home. **All donations must be store bought and unopened.** Due to allergies no items containing nuts or peanuts are allowed in the facility.

If you would like your child to celebrate their birthday at school with their friends, you are welcomed to bring in an item to share such as a cake, cupcake, ice cream, cookies, popsicles, etc. Please let the director know in advance so they can assist you in the process. Birthday parties are celebrated at afternoon snack time so as not to interfere with lunch service.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT :

(Only for those schools offering part-time) The amount of days per week signed up for upon enrollment must be paid for whether absenteeism occurs or not. For instance, you sign up for 3 days a week, you must pay for 3 days even if you child was here only 1 day. Also any initial start-up fees are the same as for full-time students.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

We cannot be responsible for any personal belongings brought in by your child. However, we will do our very best to protect them. Do not allow your child to bring to school any item of value. **Children are not permitted to carry cell phones at our facility. Please label everything belonging to your child.** This will assist us in returning lost items. Everything the child brings to school must fit into his backpack. Any dangerous or inappropriate items brought to school by the student will be confiscated and returned to the parent. **All bottles and sippy cups MUST be labeled with first and last names.**

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO TAPING: Grace Community does not permit the unauthorized use of cameras or video taping anywhere on school grounds. Grace Community protects the privacy of all of its patrons. Parents are not permitted to take photographs using any image capturing devices such as, cell phones, cameras, etc.

PIANO/MUSIC LESSONS: Piano lessons and Music lessons are available for ages 2 and up (not available at all GCS schools). The lesson consists of one half hour of musical instruction per week. Your child will learn the basics of music theory, reading music notes, and piano playing. Piano and Music lessons build a child's self-esteem, increases coordination, helps them concentrate better, and even raises tests scores. The cost of piano/music lessons, and any or all piano instruction books will be charged to your account.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE POLICY:

We at GCS provide an environment to children that is designed to foster appropriate behavior and a strong sense of self-esteem. We provide a stimulating, loving environment in which children will want to learn, play, and explore. Our staff provides interaction that is both positive and empowering. Our staff give children positive feedback for all positive behavior, giving clear and consistent information about what behavior is appropriate and acceptable. We set the stage for positive, inspiring interaction, thus eliminating much potential for inappropriate behavior. We encourage children to respect themselves, property and others. Generally, this means that no one and nothing is allowed to be hurt either physically or emotionally. Children at this age, however, are just beginning to understand what "hurts" others and things, as well as how to express their feelings appropriately. When children come into conflict with each other, our goal as care providers is to guide them in exploring the appropriate ways to communicate their feelings. We explain to children what about their behavior is inappropriate.

PROMOTION:

Students may progress at their own pace. Students may be promoted to the next level upon completion of the previous material successfully and approval of the teacher.

RE-ENROLLMENT:

To re-enroll your child after a long absence due to illness, vacation or transfer, you will be charged \$40.00 (some restrictions apply). This is to your benefit as you will not be charged for all the weeks of absence.

REGISTRATION FEE:

There is no registration fee to pay to enroll your child.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN:

Upon enrollment, you will be asked to choose a pin number as a code for our computer attendance program. It is mandatory that persons dropping off a child must enter their pin code into the computer at the front office and re-enter it upon picking up a child before that child may be dismissed. Do not attempt to pick up a child from the playground without signing out at the front office. Children will be released only to those persons whose names are listed on the enrollment form. Identification will be required of persons picking up children. Parents should advise the office staff in writing, if possible, if a person not listed on the enrollment form is to pick up the child.

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute per child will be charged when a parent is late picking up a child, which is a reasonable fee considering that the entire school is staying open in order to provide services for your child/children. This fee will be added to your account. If we have not been notified or able to contact a parent/authorized contact of a child one hour after closing, the authorities will be notified.

SCHOOL HOURS:

All locations of Grace Community are open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except for holidays.

SCHOLARSHIPS:

There are also scholarships available through Nicene Covenant Church. Scholarships are based on income and family size. Please inquire in the school office about the application process for these scholarships.

SMOKE-FREE FACILITY:

Grace Community is a completely smoke-free facility. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on our property including the parking lot areas.

SOCIAL MEDIA: In our continuing efforts to keep up to date on all that is going on at our schools, we are active on social media outlets. Look for us on Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, You-tube, and even Vine! You can also sign up for email updates from our school website or from the school Facebook page. I give Grace Community School permission to photograph and video record, and use photographs and video recordings of my child or children in the development of videos, published materials, news releases, and online materials with the understanding that our privacy will be respected and honored. I also give teachers and students permission to photograph or video my child for the purpose of classroom assignments. Photographs and videos may also be used for parent information on the Internet through www.gracecommunityschools.com, the official school blog, and various social media platforms and apps including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. This includes advertisements, promoted posts, and marketing materials. An opt-out form is available should I wish to prevent photography of my child or children.

STAFF:

Every employee is thoroughly screened. We also train all our teachers in First Aid and CPR. Our staff attends in-service training courses and are encouraged to continue their training. All teachers must have 45 class hours in child training from the state of Florida within one year of employment. Each of our head teachers must have a Child Development Associate degree or working toward that goal with a minimum of one year's employment. Each year all staff members must complete a minimum of 10 class hours to continue employment. We encourage our teachers to get Bachelor and Master's degrees. Many of our managers have Masters in Early Education degrees.

Grace Community Schools conducts background screening on every member of our staff as required by state law. This includes fingerprinting, and background checks.

SUMMER:

Summer is not only spent in fun and play, taking a break from the usual school routine using special theme weeks, like Outer Space, Carnival, Western, etc. weeks, but we also combine all this fun with some review work to help the students not forget what they learned previously and to help the new students learn to read and count. During the summer, drop-ins may be accepted (depending upon space availability) paying a daily rate only. Also, look for signs in the front office about special event days such as, Bounce House, Water Slide, and other activities. These activities are available to all children who wish to participate for a nominal fee.

SUPPLIES:

Parents will need to provide the following supplies for their preschool children upon their enrollment:

A rest mat of at least 1" thickness. It is the parent's responsibility to care for this mat. If a mat is torn, it needs to be replaced. Rest mats are available for purchase at our centers for \$25.00 each.

A change of clothing in a backpack labeled with the child's name. Parents need to replace the clothing if it has been used or is no longer large enough for the child.

For infants, all supplies needed for the day—a clean crib sheet, diapers, wipes, formula, food, etc. Also any special blanket or toy that the child needs for security would be helpful.

There is a \$10 per month fee for supplies such as crayons, glue, scissors, construction paper, etc. This fee applies to all children age 1 year and up.

TAX INFORMATION:

Information needed for tax returns such as tuition fees paid and Federal identification numbers are **available upon request only**. This information is given as a courtesy to all of our clients who have an account in good standing. We are not required to mail or fax this information to you.

TRANSFERS:

If you are moving to a new location you are able to transfer your child to a Grace Community closer to you provided that your account is in good standing.

TUITION:

The first week's tuition must be paid in advance before admission. You may pay by cash, check, money order, or credit card (Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Amex). The weekly tuition is due each Monday thereafter. **A \$25.00 late fee will be charged to all who do not make their full tuition payment by Tuesday morning.** If a payment is not received by Friday, the child cannot attend school the following Monday or thereafter until payment is made. You will be charged the weekly fee even though your child was absent, because the seat must be reserved for his return. No deduction can be made for the few holiday absences when our school is closed. We will not accept post dated checks. If your check bounces, you will have to pay the service charge (\$25.00). If you bounce two checks in a row, you will have to make all payments in cash. All overdue accounts will be turned over to a collection agency.

We offer discounts for multiple children in the family. Please check with office staff for discount information.

If a coupon or discount from advertising is used for tuition, it is limited to new full-time students, immediate family members, and one per family. It must be used for consecutive weeks. The coupon discount may not be combined with any other advertising. All Grace Community Schools may not be participating in the coupon discounts. If a parent is late making the tuition payment or bounces a check, the coupon discount is rescinded and full payment will be required.

WAITING LISTS:

To put your name on our waiting list, simply pay the first week's tuition in advance and fill out an application form. You usually will not be required to wait long. This advance tuition will be refunded to you if an opening does not occur within the time frame needed.

WITHDRAWALS:

A child may be withdrawn with a one week written notice to the office. If written notice is not received in advance, charges for that week will be assessed. Please make sure your balance is fully paid. Please do not ask us to transfer academic records if your bill is not fully paid.