



**Middle School
Handbook
2021-2022**

Parent Letter

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

Welcome to Middle School at Grace Christian School. 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 have 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*

Karisa May--Science

Victoria Swanson--History, Literature/Vocabulary, Bible Class

Lee Zabinsky--Language Arts

Isaac Endermann--Middle School Lead, Mathematics

Aaron Smith--Senior Pastor, Bible Class

Kara Warner--Associate Principal, School Counselor

Michelle Quezada--Associate Principal

Ben Elliott--Superintendent

ACADEMICS

We expect our students to try their best to succeed in every class. Open communication with their teachers is necessary to reach this goal. We appreciate family support in encouraging students to reach out. If it is before or after school hours, students can always send a message to their teachers via email.

Students maintaining an average below 70% in any class will have their parents notified by email weekly. Parents and students are expected to sign in to GradeLink to review grades and assignments. If there is any confusion on how to improve, students and parents are expected to communicate with teachers to make sure they understand how to move forward.

To pass a subject, a student must have a passing average over the year. Any student that fails two or more subjects 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.

In each 8th grade graduating class, the valedictorian will be the student with the highest yearlong percent score average over all graded classes, and the salutatorian will be the student with the second highest average. Any score in an advanced math class will be counted as one full letter grade higher, which is 10% higher than shown on a report card.

HOMEWORK POLICY

It is important that students complete their assigned work on time. Late assignments may receive no credit or partial credit depending on the nature of the assignment.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

On all assignments, students should value and respect academic honesty.

Due to the varying nature of assignments and degrees of acts of academic dishonesty, disciplinary action may include the following:

- Receiving a score of zero for the entire assignment or for part of the assignment.
- Requirement to repeat the entire assignment or part of the assignment.
- The general behavior consequences outlined later in the document, including behavior conference, office referral, detention, and revoking of privileges.

Explanations of various topics relating to academic honesty can be found below. This is not an all encompassing list, but provides general insight into academic honesty.

1. Assessments

Students are expected to do their own work or to collaborate only as directed by their teachers. Any giving or receiving of external assistance relating to an examination, test, or quiz, without expressed direction or permission of the teacher

is cheating. This includes giving or receiving previously administered tests.

2. Fabrication, Falsification, or Forgery

Students are expected to present information they believe to be true. Any falsification or invention of material, information, data, citation, or other authority in an academic exercise is cheating. Additionally, forging another person's signature is an act of academic dishonesty.

3. Unauthorized Collaboration

Collaboration is often a helpful tool for learning, and as such is often permitted and encouraged by teachers.

However, unauthorized collaboration is an act of academic dishonesty. This includes copying another student's work, sharing answers or images of work to an individual or group, allowing work to be copied, 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. Check with your teacher if you are ever unsure.

If students turn in identical answers, it will be considered a violation of the academic honesty policy for both students. Exceptions may apply based on the nature of the assignment, such as a math quiz.

4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking credit for someone else's work. Plagiarism can have serious academic, professional, or legal consequences. Please note that plagiarism is not limited to copy and pasting from a website, but it is any time someone leads others to believe that someone else's work is their own. Students are expected to take credit only for their own work.

GRACE ESCAPE

Grace Escape is a time for building camaraderie and promoting the well-being of our middle school students. We walk off campus during an extended lunch period to a local store or restaurant to purchase lunch, snacks, or dessert. Students enjoy a time of friendship, fresh air, and fun. We hope that all students are able to participate, but their privileges can be revoked as a consequence of their behavior.

UNIFORM/DRESS CODE POLICY

This is a supplement to the all-school policy that can be found in the Family Handbook that provides extra clarification for relevant middle school topics.

Additional Middle School Guidelines:

- Students are expected to dress safely.
 - Students are allowed to wear modest jewelry, but jewelry that compromises safety will not be permitted. Examples of unsafe jewelry include but are not limited to chains, dangling jewelry, large earrings, or spikes.
 - Free dress clothing must not have any elements that compromise safety. Possible elements of concern may include straps, rips, holes, tears, or any dangling or excessively loose components.
- Students are expected to dress modestly, and therefore no garment should be excessively tight, form-fitting, or revealing.
 - All free dress and uniform skirts and dresses must be no shorter than two inches above the knee.
 - All shorts may be no shorter than mid thigh.
 - Uniform leggings may only be worn under skirts, skorts, and shorts. Leggings must be solid, non-patterned in black, gray, or uniform color (forest green, navy blue, light yellow, white).
 - Free dress leggings may be worn with an accompanying garment that covers from at least waist to mid-thigh.
 - For free dress clothing, no rips, holes, tears, slits, mesh, or other revealing elements may be present above mid-thigh.
 - Makeup is not permitted.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

This policy is a supplement to the all school discipline policy that can be found in the Family Handbook. It provides clarification for relevant middle school topics.

The teachers and staff of Grace Christian Middle School care very much about your children and want them to have a safe, productive year. We believe it is in their best interest to set up and enforce guidelines for their conduct.

General Rules

The following rules will be in effect throughout the course of the day.

- Follow directions from teachers and staff.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Be seated at your assigned seat when the teacher is ready to begin.
- Be prepared for class with the required materials.
- Do not use rude phrases or gestures.
- Do not disrupt the learning environment for others.
- Arrive to class promptly.
- Follow any classroom specific rules.
- Use Chromebooks and other digital devices only as directed by the teacher and only for the academic purposes of the current class, unless otherwise permitted by the teacher.

General Consequences

Failure to comply with the general rules will first result in removal from the classroom in order to take a moment to refocus and return to class with improved behavior. Multiple offenses may lead to the consequences below:

- Behavior conference with a staff member.
- Office referral.
- Detention.
- Revoking of privileges, such as Grace Escape.

Non-Negotiable Behaviors

The following behaviors will result in referral to the administration for a behavior detention and/or other disciplinary action as necessary.

- Disrespect for a teacher's decision.
- Misuse, destruction, or theft of another's belongings.
- Use of a Chromebook or other digital device to access content inappropriate for the learning environment. Examples include but are not limited to streaming videos for entertainment, sending private messages, or accessing explicit content.
- Bullying, threatening, or intimidating others.
- Other severe behavior issues, including but not limited to overt defiance, fighting, possession of a controlled substance, or possession of a weapon.

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.

Locks and lockers for middle school students are the property of Grace Christian School. Vandalism or destruction of the lock or locker will result in a repair or replacement fee. 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.
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 on, 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 the Middle School Handbook Signature Page) 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 kwarnier@gracelcms.net

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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, should 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 *Paw Prints* 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.*

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/guardian name(s)

Parent/guardian signature(s)