

GraceWay Academy



EXODUS 33:13

Student & Family Handbook

2019-2020

2255 SE 38th St

Ocala, FL 34480

(352) 629-4523 p

(352) 629-3383 f

Welcome, families!

Our Mission: Preparing students for academic success

while glorifying God through faith in action.



Show me Your way, that I may know You and find grace in Your sight. Exodus 33:13

Welcome! We're looking forward to an exciting year of fun, exploring, and learning about this wonderful world and Jesus who loves each one of our students. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

Table of Contents

Accreditation 3

Arrival and Departure 3

Attendance 3

Child Abuse & Neglect..... 5

Communication..... 5

Conflict Resolution 5

Curriculum..... 6

Discipline 6

Dress Code/Attire 7

Elementary Classroom 9

Enrollment 9

Field Trips..... 10

Financial 10

Fundraisers..... 11

Governance 11

Harmful Behavior 11

Health..... 12

Honor Code..... 12

Hygiene..... 13

Internet & Network Access Agreement 13

Library 13

Lost and Found 13

Lunch 13

Medication 14

Midmorning Snack 14

Mission Statement 14

Nap Time or Rest Time During After Care 15

Non-Discrimination Statement 15

Observations Regarding Potential Learning Disabilities 15

Parties and Holidays 15

Personal Belongings 15

Prayer..... 15

Progress Reports 16

Retention..... 16

Safety 16

School Hours 17

School Pictures 17

Severe Weather..... 17

Social Media 17

Special Needs..... 17

Standardized Tests 18

Standards-Based Grading 18

Statement of Faith..... 19

Technology and Devices..... 19

Tobacco & Vaping..... 19

Volunteers..... 20

ACCREDITATION

GraceWay Academy is accredited by the League of Christian Schools and the Florida League of Christian Schools. Accreditation is a process by which schools voluntarily submit to rigorous outside inspection and interviews regarding the educational and administrative standards set by the accrediting group. This process ensures that a high-quality experience is had by our families in a Christ-centered environment.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Kindergarten-Fifth grade students can be dropped off in the carline (alongside the playground) in the morning. A teacher will be on the curb to greet them at 7:45 a.m. Students will be marked tardy if they are not in the designated room by 8:00 a.m. Elementary students will be ready to be picked up in the carline at 2:00 p.m. Please be aware that our teachers will be focused on keeping your children safe, so they may not have time to chat as they load and unload children. Leaving a message in your child's folder or calling the school office will allow them to give you their full attention. GraceWay staff is not responsible for buckling students into vehicles.

Late Pick Ups will be assessed a \$1 fee per minute. Late pick up fees will begin at 12:06 pm for preschool, 2:21 pm for Kindergarten-5th grade, and 5:36 pm for Extended Day. If you know you are running late, please call and let us know. Your child will appreciate knowing that you are on your way.

Ample parking is available in the grass lot north of the church. Please **DO NOT** park along the circle drive as this must be reserved for emergency vehicles.

For the safety of our children, the entry door will be locked during school hours. Please press the intercom button to alert the office staff.

Elementary Morning Car Line for Preschool Siblings: Elementary parents with preschool siblings may drop off all their enrolled students in the morning car line at 7:45 am – 8:00 am. Because GraceWay is required to maintain direct supervision of preschool students at all times, preschoolers will enter the building and be directed to a specific teacher who will either accompany them to their classroom or call the office to have them escorted by another staff person. Parents should talk with their preschoolers about walking during carline and following teacher instructions carefully so that they stay safe. If a particular preschooler struggles to model safe carline behavior, this privilege may be revoked by administration at any time. This car line option is only available for morning drop off.

ATTENDANCE

Absences

The GraceWay Academy school calendar is provided to all families and is available on the school website (www.gracewayacademy.org). Any changes to this calendar will be communicated with parents via email.

Elementary

Per Florida statutes, parents are responsible to ensure that school age children attend school. Habitual truancy can affect scholarships, enrollment, and promotion to the next grade. Good attendance and punctuality are important habits to teach your child. Full day and partial day attendance are tracked on student progress reports and will be sent with school records requests.

- Elementary students should submit an absence note for ANY absences. Even when a phone call is made, we still require a written or emailed note for our records.
- Absences will be recorded as excused for illness, doctor appointments, and family emergencies. Up to two days of parent note excused absences per quarter will be considered excused; absences per quarter of three days or more will

be unexcused unless there is a doctor's note. **Absence notes must be received within two weeks of the date of absence.** Documentation from a physician can be submitted for consideration regarding this policy in the event of a chronic illness. Please schedule an appointment with the principal to discuss.

- If your child has five absences (full day or partial) in 30 days or six absences total in one quarter, you will be contacted for a conference to discuss the impact to your child's learning. Worksheets at home cannot replicate in-class instruction.

If it is determined that the student's progress has been negatively impacted by the absences and/or partial days, it may be required that parents seek supplemental instruction (i.e., tutoring) or enrollment may be terminated. Any absences incurred after a period of excessive absence require a doctor's note to return. Our teachers will do their best to help children make-up for their missed days to the extent possible. Regular attendance is essential to school success. Please plan to schedule expected appointments and vacations outside of school hours.

Fireflies (3-year olds)

Preschool families on the 2-day or 3-day schedule may make-up missed days anytime during the 30-day period following their absence if you call the office first to find out if there is space available that day. Make-up days are not guaranteed but offered if available.

VPK

GraceWay Academy must submit attendance information to the Early Learning Coalition of Marion County to receive funding to cover your child's preschool tuition. Each month, we will require you (or a designated representative) to verify your child's attendance by signing their attendance form. We do not receive full funding for children who are absent more than 20% of days, or 35 out of 176 days.

In addition to the signed attendance form, we will need to collect:

- a note from a parent or guardian stating the reason a child is absent for any absences exceeding three in a calendar month
- a note from a medical provider for any absences exceeding four in a calendar month.

Absences of four consecutive days or more need to be preapproved by the school office. School attendance will be reviewed.

Any child who is absent five or more consecutive days without prior approval may be subject to withdrawal from the program. Children whose absences exceed the State's absence policy (20% of total days) will be withdrawn from the VPK program with the opportunity to reenroll as a fee-based student under the current monthly rate to remain in their same class and finish the school year.

At the end of each month, parents will be required to verify their child's attendance for that month. Please sign and date these legibly for the State: think third grade cursive practice.

Partial Day Attendance: Tardies

We understand the occasional delays to school – car trouble, oversleeping, illness – but repeated tardiness places an undue burden on staff and students. Late arrivals interfere with the morning routine for your child and disrupt the class. Please make whatever changes are needed to ensure your child's timely arrival for the remainder of the school year.

If your child will be late, please call our office to let us know. Just like absences, tardies can be excused or unexcused. All late-arriving students should be signed in by an adult in the office. Elementary students will walk to their class independently after obtaining a tardy slip from the office. Preschool students will walk with a staff person to their class.

Partial Day Attendance: Early Pick-Ups

It is equally important for your child to attend school for the full school day. Frequent early pick-ups can interfere with your child's progress as the full school day is used for instruction. All early pick-ups will be signed out by an adult in the office. Early pick-ups can be excused or unexcused as well.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

We pray that we will never be confronted with a situation where we know, or have suspicions, of a student being neglected or abused. However, we want our parents to know what we **MUST** do, according to Florida Law, if we encounter either of these problems.

Florida Statute defines child abuse as: "Any willful act that results in physical, mental, or sexual injury that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired."

Child neglect is failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, or needed supervision.

Florida law also requires any school teacher or other school official or personnel – who know or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused or neglected – to report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children and Families. We do not have to be able to "prove" abuse to make a report. All that is required is a "reasonable" suspicion. It is the department's responsibility to fully investigate. Again, we pray that these problems will not arise within any family at our school, but we do have to abide by state law, and wanted you to be fully informed of our legal obligation.

COMMUNICATION

The majority of our school communication will be via email. Please be sure that the email address you provide us is one that you check regularly, if not daily. Additionally, your MyProcure parent portal will be used to communicate regarding your financial commitments. Field trip permission slips will be sent home on paper to be returned.

Every week your child will be learning through a wide variety of activities. Elementary families will receive monthly school newsletters and weekly updates from teachers. Please watch for these and be sure to note the weekly themes, important events, dates, announcements, and how you can help the GraceWay Academy community. Always feel free to contact us if you need more details or have questions. We are always happy to talk with parents and will schedule a time to meet with you if necessary.

Our website (www.gracewayacademy.org) is a good resource to find calendars, newsletters and other school information. Our school Facebook page is available to keep parents informed about coming events. We use an automated phone and email service to communicate with families. Please notify the office if your phone number or email addresses change so that you receive all school communication effectively.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

We, the school and our families, will resolve differences according to the biblical principles outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, and will adhere to the following procedures to resolve any issues with a school staff member, with the goal of reconciliation for all involved.

1. Parent and involved staff member will meet to discuss the issue and possible resolutions.
2. If the issue is not resolved, the staff member and parent will meet with the School Principal.
3. If the issue remains unresolved, the School Principal will refer the issue to the School Board for final resolution.

Our curriculum is reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure that it helps our students meet state learning standards. Certain pieces are specifically Christian; others are not. However, our teachers, not the curriculum, are how our students receive a faith-based educational experience. Our staff is trained in delivering a Christ-centered education, regardless of the focus of the materials, and to filter out material that is inconsistent with our mission and beliefs.

Elementary Curriculum

Our elementary program is supported by curriculum from the following publishers: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, BJU Press, trade books/novels, Zaner-Bloser, Pearson, Sadlier, and smaller publishers. Materials are also created in-house for use with exceptional students. Students also receive instruction and exposure in Music, Art, Physical Education (PE), Spanish and Bible classes.

Preschool Curriculum

Our curriculum meets or exceeds all of the state-mandated standards for VPK programs. Children are taught to write using the Block Manuscript alphabet, which is used by most schools in Marion County. Please help to reinforce this printing at home. All of our activities are planned with skill-building and reinforcement in mind on a biblical foundation.

DISCIPLINE

Elementary

In order to promote consistency across all classrooms, this discipline plan will be used to guide teacher procedures and student consequences. GraceWay Academy seeks to build its students up in the Lord's ways. He set forth a hierarchy of cooperative obedience for us to live by. At school, such rules and expectations create a framework for a safe learning environment for all students. As a school community, everyone has a valuable part to play:

- GraceWay Academy will clearly relay classroom, hallway, and playground rules and expectations to students.
- Students will show obedience in following rules and expectations, setting a positive example for their classmates.
- Parents will promote the importance of their student's obedience.

Level 1

Handled in the classroom: Angry or aggressive verbal behavior towards teacher or another student; off-task behavior; showing frustration inappropriately; disrespect towards the teacher or another student; disobeying classroom, school or playground rules.

Teacher action:

Warning 1: For minor offenses. Consequences are logical; for instance, if a student is using an object inappropriately it will be removed.

Warning 2: For minor offenses. Behavior Reflection/Think Sheet completed by student during lunch with isolation from other students. Reflection time with the teacher.

Warning 3: Referral to the School Principal. Completion of Disciplinary Referral form as soon as possible. Written notification to parent/guardian via copy of form, which will also go in student file.

Excessive issues or warnings will be discussed on an individual basis. Consequences may vary based on a student's needs or circumstances, at the discretion of the teacher.

Level 2

Immediate referral to the School Principal: Repeated Level 1 behaviors, temper tantrum with some physical aggression; foul language, hand motions, drawings or writings; verbal, emotional, or physical aggression towards the teacher or another student; vandalism on school or church property.

Teacher action:

Send student to the office. Completion of Disciplinary Referral form as soon as possible. Written notification to parent/guardian via copy of form, which will also go in student file. Student will complete Behavior Reflection/Think Sheet. Consequences may vary based on a student's needs or circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal.

Level 3

Immediate referral to the School Principal for immediate action with potential suspension or termination of enrollment: Repeated Level 2 behaviors; intentional search for pornography via Internet; recurring pattern of verbal, emotional or physical bullying; bringing a weapon to school; intentionally harming the teacher or another student.

Teacher Action:

Send the student to the office. Completion of Disciplinary Referral form as soon as possible. Written notification to parent/guardian via copy of form, which will also go in student file.

Consequences may vary based on a student's needs or circumstances, at the discretion of the Principal and/or the School Board.

Preschool

Children depend on the wisdom of adults to set reasonable limits for them. Limits are necessary to maintain safety, protect health, and guard the rights of others. It is our job as professionals to provide a loving environment in which your child can thrive, learn, and develop. We expect the children to obey the rules set by their teacher and we will use praise to reinforce good behavior. We will use discipline as guidance, not punishment. These are the procedures that will be followed at those times when discipline becomes necessary:

1. A simple and loving verbal reprimand is usually sufficient.
2. If the misbehavior continues, we will use “thinking time” in the classroom or on the playground. The child is not just given a “time out”, but is encouraged to think about a way to be a better friend, a way to be better controlled, etc. The teacher will allow the child to rejoin the group when a solution has been developed by the child, with the teacher’s help when necessary.
3. If the problem persists, or if a child’s behavior results in harm or injury to another child and “thinking time” does not resolve it, the teacher and parent will conference to work out an agreeable solution. When necessary, a behavior plan will be developed and implemented.
4. If the problem becomes chronic and all efforts to improve the situation fail, it will become necessary to remove the child from the school.
5. Corporal punishment will not be used by GraceWay Academy staff.

DRESS CODE/ATTIRE

Elementary Dress Code

Elementary students wear uniforms. The following guidelines should be followed:

- All students: Purchase your own solid knit collared shirts (polo style) in the following colors: white, navy, light blue, gray, green, and light pink (girls), from any online or local retailer such as Amazon, Target, Walmart, or Old Navy – any store that sells uniform pieces. Any brand of polo shirt is acceptable; however, they should be free of brand logos that would interfere with placement of the embroidered school logo on the left chest. White button-down shirts are acceptable as well. Shirts may be short- or long-sleeved. Take shirts to **Advantage Specialties** (219 NE 36th Ave, Ocala) or **Evolution Signs Plus** (9360 US-441) to be embroidered with the GraceWay Academy logo at your cost. **QueenB** is another low-cost option (352-875-7240) ready to embroider your items.
- Boys: Navy, gray, or khaki uniform pants or shorts. No athletic shorts or pants are permitted except for on PE day. The fit should not be tight or excessively baggy.

- Girls: Navy, gray, or khaki uniform pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, or dresses. No athletic shorts or pants are permitted except for on PE day. Shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, or dresses should have a minimum length of four inches above the knee and have an appropriate fit (not clingy, tight, or excessively baggy). Skirts, jumpers, and dresses need shorts or leggings underneath. Dresses and jumpers need to be embroidered with logo if undershirt logo is not visible.
- Jeans, denim shorts, or denim skirts/skorts (girls) may be worn on Fridays with a uniform shirt or GraceWay spirit shirt.
- All undershirts should be one of the colors listed above and do not need to be embroidered.
- Shirts should be tucked into bottoms. Bottoms with belt loops must have a belt.
- For use on cool days or in cool classrooms, an embroidered sweatshirt hoodie or sweater may be purchased from the school. Florida scholarship funds may be available to reimburse this purchase.
- Any heavier coat may be worn outside on cold days only.
- Socks should be solid colored and matching.
- Shoes should be rubber-soled with a strap or tie so that students are ready for the day's activities and to reduce slipping hazards.

Special non-uniform days will occur at different times during the school year. On these days, the following must be observed:

- Clothing should portray positive messages which are consistent with our Christian values,
- Bottoms must have a minimum length of four inches above the knee,
- Shorts or leggings should be worn under skirts and dresses.
- Leggings may only be worn under skirts, dresses or long tunic-style shirts.
- Tank top straps need to be at least one inch in width and need to cover bra straps if that applies.

Please have children move, bend, and stretch to ensure that they are appropriately covered with no undergarments showing.

Violation of dress code:

- First and second offenses: Contact parent to correct issue for the following school day.
- Third or more offenses: The family will be called to bring an alternate outfit for the student to change into; the student may wait in the office until the change of clothes arrives. After the third offense a \$15 fine may be applied to the student's account.

Administration reserves the right to decide whether student attire meets code.

Elementary Physical Education (PE) Dress Code

Students should wear navy mesh athletic shorts or pants with a plain grey t-shirt (no logo required). Athletic shoes ("sneakers") are required for PE. Shorts should be at least mid-thigh in length. Students may arrive on PE day in their PE outfit and wear it all day.

Preschool Attire

Preschool students are not required to wear uniforms. They will best be able to enjoy their activities by wearing play clothes that are comfortable, weather appropriate, and easy to get on and off at bathroom time. Closed-toe shoes are best suited for the preschool environment, particularly "sneakers." Girls may wear dresses if they wear shorts underneath. Please label all outerwear garments with the child's name in ink. We ask that you provide the school with an extra complete change of clothes in a ziploc bag, labeled with your child's name (shirt, pants, underwear, socks).

Children in pull-ups must have extras at school at all times. Please provide a week's supply, planning on two per day. You will receive a note if the supply for your child is low. Please consider ease in changing when choosing your child's school clothing.

ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

Classroom Rules

Teachers will set expectations with students to ensure that they are clearly communicated. Each classroom will adhere to the school discipline policies (see appendix). Classrooms should be places where children feel safe and loved to encourage learning. Towards that end:

- Our manners and attitude towards others should reflect the love of Jesus.
- Students should arrive prepared for their school day.
- Students should wait to be acknowledged by the teacher, especially during instructional times.

Homework

Homework at the elementary level is considered part of your child's educational experience. It is meant to reinforce classroom learning, not to be busy work. Nightly reading (independent, with a parent, or to your child) is required in order to aid your child's progress. These home-to-school links are part of how our program functions; non-compliance will have a negative effect on your child's progress.

Standards for Elementary Classwork

All written work should be neat and complete. Directions should be read and reread; completed work should be reviewed and corrected before submission. Teachers may return work that is hurried and/or incomplete.

ENROLLMENT

Documents and Requirements

In order for your child to be admitted, we require the following items:

- Full enrollment paperwork completed and returned to the GraceWay Academy office.
- Photocopy of child's birth certificate.
- HRS Form 680/Immunization form received prior to first day of attendance showing that immunizations appropriate to the child's age are up-to-date.
- HRS Form 3040/Physical Examination received within 30 days of initial enrollment for an exam completed in the last twelve months. This must be updated every two years.
- A written note of any allergies or special needs, with agreement from principal for how the school will appropriately address these special needs.
- Full payment of the Registration and Book Fees as applicable.
- An academic assessment will be completed to determine your student's current skill level for incoming elementary students.
- Records from previous school (first grade and higher).
- Enrollment is contingent on a 90-day probationary period to ensure that this will be a successful environment for the student.

Reenrollment and Open Enrollment

Current students are given priority through a particular date as communicated by administration. After that date, current and new families will be awarded spots in our program giving priority to current families and keeping siblings together. Current students who miss the reenrollment deadline will be awarded spots on a space-available basis.

FIELD TRIPS

By including field trips and special guests who can come to school and share with the students, we can expand the students' learning sphere. If you have any suggestions for resource experts who could share their job or hobby with our children, please let us know.

Our insurance does not allow us to transport children, so we must ask for parental transportation on field trips. Parents will be asked to transport their own children or make other personal arrangements. Parents must stay with their children during a field trip unless another adult is designated on the permission slip to supervise/transport your child. All field trips will adhere to a 1:1 adult-to-student ratio unless stated otherwise. Students who are unable to attend field trips may stay at school with a school staff. Students who are not in attendance at school or at the field trip location will be marked with an unexcused absence unless the parent reports otherwise.

FINANCIAL

Late Payments

If your balance due is not paid on or before your due date, a late fee will appear on your account. As we seek to maintain a reasonable tuition, we operate on a lean budget. Late payments affect our ability to honor our own financial commitments, such as paying our teachers.

Your account must be current in order to re-enroll for the following year.

MyProcure Parent Portal

Please go to myprocure.com to register your email (the one we have for your account) in order to access your parent portal. All financial information regarding your student's account will be communicated through the portal.

Final Fees Due

Any remaining fees due at school year end (field trips, before/after care, late pickup fees, etc) will be due and drafted no later than the last day of school. Outstanding balances may delay receipt of quarterly report cards as well as end-of-year student documents, report cards, and release of student records.

Payments: Bank Draft

The school should have your form on file to initiate a monthly automatic bank draft for payments of any fees due. Drafts will occur monthly on your chosen payment date (5th or 15th), August to May. This convenient option greatly reduces the chances of your payments being late. In the case of insufficient funds, a bank fee will be assessed as well as the school's late payment fee if funds are not received by your chosen due date.

Payments: Cash Accounts - Paying by Cash or Check

For a monthly processing fee, we will set up your account as a Cash Account in order to accept cash or check payments rather than bank draft. Please mail or hand deliver your checks to be received no later than your chosen due date. Cash should be hand delivered to the office by an adult. In the case of a returned check, a bank fee will apply as well as the school's late payment fee; these costs will appear on your account. To avoid the monthly processing fee, be sure to have a valid bank draft form on file with the office, regardless of your scholarship status.

Scholarships

We accept Florida Empowerment, McKay, Gardiner, and the Florida Tax Credit (income-based) scholarships through Step Up for Students and AAA. These scholarships may be used to cover tuition, registration fees, the book, tech & activity fee, and uniform pieces purchased directly from GraceWay. They may not be used to cover other fees, including but not limited

to field trips, extended day, after school programs, early drop off and late pick-up fees. GraceWay also offers an in-house scholarship managed by FACTS. Information is available regarding how to apply. Any costs not covered by scholarships are the responsibility of the parents and will be listed on account statements. While scholarship organizations may pay student tuition and fees, ultimate responsibility to ensure full payment lies with the parents.

Tuition and Fees

The Registration Fee is due at enrollment to ensure a spot. The elementary Book, Tech, and Activity Fee is due no later than June 1 or with enrollment.

As GraceWay is making a full-year commitment to your child, so you are also making a full-year commitment to the school. For your convenience, your annual commitment can be divided into ten equal payments, August through May. Monthly Fees (tuition, before, and after care): Families will select their choice of due date: the 5th or the 15th of the month. If your chosen day falls on the weekend, your due date is the following school day. Tuition and fees not paid by your chosen due date will be considered late and result in a late payment fee on the following day. Additionally, your child may not be able to attend until tuition and/or fees are paid or other arrangements are made. Two late months in a row may result in alternate payment arrangements needing to be made. There is no refund of any fees.

Mid-year withdrawal will be subject to fulfillment of the annual tuition and fees commitment unless petition is made to the Board for a reduction. Scholarship recipients will submit the remainder of the Book Fee that has not been paid by the scholarship before transcripts are released. Any balance must be paid for student records to be released.

Additional fees may be collected for optional services, such as Before Care or Extended Day. These fees are also due on your chosen due date to avoid late fees and possible revocation of services.

For VPK, state funds cover all activities between the hours of 8:45 a.m.- 11:45 a.m. Fees for programs and services outside of these hours are not covered by VPK funding and are the responsibility of parents/guardians. Fees such as late pick-up fees, early drop-off fees, and after care are not covered by VPK funding and will be listed on account statements.

FUNDRAISERS

Because of the expense involved in running a school, it is necessary to have fundraisers or each year. Many areas of our program, such as playground, technology, security, and facilities benefit from your support with fundraisers. We would appreciate any help you can give GraceWay Academy in this area. All of our students benefit from these fundraisers!

GOVERNANCE

GraceWay Academy is a ministry of Grace Presbyterian Church. School administration operates under supervision of the Board, which is accountable to the Session of the church. We would love to see your family worship with us here at Grace!

HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

In the case of repeated incidents of behavior by one student that deliberately harms or injures other students, the following steps will be taken:

1. Principal or representative will meet with parent to discuss behavior, gain understanding of the problem, and develop a plan for addressing the behavior.
2. Principal will advise staff members how to implement this plan, with special prayer time to ask for God's wisdom and direction in this child's life and our ministry to them and their family.

3. Staff will report to principal/representative any repeated behavior and an incident report will be completed. Principal or representative will meet with the parent to discuss. If the principal deems the behavior serious enough to jeopardize the safety of the other children and risk liability to the school, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child for a period of one month.

If the child is withdrawn, this will be put in writing to Chairman of the GraceWay Academy Board, with a copy to parents. The letter will state the problem, plan and results as well as clearly communicating the goal of GraceWay Academy to minister to this family. The child may be allowed to re-enroll in one month, if the parent, Principal & staff have deemed him/her ready.

HEALTH

It is very important to keep your child home if:

- They have vomited, had diarrhea, a fever greater than 100 degrees, or been on medication to reduce a fever during the previous 24-hour period;
- They have a heavy clear-colored nasal discharge, or any non-clear nasal discharge;
- They have a constant cough or difficulty breathing;
- They are lethargic, cranky, or generally not in good health;
- They have an unexplained rash;
- They have or appear to have a highly contagious infection such as pink eye, scabies, impetigo, strep infection, whooping cough, and chicken pox;
- If your child is placed on antibiotics, they must be on antibiotics for a complete 24 hours before returning to school.

Please partner with us in teaching good hygiene practices to include frequent hand washing when your child is ill. If a child becomes ill at school, they will be immediately isolated from the other children and the parent will be called to come pick up the child promptly. Please make sure we have at least two working phone numbers on file. Ill children who are not picked up promptly may be assessed a late pick-up fee.

Elementary parents should use their most conservative discretion regarding mild colds and nasal discharge in determining their child's ability to participate at school without spreading the illness to classmates. Should your child attend school during a cold or with heavy/constant nasal discharge, the school may contact you regarding your child's health, and if needed, determine that your child may need to be picked up. A \$25 late pick up fee may be assessed when sick children are not picked up within one hour of contacting the parent/guardian.

Head Lice

We will follow a modified version of the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation regarding head lice. Upon first head check, if a live louse is observed, you will be called to pick up your child to begin treatment. In order to return to school, children must be dropped off in the office with a parent while a staff person checks their head. This will occur each day until all the eggs are gone. If another live louse is observed, the child will not be able to attend school that day. Each day that the child's head is checked, it should be observed that less and less eggs are present. Various shampoo-type products and fine-combing may eliminate live lice. The best way to eliminate eggs is manual extraction (picking the hairs out by hand).

HONOR CODE

“Show me Your way that I may know You and find grace in Your sight.” Exodus 33:13

GraceWay Academy feels that strong academics need a foundation of strong faith to fully prepare our students for the plan that God has for them. As followers of Christ, we endeavor to model our behavior and conduct after His example:

We will:

- Think before we speak or act
- Be prepared for each school day
- Respect others and treat them with kindness
- Work as until the Lord, striving for our personal best
- Work to grow academically and spiritually
- Be responsible for our iPads, computers, school supplies, and facilities

HYGIENE

God made us for His glory, and we are called to take care of our bodies (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*). While observing the dress code requirements, students should be clean and neat in appearance. As our students grow, they will require deodorant; this occurs at different ages for different children. Self-care is an important step in our student's growth and maturity.

INTERNET AND NETWORK ACCESS AGREEMENT

GraceWay Academy students may use computer Internet services. While GraceWay will attempt to filter obscene and immoral web sites, it should be understood that it is difficult to block every objectionable site. Students may have their Internet privileges suspended or revoked for inappropriate Internet use. Further discipline or possible legal action may ensue for particularly egregious activities. GraceWay Academy is not responsible for any claims or damages that may arise from unauthorized or improper use of the Internet or network systems. Student use of the Internet is approved for GraceWay curriculum use only. Personal use is strictly forbidden (i.e., email, instant messaging, social networking, etc.). Additionally, immoral, crude, or suggestive language or pictures in any media (i.e., Internet, cell phone) is a violation of policy.

LIBRARY

Library starts in September. Every child who has signed permission will have the opportunity to choose and check out a book from the Grace Presbyterian Church Media Center in the building connected to the school. When the book is returned, the child will be able to check out a new book on the next Library Day. We encourage parents to use the GPC Media Center. It is a wonderful resource for the whole family.

LOST AND FOUND

Found items are placed on top of the preschool cubbies. If your child is missing something, please check to see if it has been turned in. At the first of each month, these items will be cleaned out and donated.

LUNCH

Elementary Lunch

Students will have a designated lunch and recess/PE time each day. Lunch should be made up of healthy items to aid your child's learning at school. They should also be ready-to-eat. Soda should not be brought to school (except for authorized special occasions). There may be times for special lunch days where students may, in advance, order and pay for a meal to be brought in for the school at large, organized by administration. There may also be days designated during the school year for parents to have lunch with their student; it is otherwise challenging to organize and is not possible in classes who lunch in their classroom.

Preschool Lunch

For preschool students who stay for After Care, peanuts and peanut butter are not permitted. Lunches should be ready-to-eat.

MEDICATION

Administration of medication is foremost the responsibility of the parent or guardian. All medications that can be given outside the school hours without serious effects must be given before and after school. Example, medication can be given at breakfast, after school, and at bedtime unless otherwise indicated by a licensed prescriber.

If a dose of medication must be given during the school hours, it can be administered as long as the following is in order:

- a. Signed medication form by parent.
- b. Signed medication form or prescription note by the licensed prescriber.
- c. ALL MEDICATION must be in the original container/bottle and labeled with the child's name (no medication in baggies, boxes, etc.).
- d. The first dose of a new medication must have been given by the parent/guardian at home, in case of allergic reaction.

If any of the above medication guidelines in paragraph 2 regarding administration of medication during school hours has not been met, no medication will be administered to the student by school staff. These guidelines are directed by the GraceWay Board medication policy and administration of any medication will become the responsibility of the parent until all guidelines have been complied with.

Only send in enough medication to complete the required dosing administered at school (30-day supply is the limit). *AT NO TIME WILL MEDICATIONS BE SENT HOME WITH THE STUDENT. IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN TO PICK UP ALL REMAINING PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION(S) AND/OR NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION(S) FROM THE SCHOOL.*

Cough drops can be given to the office with a signed note from the parent instructing frequency of dose; this will be permitted as long as it is not disruptive to the class. Students cannot dispense their own cough drops, nor any other medication or supplements.

MIDMORNING SNACK

Preschool

Each preschool family can help our school by signing up for four snack days per school year. Sign-up sheets will be available at parent meetings and then located in the hallway or in the GraceWay Academy office. All our snacks are provided by parents, so we ask you to take a turn at providing snack, drink, cups, and napkins. The children enjoy healthy fruits, vegetables, cheese, crackers and other non-sugary snacks. Ask us for ideas. Please consider a variety of real fruit juices, not just apple juice. However, because of spills, please no grape juice or any that stain. Please write down the dates of your snack days and add them to your calendar. A reminder notice will go home in advance of your snack days and will indicate types of items and quantities needed.

Elementary

Elementary students should bring a dry snack in their lunch bag.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Preparing students for academic success while glorifying God through faith in action.” Our students and staff should know our mission and understand its meaning for them personally and for the school at large.

NAP TIME (REST TIME) DURING AFTER CARE

Preschool students who stay for aftercare will have a designated rest time and will need a nap mat purchased by the parent to remain at school. This downtime is important for our students so that they can get the rest they need in the midst of a longer,

busy day. Please talk with your student about the importance of cooperating during this brief time even if they do not nap at home.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

GraceWay Academy does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national or ethnic origin in student admission.

OBSERVATIONS REGARDING POTENTIAL LEARNING DISABILITIES

Learning disabilities can be suspected when there is a significant difference between a child's overall demonstrated performance and his capabilities in different skills. When a student is observed with indicators of a potential learning disability, various trial interventions will first be used in the classroom to try to provide remediation. If a recommendation is made to pursue outside evaluation for a possible learning disability, the family's cooperation regarding the recommendation is needed in order to keep student learning moving forward. The results of the evaluation will inform parents and school staff regarding student needs to assist student learning and growth. Different therapies may also be recommended in the evaluation; when the teacher is aware of such therapies being used, they can communicate with parents regarding the success of these therapies.

PARTIES AND HOLIDAYS

Holidays will be highlighted with special celebrations at school. We invite parents who have been approved as volunteers to sign up as helpers for these events. Additional help may be needed with special supplies or food prep to allow us to make these days extra special which does not require a background check. Our office will call parents 1-2 weeks prior to the event to schedule the day and time for your help. Thank you in advance!

To celebrate your child's birthday, you may bring a special snack such as small muffins, Rice Krispy treats, or cupcakes to include in the classroom's celebration. You may drop them off in the kitchen in the morning or give to your child's teacher. She will determine the best time of day to celebrate. These celebrations are student-only events.

Private birthday parties are a great time for friends to gather outside of school. Invitations may be distributed at school if the whole class is invited. Otherwise, invitations should be distributed outside of school to limit hurt feelings of those not invited.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please do not allow your child to bring jewelry, purses, toys, candy, or other valuable items to school. We want to avoid the hurt feelings that occur when toys or personal items have been accidentally broken or lost. If your child brings an unrequested item, it will stay in the child's cubby, backpack, or the office until dismissal time. This will prevent items from being broken or misplaced. Periodically, "Show and Tell" or "Write and Tell" days may be designated by teachers; parents will be notified in advance.

PRAYER

Please put GraceWay Academy & Preschool on your daily prayer list. Pray for a successful year with all of our precious children and please pray for our safety and other needs. Also, let us know how we can pray for your family and your child. Our teachers, staff, and students pray together throughout the week. We would love the opportunity to pray for your family. Thank you again for letting us share in your family by caring for your child!

PROGRESS REPORTS

Preschool

VPK parent conferences will be held in the middle of the school year, with progress being reported periodically. Please feel free to ask questions in between if you have concerns. Our Firefly (3-year olds) teachers will schedule conferences as needed to discuss progress. Please do not hesitate to stop by the office to schedule a conference with your child's teacher or the GraceWay Principal.

Elementary

Our elementary curriculum meets or exceeds all state standards. At the end of first quarter, conferences will be held to convey student progress with a brief written report. At the end of the second, third and fourth quarters, report cards will be emailed to families. A 2.0 average in core subjects (reading, math, science, social studies) is required to pass to the next grade. Additional conferences may be scheduled during the year to review your child's progress as needed. Please feel free to ask questions in between if you have concerns.

RETENTION

Sometimes students need more time in their current grade level to achieve academic success at grade level. Aspects of a student's progress and development will be considered such as academic performance, age and physical size, attendance/tardiness, work habits, and their cognitive, social and emotional development. This can be a tough decision for schools and families to make, and GraceWay endeavors to partner with families to guide and support them along this path. Retention has been shown to boost student confidence in the classroom and allow for maturity and more repetition of concepts to boost student performance.

GraceWay desires regular two-way communication with parents to stay abreast of any challenging areas for teachers and parents to work on together for the benefit of the student. If retention is a possibility, the conversation will begin at the beginning of January and continue until the best decision is determined between the school and the parents. The parent may request that Light's Retention Scale be completed by the teacher. If retention is recommended, it will appear on the student's report card. Because trial promotions tend to limit student growth, they will not be used.

Documented exceptions to these procedures may be made in special situations (e.g., special education students) with the approval of the principal.

SAFETY

We want a safe year at GraceWay for your child! You can help by remembering these things:

1. Until we get to know you, please do not be offended if we ask to see a driver's license when you come to pick up your child. This is especially true for those we see less frequently. We want to keep your child from harm. We only release children to those who are on your authorized pick-up list.
2. Notify the office in writing if anyone other than yourself or your spouse will be picking up your child. Verbal messages from the child cannot be accepted. Please advise your friend or relative that PHOTO ID will be required, which may be photocopied before the child is released.
3. The children will be taught what to do in case of fire, and fire drills will be conducted monthly. Tornado drills will be conducted twice per year.

SCHOOL HOURS

Preschool & VPK:	8:45 am – 11:45 am
PreK Extended Day*	11:45 am – 5:30 pm
Grades Kindergarten – 5 th	7:45 am – 2:00 pm
K-5 th Extended day*	2:00 pm – 5:30 pm
After School Clubs*	2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Before Care*	Begins at 7:45 am

*Additional fee required.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual student photos will be taken annually in the winter, and group class photos will be taken in the spring. Opportunity to purchase photos will be communicated to families.

SEVERE WEATHER

GraceWay will follow most Marion County Public School closures for weather reasons. We will use our website, Facebook, and our phone/email/text service to communicate with families. In the event that the school needs to close early, families will be contacting using the same methods. Make-up days will be scheduled as needed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media

Social media website and other communication sites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools and their staff and families. The School Board considers the use of social media and communication websites in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community. Any concern you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, school principal, or School Board so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned.

Libelous or Defamatory Posts

In the event that any student or parent/caregiver of a student at GraceWay Academy is found to be posting libelous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other such social networking sites, they may be reported to the appropriate “report abuse” section of the network site. Our school also expects that any parent/caregiver or student will remove such comments immediately. If all comments are not removed, the family’s enrollment may be revoked, and legal options will be considered.

Cyber Bullying

Additionally, there is the issue of cyber bullying and the use of the online space by a child or family member with the intention of publicly humiliating another by inappropriate social network posts or comments. Should this occur, we will deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully, any incidents of bullying of any kind are extremely rare, but the framework for how to handle it needs to be in place.

SPECIAL NEEDS

GraceWay Academy believes that each child is uniquely and wonderfully created by God. We welcome all students and do not discriminate against students or staff on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in student admission and employment practices, nor in awarding scholarships and financial aid. We will do our best to assess and meet the needs of

each individual learner. However, we must also recognize that not every child will flourish in the same environment or styles of learning.

Our guidelines for meeting the “special needs” of children include:

1. Child must make forward movement in their growth and development. We will make accommodations to help them get there.
2. We require the parents to work with us. It is a team effort – we can only do what is possible in our school setting. Extra time may be spent conferencing with teachers and administrators as we make and amend learning plans.
3. The child must be receiving appropriate services from qualified professionals outside of GraceWay Academy. We are not trained to provide specialized educational interventions or therapies.
4. Safety is important for the child, teachers, and other students.

If these guidelines are not met, a child may be dismissed from our school or enrollment may not be offered the following year.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Third through fifth grade students take standardized testing with the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). This is a requirement of our accreditation as well as our Florida scholarships. Standardized testing is used to measure your student’s growth; results are used to make adjustments to our materials and instruction as needed and generally tend to confirm classroom grades. They are one piece of information about your student’s learning; decisions or recommendations about your student are not made solely based on test results.

STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

What does a B in Math tell you about your child’s learning? Do you know if they understand fractions but not decimals? Are they strong in their math facts but not 3D shapes? Are their extra points for having a clean math folder hiding a skill weakness? Traditional grading requires other methods of determining student knowledge because that grading system does not show what they know. With standards-based grading, your student’s grades will give you specific information about your student’s knowledge and skill development. Our report cards are more detailed for this reason. Additionally, behavior and Christian character are noted separately from academic grades. Look out for our Parent University sessions to help walk you through this grading system that is growing both across the state and the country.

How is standards-based grading different from traditional grading?

In the traditional 100-point grading system, grades are typically generated from a series of scores from all work assigned in the class, including classwork, homework, projects, quizzes, tests, etc. These scores are often arranged in the grade book by the type of assignment rather than by the essential skills for the class. Therefore, the final grade becomes a cumulative numerical average from many unrelated activities, which also often include points for non-academic factors, such as behavior, participation, effort, and attitude.

Standards-based grading, however, focuses solely on progress toward mastery of the essential standards. An SBG grade book tracks learning through activities that focus on standards and do not include non-academic factors such as behavior, participation, effort, and attitude. These factors are important and are assessed and reported, but through a separate and more appropriate method.

Traditional letter grades are often calculated by combining how well the student met a teacher's expectations, how the student performed on assignments and tests, how much effort the teacher believes the student put in and how the student is doing in comparison to classmates. Letter grades do not tell parents which skills their child has mastered or whether he or she is working at grade level. The Standards-Based Report Card measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to the grade level standards, not the work of other students. This will give parents a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and encourage all students to do their best.

Standards-Based Grading Scale

ES or 4: Well beyond end-of-year grade level standards/expectations. The student consistently demonstrates mastery of the grade level standards and applies and extends processes beyond what is taught shown through advances application of the material.

3: Meeting end-of-year grade level standards/expectations. The student demonstrates understanding of the grade level standards and can apply complex concepts in a variety of contexts.

2: Approaching achievement of end-of-year grade level standards/expectations. The student is beginning to, and occasionally does, meet grade level standards. The student may understand the foundational material that supports the targeted skill but is still working to master the complex material.

1: Limited achievement of the end-of-year grade level standards/expectations. The student is not meeting grade level standards and is working below grade level. Student may demonstrate understanding with assistance but struggles to work independently.

0: Proficiency cannot be determined due to missing assignments, poor attendance, and/or length of time in school (ex., mid-year transfer).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe:

- The Bible is the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God (*2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21*).
- There is one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Genesis 1:1, Matthew 28:19, John 10:30*).
- All people are sinners and in need of salvation that only Jesus can provide through confession and repentance (*1 John 1:9*).
- In His bodily resurrection and His coming in power and glory (*John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:4, Mark 16:19, Acts 1:11, Revelation 19:11*).
- It is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone that a person can be justified, not as a result of works (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).
- The Bible defines marriage, gender and sexuality (*Genesis 1 & 2, Leviticus 18, Matthew 19*).

TECHNOLOGY AND DEVICES

Students should not bring phones, tablets, or other personal technology items to school. Any needed technology at school will be provided for student use during the school day. Home assignments that require a computer will be assigned in advance to allow families without a home computer to use those at the public library. GraceWay Academy is not responsible for items brought from home to school.

TOBACCO & VAPING

Due to the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, as well as the life-threatening diseases linked to the use of all forms of tobacco, it shall be the policy of GraceWay Academy to provide a tobacco-free environment for all employees, visitors, and students. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products or “spit” tobacco, and it applies to both employees, students, and non-employee visitors of GraceWay Academy. Tobacco use is prohibited on all Grace Presbyterian Church property during school operating hours, in the presences of GraceWay employees or students, or in personal vehicles transporting children on Grace Presbyterian Church campus or to authorized off-campus trips. Additionally, vaping or the use of e-cigarettes are not safe for youth, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products, and are therefore not permitted as well.

VOLUNTEERS

Classroom Helpers

We love having parents in the classrooms to help with teacher-designated events. Due to insurance and accreditation requirements, parent volunteers that serve in the classroom need to complete a Level 2 FBI background check and fingerprinting at the parent's cost. This may be a worthwhile option for some parents. If you are not able to undergo the background check process, there may be other ways to assist your child's class. Just ask!

Parent Volunteers

Many aspects of a school's program require parent involvement in order to make them successful. At the Back-to-School Open House, parents will sign up to volunteer for at least two school events. Different opportunities are available making it possible for you to get involved regardless of your work schedule. The added benefit of your involvement is the positive impact on your children as they see you get involved at their school. If you are unable to be involved, please contact the office to inquire about your alternative to volunteering.