



**Middle School
Handbook
2019-2020**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

Welcome to Middle School at Grace Christian. Middle School is an exciting time and we have worked very hard to create a very special experience for our students. We strive to provide academic excellence in an encouraging and supportive environment. Put simply, we care about students and want to help them succeed! This handbook is a guide for the many unique aspects of the Grace Middle School experience.

Middle School is a time of tremendous growth and we will be celebrating with you the victories along the way. We are here to support you during these important years. We want to help. Please communicate any challenges you are having with regard to middle school so that they can be addressed quickly.

We pray that your Grace Middle School experience will provide encouragement for your family to grow closer to God and that you experience His presence through the joys and challenges of parenting your emerging adult.

May God bless us all as we endeavor to raise our children to become responsible, caring, Christlike adults.

In Christ Jesus,

*Grace Christian School
Middle School Faculty*

Cindey Fikse-- Mathematics

Karisa May-- Science

Victoria Swanson-- History, Academic Writing, 6th, and 7th Grade Bible

Lee Zabinsky-- Language Arts

Lynn Leger-- Athletic Director & 6th-8th PE

Isaac Endermann-- Middle School Lead/Mathematics

Kara Warner--Associate Principal/School Counselor

Michelle Quezada--Associate Principal

Ben Elliott--Superintendent

IMPORTANT EVENTS

An invoice will be sent home that will cover the cost of several events for the entire school year. If another opportunity becomes available we may need to ask for additional funds. Each 8th-grade student will be invoiced for a graduation fee to help defray the expenses of the 8th-grade year. These costs include flowers, decorations, roast gifts, and the after-graduation party.

6th GRADE

- Outdoor Education (Palomar Christian Conference Center)
- Middle School Choir and Musicals
- Track Meet
- Cross Country
- Sky Zone (Last Grace Escape)
- First Communion
- End of the Year Party

7th GRADE

- Catalina Science Trip
- Middle School Choir and Musicals
- Medieval Times OR Blue/Gray Ball (alternate every other year)
- End of the Year Party (last Grace Escape --at Dave and Buster's)
- Dances
- Track Meet
- Cross Country

8th GRADE

- Washington D.C.
- Middle School Choir and Musicals
- Medieval Times OR Blue/Gray Ball (alternate every other year)
- Confirmation
- Dances
- Track Meet
- Cross Country
- River Trip
- Ditch Day (Last Grace Escape to Knott's Berry Farm)
- Gracy Awards
- Graduation
- Graduation Party

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in class is important for Middle School students. The staff requests that you plan any vacations when school is not in session. Although homework can be made up, it is very difficult to make up in-class work or replicate the discussions that are part of the learning experience for your Middle School students. Providing homework for a planned absence is a courtesy the teacher may be able to provide. Teachers are not required by the school to provide this service. If the teacher is able to provide homework for a planned absence, the work is due the day you return. If it is not completed by that day, the work will be counted as late or as a missing assignment. **Students must be in attendance during the school day in order to participate in a school-related extracurricular activity on the same day.**

MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

The teachers and staff of Grace Christian Middle School care very much about your children. We believe it is in their best interest to set up guidelines for their conduct and then to consistently enforce those parameters. We also would like to regularly commend those students who do choose to obey our classroom and school rules.

The following rules will be in effect during all classes:

- Follow directions.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Be seated in a desk when the teacher is ready to begin.
- Be prepared for class with the required materials.
- No rude phrases or gestures.

Rewards

- Praise
- Positive communication with parents
- Weekly Good Citizenship Rewards
- Grace Escape

Consequences

- Warning
- Time out of class
- Detention: sent home to be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day-filed in student's behavior file.
- Behavior Report: given every third Behavior Detention and sent home to be signed by a parent and returned to school the following day. Consultation with the principal is required. This document is filed in the student's behavior file.
- Severe Clause--Serious behavior problems such as overt defiance, fighting, controlled substances, alcohol or weapons on campus will lead to an automatic Behavior Report and consultation with the principal with possible additional consequences.

Weekly Citizenship Reports

After each class period, the classroom teacher will record the students' behavior using a point system. Students will accumulate points equal to the number of times they have broken one of the classroom rules.

At the end of the day on Wednesday, all citizenship grades for the week will be totaled, and the students and parents will be notified of their citizenship points for the preceding week (**Thursday through Wednesday**). This will be emailed each Friday to the parents and the students. Be sure to look for it.

If students receive 2 points or fewer for the week, they will receive a weekly Good Citizenship reward from alternating teachers. If students receive 8 or more behavior points in a week, they will receive an automatic behavior detention.

If a student receives 10 or fewer combined Academic Alerts or behavior points in a four-week cycle, they will be eligible to attend our Grace Escape lunch off-campus. Details on Grace Escape are provided later in this handbook.

HOMEWORK POLICY / ACADEMIC ALERT

It is very important that students in the Middle School complete their assigned work on time. Students who are having difficulty in completing all of their work or who are maintaining a low course average will be issued an Academic Alert. The Academic Alert will list a plan of action that the student must follow in order to resolve the issue of missing work or a low course average. The student will be required to attend the after-school Academic Recovery Period starting on the assigned start date and continuing each subsequent Wednesday until the plan of action has been completed. In order to be excused from the Academic Recovery Period, the student must complete the plan of action and demonstrate to the issuing teacher that the plan has been completed. This must occur before 8:10AM on Monday in order for the student to be excused from the Academic Recovery Period that Wednesday. The Academic Recovery Period is held on Wednesdays from 3:15PM-4:15PM.

You will be notified via email if your student has been issued an Academic Alert from any teacher. Please review all Academic Alerts with your student and encourage them to complete the assigned plan of action. Each Academic Alert counts one point toward Grace Escape.

If a student has not received an Academic Alert in the previous week, look for a colored certificate in their Special Delivery commending them for their responsibility.

Please check your email for any Academic Alerts that may be issued, and the “Special Delivery” folder each weekend for reward certificates.

UNIFORM/DRESS CODE POLICY

We appreciate parental support of our uniform policy. Please schedule regular haircuts and make certain your child is dressed appropriately each day. Please refer to the Family Handbook for specific guidelines.

Additional guidelines for middle school attire are as follows:

- Uniform shorts and skirts, as well as free dress shorts and skirts, must be at least mid-thigh in length.
- Dresses worn on free dress days must be at least mid-thigh in length.
- Leggings may only be worn under skirts, skorts, and shorts. Leggings must be solid, non-patterned in uniform color (forest green, navy blue, light yellow, white) or black.
- All clothing should be free of rips, tears or frayed edges. Shorts or pants that are cut off or have holes in them are not permitted.

- Modesty must be maintained and therefore no garment should be excessively tight, form-fitting or revealing.
- Excessive jewelry will not be permitted.

IN CLASS FOOD POLICY

Hungry students have a hard time maintaining focus and learning. Therefore, some middle school teachers allow eating in the classroom during class time. Rules regarding eating in the classroom are as follows:

- Only healthy foods can be eaten during class. These include items such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, cheese, sandwiches, etc.
- Eating must be done in a way that is not distracting to teachers or other students.
- Junk food, strong-smelling food, items with noisy packaging, or foods that are messy are not allowed.
- The only drink allowed during class is water.
- Eating in class may be denied at any time subject to teacher discretion.

GRACE ESCAPE

Grace Escape is a reward system implemented by our faculty to encourage the most positive, God-pleasing behavior possible. Students who are trying to abide by the rules and regulations will be recognized and rewarded in a tangible way.

If a student accumulates 10 or fewer behavior points in a month, they will be allowed to “Escape from Grace” (with their teacher) for an hour once a month during lunchtime. Each class will decide where to go, within walking distance, and each student can bring money to buy themselves lunch and/or a treat. Popular destinations include restaurants such as Starbucks, Burger King, and Panda Express.

**Watch for a Grace Escape Contract and Permission Slip with details and dates.*

GRACE ESCAPE POINTS

The following are ways your students can accumulate those unwanted points:

Academic Alerts: Receiving an Academic Alert from a teacher for having missing schoolwork or maintaining a low course average. **1 point**

Behavior Warnings: Behavior warnings are given for being tardy, neglecting to bring required materials to class, or violation of any classroom or school rule. **1 point**

Dress Code Violation: Please review the dress code policy in the Family Handbook **1 point**

Pink Behavior Detention: Pink behavior detentions are given for chewing gum, passing notes, inappropriate cell phone use, three warnings in any given class, inappropriate language, cheating, disrespect, or throwing objects (including food). **3 points**

Yellow Behavior Report and/or Suspension: includes overt defiance, fist fighting, or 3 accumulated behavior detention. **Loss of Grace Escape privilege.**

Please know that it is our sincere desire that EVERY student accompany us on Grace Escape. Please speak to your student about making wise choices and being prepared for class.

IMPORTANT: Since the Grace Escape is scheduled to take place during lunch, students who have earned the reward to walk off-campus should not order lunch that day. Please check the Grace Escape schedule before you order, and be sure to cancel any orders by 9:00 a.m. the day before. In the unlikely event of any of the dates being changed, we will alert you as soon as possible.

*See the Rewards/Grace Escape Schedule attached to the Middle School Handbook.

ACADEMICS

To pass a subject, a student must have a passing year-end grade. If a student fails two or more subjects, he/she will not be promoted and must repeat the grade. **Any student failing 8th grade will not receive a Grace Christian School diploma and will not have the privilege of participating in 8th-grade graduation services.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating on Tests

Any giving or receiving of external assistance (either verbally, in writing, or using an electronic device) relating to an examination, test, or quiz, without expressed direction or permission of the teacher. This includes giving or receiving previously administered tests.

2. Fabrication/Falsification

Any falsification or invention of data, citation, or other authority in an academic exercise.

3. Forgery

Falsifying or submitting academic work by forging another person's signature.

4. Unauthorized Collaboration

Collaboration on an assignment between a student and another person, if such collaboration is not expressly directed or permitted by the teacher. This includes copying another student's work, allowing work to be copied or completing assignments for others, giving or passing old tests to other students for the following year, or receiving old tests from other students.

Unless it is a group project, students should not work together on class assignments. Students may collaborate on math assignments provided all work is shown.

If students turn in identical answers to any assignment other than math, it will BE considered a violation of the academic honesty policy for both students.

5. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking credit for someone else's work. Plagiarism can include but is not limited to copy and pasting from a website.

Policy violations will result in the following:

1st violation: Any student who violates the academic honesty policy will receive a "0" on the assignment/test, 30 day probation, and be scheduled for academic counseling. The student's parents will be contacted by the classroom teacher.

2nd violation: Any student who violates the academic honesty policy will receive a "0" on the assignment, and a behavior detention. The administration will contact the student's parents. The student may be removed from any and all elected or appointed leadership positions for the remainder of the school year.

3rd violation: Any student who violates the academic honesty policy will receive a "0" on the assignment, and a behavior report. Due to recurring behavior, third violations can result in a suspension.

WORKSHOP WEDNESDAYS

In order to promote student success and well-being, one Wednesday a month will have a modified schedule and modified procedures that aim to work towards these goals.

On Workshop Wednesdays, students will have three periods: Language Arts, History, and Science. These will be modified periods that provide time for conferencing with the teacher, tutorial from the teacher, and supervised and guided work time. They will also have a pull-out one-on-one academic advisory session with a Grace Christian Middle School staff member.

To allow time for these important activities, students will not receive new instruction on Workshop Wednesdays. Additionally, they will not have a math period or a new math assignment to work on.

During the academic advisory session, a student will be pulled from their current Workshop period in order to have a one-on-one meeting to review their grades, discuss any issues at school, and create plans to improve in any areas of difficulty. Academic Advisory sessions will be by appointment as set by the Grace Christian Middle School staff and will be led by Grace Christian Middle School staff.

In order to further promote student well-being and camaraderie, students will have an extended lunch period on Workshop Wednesdays. If they wish to do so, students will have the option to walk off-campus with their teachers to purchase lunch, then walk back and eat it on campus. This will usually be a walk to Sprout's, the local grocery store and deli just down the street. This lunch option will be available to all students who are not receiving disciplinary action from school administration, such as a suspension or a behavior report.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCKER AGREEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

Carefully read the following guidelines as you accept a locker from Grace Christian School. Remember that having a locker is a privilege and not a right. Lockers are assigned only if the student and parent/guardian agree to these rules. Violation of these rules will result in loss of the privilege of having a locker.

Lockers for middle school students are the property of Grace Christian School. The Locker Deposit will be \$20.00 for the lock and locker. ONLY the school-issued combination locks will be permitted on the lockers.

1. The school assumes NO responsibility for loss or damage to personal or school items in an unlocked or locked locker.
2. Grace Christian School reserves the right to search lockers at any time.
3. Valuables, including Chromebooks and chargers, must NOT be kept in the lockers.
4. Students should keep only items necessary for school in the lockers (i.e. textbooks, school supplies, P.E. uniforms)
5. **The storage of food and drink in the locker is not allowed.** (Think critters!)
6. Students are solely responsible for the contents of their lockers and should not share their lockers with other students. Students should not divulge locker combinations to other students.

7. Lockers must be in the same condition at the end of the school year as they were in the beginning of the school year. Students are not to write, place stickers, or vandalize lockers in any manner. Students guilty of such infractions will be charged for cleaning and/or repair of the locker and lose locker privileges.
8. Students may not use lockers during class time without permission.
9. Tardiness to class due to locker use is not acceptable.
10. Students are to report any problems with lockers to their homeroom teacher immediately.

My signature below (on page 15) indicates I have read, understand, and agree to comply with these policies. Lockers will not be assigned without a signed agreement and receipt of a deposit.

HIGH SCHOOL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Choosing a high school can be a stressful process for both students and parents. Please watch for emails from Ms. Kara starting in October, regarding the high school registration process. You can also set an individual appointment with her if you have any questions or concerns.

To get you started, here is some information to help you navigate the registration process:

Charter Schools

Charter schools such as Escondido Charter High School, Escondido Charter Flex Program, High Tech High, Classical Academy, and Del Lago (a magnet school) hold lotteries to determine 9th-grade placement. The lottery dates are different for each school but usually take place in January. You can start applying for these lotteries in October and November.

Public Schools

In December, the Escondido Union High School District (EUHSD) office will contact Grace Christian to request the names and addresses of all 8th-grade students who live within the EUHSD area. Based upon your address, your student will be assigned a "high school of residence," and beginning in February, you will begin to receive information on the high school registration process.

- Students who live outside EUHSD boundaries should receive information from their high schools of residence around the same time. These high school districts (i.e., Poway Unified, San Marcos Unified, etc.) do not contact us directly but are required to contact you as part of their "child find" process. If your child will be attending a public school outside of EUHSD, please let Ms. Kara know and she will help you get the information you need!

It is common for students to want to go to a different high school than their high school of residence. For example, your child's high school of residence may be San Pasqual, but because most of their friends are going to Escondido High School, he/she would prefer to attend Escondido High School. In order to transfer your child from one high school to another within the EUHSD, you will need to complete an Intra-district Transfer Form (IDT Form) and turn it into the EUHSD office.

Parent Night usually takes place before registration in early to mid-March. Parent Nights are designed for both parents and students, although attendance is usually comprised of parents. At Parent Night you will receive information regarding the school campus, course selection, elective classes, summer school, athletic programs, and student clubs and organizations. Typically, at the end of the parent night, parents of private school students will be asked to stay after in order to schedule individual appointments with the school counselors for registration. If you do not get an individual appointment, the high school will inform you of a date and time frame in which you are to come to the high school to register.

Registration usually occurs in late March or April. Before going to registration, you will receive Math and English Recommendation forms from your Grace English and Math teachers in your Special Delivery envelope. These forms will help the high school counselor determine which freshman courses are best for your student. At your registration appointment, you and your student will meet with a counselor to determine which courses to enroll in for the first semester of their freshman year (including elective courses). You will not receive a schedule of classes or know what teacher you will be receiving since schedules are not processed until August, just before school starts.

Private Parochial Schools

Registration for private, parochial schools like Calvin Christian and Cathedral Catholic takes place throughout the school year. Plan on making contact with the school before Christmas Break of your student's 8th-grade year.

Finally, don't be afraid to call the high schools you are interested in and schedule a tour before registration starts. Touring is a great way to get "the feel" of the school before making a final placement decision.

If you have any questions regarding the registration process, please contact Kara Warner, Grace Christian School, Associate Principal/Counselor at (760) 747-3029 ext. 7108 or kwarners@gracelcms.net

**MIDDLE-SCHOOL GOOD CITIZENSHIP AWARDS
GRACE ESCAPE SCHEDULE
2019 - 2020**

08/20 - 08/28	Language Arts
08/29 - 09/04 (7th Grade Trip 09/03 - 09/06)	PE
09/05 - 09/11	Jeans Day: Monday, 09/09
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 09/11/19
09/12 - 09/18	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 09/18/19
09/19 - 09/25 (8th Grade Trip 09/21 - 09/28)	Math
09/26 - 10/02 (6th Grade Trip 09/30 - 10/04)	Free Dress Day: Monday, 10/07
10/03 - 10/09	History/Academic Writing
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 10/09/19
10/10 - 10/16	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 10/23/19
10/17 - 10/23	Science
10/24 - 10/30	Jeans Day: Monday, 10/28
10/31 - 11/06	Language Arts
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 11/13/19
11/07 - 11/13	Grace Escape: Tuesday, 11/19/19
11/14 - 11/20	PE
11/21 - 12/04 (Thanksgiving Break)	Free Dress Day: Monday, December 9th
12/05 - 12/11	Math
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 12/11/19
12/12 - 12/18	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 12/18/18
12/19 - 01/08 (Christmas Break)	Language Arts
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 01/15/20
01/09 - 01/15	Jeans Day: Tuesday, 01/21
01/16 - 01/22	PE
01/23 - 01/29	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 01/29/20
01/30 - 02/05	Math
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 02/12/19
02/06 - 02/12	Free Dress Day: Tuesday, February 18th
02/13 - 02/19	History/Academic Writing
02/20 - 02/26	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 02/26/20
02/27 - 03/04	Science
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 03/11/20
03/05 - 03/11	Jeans Day: Monday, 03/16
03/12 - 03/18	Language Arts
03/19 - 03/25	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 03/25/20
03/26 - 04/01	PE

Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 04/01/20
04/02 - 04/15 (Easter Break)	Free Dress Day: Monday, 04/20/20
04/16 - 04/22	Science
04/23 - 04/29	Grace Escape: Wednesday, 04/22/20
04/30 - 05/06	Language Arts
Workshop Wednesday	Wednesday, 05/06/20
05/07 - 05/13	PE
05/14 - 05/20	Jeans Day: Tuesday, 05/26
05/21 - 05/27	Final Grace Escape: Thursday, 05/28/20

MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

2019-2020

SIGNATURE PAGE

Although as a practical matter it is impossible to provide clear, concise, and complete guidance on each and every issue that may arise during your child's attendance at school, the Middle School Handbook has been created so that the goals and the Christian culture of the school are communicated to each parent. By making the decision to enroll your child in school, you have made a commitment to your child's education, and you have made a financial commitment. It is in the spirit of these commitments that you, the parent, shall familiarize yourself with the contents of this Middle School Handbook. As a condition of your child's enrollment at Grace Christian School, both parent and child must be committed to adhering to the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of both the Middle School and Family Handbook.

Your signatures below signify that you and your child are making the commitment to read and discuss the Middle School Handbook. Grace Christian School reserves the right to modify, amend, change, addend, and/or append any or all of this handbook and will communicate such changes in the weekly Principal's Pen newsletter.



My signature below indicates I have read, understand, and agree to comply with these policies. *Lockers will not be assigned without a signed agreement and receipt of a deposit.*

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of and agree to the commitment set forth above in the Middle School Handbook for the current school year (one signature page per family).

Please **PRINT** student name(s)

Student signature(s) Date

Please **PRINT** parent name(s)

Parent signature(s)