

Grace Fellowship Academy Preschool

A ministry of Grace Fellowship Church



Parent/Student Handbook 2023-2024

6500 S. Miller Rd.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
Phone: (623) 393-8883
Fax: (623) 321-1662
www.gracefellowshipacademy.org

Administration

Principal- Mrs. Dickinson
Preschool Director- Mrs. Ryan

School Hours

Monday-Thursday
7:30-3:30

Grace Fellowship Academy School Board

David Lewis-President
Cheryl Sawyer -Vice President
Cash Veo-Treasurer
Jeana Holmes-Secretary
Morgan Ohlin-Member
Michelle Dawson- Member

School Verse

"Watch, stand fast in the faith,
be brave, be strong."
1 Cor. 16:13

Purpose

Grace Fellowship Academy Preschool views itself as an extension of the home. Our goal is to assist the parents in training their children to love God and others by providing an atmosphere in which children can achieve their highest potential: spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. To meet our goal, we will continually strive to do the following:

- Teach the children God created them.
- Tell them daily they are a gift from God.
- Instill in each child how important he/she is to the Kingdom of God.
- Recognize each child's individual God given gifts while teaching them to honor each other's differences. Our differences make each of us special.
- Each day will be filled with fun! Learning about God and what He has created around us is an enjoyable experience.

Mission Statement

Equip minds, nurture hearts, and promote service all for the glory of God.

GFA begins each day with the following pledges:

Pledge to the Christian Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands, one brotherhood uniting all Christians in service and love.

Pledge to the Bible

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path, and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

Pledge to the American Flag

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands: One nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

ACSI

GFA holds membership in the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), a strong international organization of Christian schools with over 23,000 members. Its purpose is to provide guidance, research, curriculum, administrative policies and other resources to support member schools to provide outstanding Christian education with high academic standards.

Admission Requirements

All students need to be completely potty trained to enroll. Students must be 4 years old by September 1 to enroll in Prekindergarten, and 3 years old by September 1 to enroll in Preschool. Complete and provide the following information prior to your child's admission:

- Submit online application and Application Fee of \$50.00 (non-refundable)
- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record
- Emergency, Information and Immunization Record Card
- Signed form on last page of Parent Handbook
- Signed Financial Commitment Form
- Tuition Fee of \$150.00 upon acceptance (non-refundable)

The Arizona Department of Health Services requires that all immunizations are current upon enrollment. If any immunizations are not current, you will receive written notice from the facility director. Upon receiving the notice, the state allows 15 days to become current. After the 15 days the student will be unable to attend school until they are current.

Curriculum and Evaluations

At GFA we offer an exceptional program for the children using the Abeka curriculum. This curriculum has been proven to truly give the children a jump on their education and relationship with God. Abeka focuses strongly on phonics and incorporates a fun learning experience, as well as biblical principles which are taught daily. Formal evaluations of your child will be done quarterly. Parent/teacher conferences will be held with the teacher upon request.

PreSchool & PreKindergarten

In this class we will show the children how God has made them special as individuals. We will teach and relate scriptures to them in order to emphasize their importance to God as well as how he created them for his kingdom in his own image. The children in this class will be developing and refining social and academic skills through fun hands-on learning experiences that are incorporated with music, crafts, puppets and dancing with literature centered projects as well as letter and number recognition. These class activities will be centered around the alphabet (names and sounds) and counting numbers (0-20). Our academic areas include Bible, phonics, math, science, art, vocabulary and oral language development. Music and movement incorporated with manipulatives will be used to develop both small and large motor skills.

Our class ratio is 1:13

Holidays

We follow the GFA K-8 school calendar, which starts in August and dismisses at the end of May. The school is always closed on the following days:

- Labor Day
- Fall Break- 1 Week
- Veterans' Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Break-2 Weeks
- MLK Day
- Presidents' Day
- Spring Break- 1 Week

Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition payments need to be made out to Grace Fellowship Academy (GFA) and are due by the first of the month. Our school is a non-profit Christian ministry that depends on timely tuition payments to maintain affordable tuition rates. It is, therefore, imperative that we receive payment of all fees and that it is understood that the payment of all fees is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

The tuition payment policy for GFA is as follows:

- Tuition may be paid in full.
- Tuition may be paid in 10 equal monthly payments, due by the 1st of each month. The first payment is due August 1 and the final payment is due May 1. There will be a returned check fee of \$25.00 for insufficient funds. Monthly statements showing the total outstanding balance are emailed to parents for their records and do not affect when payments are due. To help parents keep up regular payments, to prevent occurrence of insurmountable past due balances, and to enable GFA to meet its financial obligations in a responsible fashion, the following delinquent account process has been established:

15 days past due	The account is considered delinquent and a late fee of \$35.00 will be assessed each month the account remains past due (\$75.00 for ESA invoices).
30 days past due	These accounts will receive a phone call from administration.
60 days past due	The student may be suspended and student records held until the account is made current.
90 days past due	The account may be referred for collection. If this occurs any additional collection charges will be added to your account.

***Absences due to illness or any other reason will be charged; this includes holidays.** If your child is left at the facility after closing time, there will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute per child. Fees are due immediately upon pick up. If we have not been able to reach a legal guardian or emergency contact after 30 minutes, we will be forced to contact legal authorities.

Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Any family that desires to withdraw their student must notify the school in writing two weeks prior to the student's final day. Any student that attends at least one day of class for that month is charged for that month's tuition. All accounts must be paid in full at the time of withdrawal. Additionally, if a student, after leaving the school, returns for re-enrollment, a \$150.00 tuition fee will apply.

- Families that have paid the entire year in advance that withdraw **prior to** the first school day are refunded the amount of tuition paid for the current school year. *It is important to note that repayment of these funds must wait until funds become available.
- Families that have paid the entire year in advance that withdraw **after** the first day of school are refunded the amount of tuition minus the monthly tuition for any month the child attended, even if he/she only attends one day for that month. *It is important to note that repayment of these funds must wait until funds become available.

Illnesses/Medications

To avoid the spreading of contagious illnesses, sick children will not be admitted into the facility. If your child should become ill while in our care, we will attend to his/her needs until a parent can pick up the child. We ask that the child be picked up within 30 minutes of the parent being notified. Please notify us if your child will be absent for any reason. If any child has an illness that is contagious, we are required by the Arizona Department of Health Services to have a communicable illness record on file.

If your child shows signs of **any** of the following symptoms, we ask that you keep your child home to protect other students, families, and staff from illness:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • Lice | <u>Covid symptoms</u> |
| • Rash | Fever or chills |
| • Fever (100.0 or higher) | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing |
| • Diarrhea | Muscle aches |
| • Vomiting | Sore throat, headache, and/or fatigue |
| • Unusual inflammation | Congestion or runny nose |
| • Contagious or infectious disease | Cough, Vomiting, or Diarrhea |
| | New loss of taste or smell |

First aid, such as an ice pack or a band-aid, will be applied to minor injuries such as small cuts, bruises and scrapes. The action taken will be written in the incident report log. Any head injury, even a slight bump, will be written on an accident report form. A copy will be given to the parent, and the original will be kept on file. In the case of serious injury or illness, the parent and proper medical authorities will be contacted. If the parent or guardian cannot be contacted, we will phone the next emergency contact in the child's file.

Children may return when they have been free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medication) and/or symptoms for 24 hours, as long as the student has not been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid or who is suspected of having Covid. Please notify the school if this situation occurs. The AZDHS Release from Isolation Guidelines will be followed in regard to determining the student's date of return to school.

****Medications will not be administered to children****

Parent Responsibilities/General Policies

A completed registration packet is needed before enrollment, followed by a tour of the school. The family and child will be on a 90-day probation. The school reserves the right to dismiss any child/family who does not conform to our requirements, rules and regulations.

Nutrition

Each student needs to provide a refillable water bottle. Snacks are provided and consist of a variety of one of the following: animal crackers, goldfish crackers, graham crackers, wheat thins, go-gurt, and/or cheese. Please make sure we have up to date allergy information for your child.

Students attending "Full Day" classes will need to bring a sack lunch. Candy, sodas, and other sugary drinks are **not** allowed. Refrigeration and microwaves are not available for student lunches.

Items From Home

Each child is assigned a hook for a backpack to store his/her belongings. An extra set of clothing should be in the student's backpack, in the case of accidents. Students should bring a labeled, refillable water bottle each day.

Your child's teacher will notify you when their Show and Tell days are. Please mark **ALL** items from home with his/her name.

***We are not responsible for lost/misplaced items.**

DRESS CODE

It is GFA's viewpoint that the learning and spiritual atmosphere of our school is enhanced by student and staff appearance that is neat, orderly, and in moderation. Clothing that is disorderly, non-functional and excessive in style and appearance does not uphold this conviction. We seek a higher level of purpose, that of honoring our Lord in our appearance as well as in our behavior. GFA's standard of dress is intended to honor these convictions without becoming legalistic. Some Biblical principles which GFA seeks to promote are as follows:

- We do all to the glory of God (*1Cor. 10:31*).
- We do not to offend others by being stumbling blocks (*Romans 14:13*).
- We are to be modest, reflecting decency and humility (*1Tim. 2:9, 10*).
- We are to draw attention to God, not ourselves (*John 3:30*).
- We are to do everything in love (*1Cor.16:14*).

GFA also recognizes that Christians can have convictions that differ regarding the application of Biblical principles in the area of dress. If a particular article or style of clothing is not allowed, GFA is not saying the item is wrong to wear at other times- just not to school. The standard is clearly not intended to measure individual spirituality, but rather to serve as a vehicle to promote an appropriate learning and spiritual atmosphere within our school. The cooperation of students, parents and teachers is necessary in maintaining GFA's dress standard.

Students are expected to live and conduct themselves in a manner that is pleasing to God and glorifying to the name of Jesus Christ (*II Thess. 1:11-12*). To accomplish these purposes, careful consideration has been given to factors such as comfort, safety, modesty, appropriateness, and ease of enforcement. The cooperation of students, parents, and teachers is necessary in maintaining the dress code. (It is especially important to be mindful of this when school clothes are purchased.)

While on campus, students must be in dress code. The school administration reserves the right to make modifications to the dress code for special occasions such as field trips, spirit days, or other fun/reward situations.

Solid: The same color throughout the article of clothing. No variation of the color.
e.g. ombre or tie dye

Finger-Tip Rule: The article of clothing must be at or past the tips of the students fingertips when arms are down to their sides.

- **Pants/Shorts/Capris: Solid color khaki or black pants and shorts, or blue denim jeans.** (No jean shorts except for on Thursdays)
 - Black and khaki pants may be a jean type of material.
 - Dri-fit material is acceptable but must not be gym/athletic style shorts or pants.
 - Pants must be worn at the waist or hips. Clothing that exposes midriffs or underwear is not acceptable.
 - Pants and jeans may not have any embellishments, rips, holes, or be frayed in any way including at the ankles.
 - Shorts must pass the "Finger-Tip Rule" (description above).
 - Ponte uniform style jeggings in black or khaki are acceptable for girls. (Must have pockets)
 - Any type of leggings, yoga pants etc. are **unacceptable** attire as primary pants.
 - Solid color khaki, black, or navy blue leggings/tights** may be worn under shorts (must still meet the length requirement).

- **Skirts/Skort/Jumpers: Solid color khaki or black uniform style with no embellishments, glitter, sequins, etc;**
 - Solid color red, black, or gray polo dresses.** Hemlines, including slits, are to pass the finger-tip rule.
 - Girls are encouraged to wear shorts under jumpers and skirts for modesty.
 - Solid color khaki, black, or navy blue leggings/tights** may be worn under skirts/skort/jumpers (must still meet the length requirement).

- **Shirts: Solid color red, black, or gray polo.** Standard uniform dress shirts may also be worn.
 - All shirts must be plain with **NO** embellishments, logos, rhinestones, decorative stitching, etc..

- **Outerwear:** During the cooler months, **solid color red, black, or gray** jackets, sweatshirts, vests, or school issued sweatshirts may be worn.
 - Logos and graphics are **NOT** acceptable unless it is GFA issued.
 - Jackets and sweatshirts may be worn in the classroom but may not be worn in place of the uniform polo shirt.
 - Outdoor rain/snow jackets may have patterns. They may not be worn in the classroom.

- **Footwear:**
 - Tennis shoes, dress shoes, and sandals with a back strap are acceptable. Laces must be tied securely.
 - No heels higher than 1 inch.
 - No crocs, flip-flops, slippers or shoes with wheels.**
 - Tall graphic socks are not to be visible and may only be worn under pants or on free dress day.
- **Hats/Caps/Beanies/Bandanas/Kerchiefs:** May be worn outdoors only and must be taken off when entering buildings and during prayer and pledge.
- **Girls:** Excessive cosmetics are not allowed (includes face glitter). Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. Earrings should not hang but be solid posts. This protects ears during PE and recess. Body piercing is not permitted. No tattoos (permanent or temporary) are allowed.
- **Boys:** No earrings, excessive jewelry, chains or studded bracelets. No tattoos (permanent or temporary) are allowed.
- **Hair:** Hair for both girls and boys is to be neat and clean. **No extreme cuts or unnatural colors are permitted.**
- Any attire not specifically covered in this policy is not allowed.
- **Book bags, hats, notebooks, sweatshirts, or other paraphernalia with inappropriate messages or pictures are not allowed.**

Thursday Dress Code:

- Regular uniform Dress Code
- Any GFA issued T-shirt with jeans or jean shorts (no embellishments, rips, holes, or frays of any kind)

FREE DRESS DAY

The last Thursday of each month will be a free dress day for all students. However, the items of clothing must still abide by the standards set by the school. This means all clothes must be modest in nature and there should be no inappropriate words or pictures on the clothes.

- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops and backless tops would all be considered not acceptable for our campus.
- “Sleeveless” shirts must have a 3-inch wide or larger strap.
- Jeans, pants, or shorts may not have any rips, holes, or frays of any kind.
- Any type of leggings, yoga pants etc. are **unacceptable** attire as primary pants.
- Solid color** leggings/tights may be worn under shorts.
- Shorts, skirts, dresses, jumpers, etc. are to pass the “finger-tip rule” described under dress code.

- Jogger style sweatpants, and athletic wear is acceptable but must be modest in nature and not resemble PJs.
- No PJs on free dress day.

Sun Safety

In the case of a heat advisory, children will be restricted to indoor activities. Otherwise, daily outdoor activity is approximately 30 minutes. We ask that you apply sunscreen before school and send a hat on warm days.

Parties

To bring treats please notify the teacher of your plans so he/she can work out the best time and inform you of any student allergies in your child's class. Do not plan a class party, bring special guests, or send telegrams.

Sign In/Sign Out

Parents must accompany their child into the preschool classroom and sign him/her in and out. This person must sign his/her first initial and full last name on the roster. AZDHS requires that anyone signing a child in or out must be at least 18 years of age. Your child is to be brought to a qualified staff member. No individual may pick up a child without prior authorization and photo identification.

Visitors

Parents have access to facilities to sign in and out their child. However, anyone interested in being a preschool volunteer needs a fingerprint clearance card, which may be obtained by the Arizona Department of Public Safety. Volunteers are anyone who will be helping in the classroom. School visitors do not need a fingerprint card. Visitors would be guest speakers or those attending a large group function (programs, school picnics, or chapel). If you plan to volunteer or visit on campus, please bring your Driver License or State Issued ID to sign in and out at the school office.

Parent Grievance

GFA is committed to positive communication and to the resolution of potential conflicts before they arise. When there is a misunderstanding or potential conflict, the principles and procedures of Matthew 18 are to be employed by everyone involved to guide the sequence and attitude in resolving the concern.

Application of Matthew 18 Principles:

Privacy (Matthew 18:15)

Difficulties are always compounded when we include those who were not directly involved in a problem. Care must be taken to keep the circle of involvement as small as possible.

Direct Information (Matthew 18:16)

Communication is never 100% accurate. Therefore, we must not draw conclusions based on second-hand information, regardless of the reliability of the source. Draw conclusions only upon what you have seen and heard.

Resolution (Galatians 6:11)

Restoration of relationships and resolution of the problem must motivate all we do.

A Spirit of Gentleness

The attitude with which we approach people is of utmost importance.

Looking to Yourselves

Self-examination must always precede any attempt to correct a problem. Check your motive and your attitude before any action is taken.

Application of Matthew 18 Procedures

The first step involves self-examination and prayer. The second step is to meet privately with the person involved to seek resolution. If the grievance is not resolved, meet with the director to seek resolution. If resolution is not achieved, a request to meet with the leadership team can be submitted. The request must be in writing and include a clear statement of the grievance, the present status of the grievance, and the settlement desired. The grievance must be received by the director or leadership team within two weeks of the occurrence. Every effort will be made to handle all conflicts according to Biblical guidelines, with the expected result being the edification of all involved.

Photographs

Photographs may be taken at GFA during the year for use on our website and in various promotional materials. Names will NOT be posted with any picture or group that appears on our website. By enrolling your child at GFA you give permission to use pictures. *If you do not wish to have your child's pictures used, you must indicate so on the application.*

Disciplinary Policy

GFA Preschool will use consistent positive reinforcement and strive to change undesirable behavior and mold Godly character. The following positive intervention methods will be used to help children understand inappropriate behavior and develop self-control.

Pray and discuss undesirable behavior in terms of its effect on self and others. Children will be encouraged to assume responsibility as needed.

Redirection/Positive Guidance and Conflict Conversion such as: suggesting a new activity, allowing children in conflict to state their position and think about how the other child feels, therefore developing self-control and communication skills.

Appropriate logical consequences such as: picking up, sharing, and apologizing.

Take a break: Under the supervision of an adult, students will be separated from peers for one minute per age of the child. The child rejoins his/her peers following a conference with the teacher.

A report will be taken and sent home with your child relating to the inappropriate behavior and the action steps taken. If inappropriate behavior persists, parents will be notified. If extreme behavior persists, we will be forced to withdraw the student from the program.

Here at GFA we strive to teach your students how to first and foremost love God and love others.

Hebrews 13:17 says: "You who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

As teachers we work hard to teach your children how to love others, obey authority, and honor commitments to God like serving, being kind, following directions, and sharing. These principles are taught at a young age so your students can grow up to be good stewards of God. Though these may be hard concepts for

3-5 year olds to grasp, we have specific policies and guidelines that allow us to help your students grow and learn in a Biblical way.

Our Disciplinary Action Plan is as follows:

Category 1 Offense (i.e.: not following directions, not sharing, unkind words/actions)

1. Redirection with verbal warning
2. "Time to think" (this is done individually with the teacher to explain, pray and reflect)

Category 2 Offense (i.e: physical contact-pushing, hitting, running away, destruction of property)

1. Verbal Parent Communication
2. Principal Chat

Category 3 Offense (i.e: biting, continuous physical contact after category 2 implementation, running away multiple times)

1. Parent Call/Student goes home for the day

*After 3 Category 3 Offenses, a meeting with family, teachers, and principal will occur in order to implement an action plan to continue at GFA. If offenses continue to occur after an individualized action plan is implemented, students may be asked to find alternative preschool care.

Our goal at GFA is to implement Godly lessons that teach your students how to become like Jesus. We ask that you abide by the Matthew 18 principle located in the GFA handbook and ask you to partner with us in continuous prayer and honor the guidelines we have put forth in making GFA the best Christian Preschool it can be. We thank you for your love and support.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to reach out to your student's teacher, Preschool Director or Principal.

Teachers: Sam Haederer & Leah Klan: 623-393-8883

Preschool Director: Ashley Ryan- aryan@gracefellowshipacademy.org

Transportation/Field Trips

We do not provide transportation to or from the facility. Due to state regulations, we do not offer field trips for our preschool program.

Child Abuse/Neglect

In accordance with state law and school policy, school staff is obligated under penalty of fine and jail term to report the reasonable suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, or child neglect.

In this very serious and legally narrow area, the school will not contact parents in advance of making a report to authorities, which would be the procedure followed in most other legal matters. The clear intent of the law, based on the seriousness of the crimes listed above, is to mandate that a report of reasonable suspicion of abuse be made.

School staff will make such reports in the best interest of the affected child and do not, once reasonable suspicion is established, have any legal alternative except to make the report to the proper authorities for their investigation and review.

Staff Information

Each staff member provides a personal testimony and signs our statement of faith. The goal of each staff member is to enrich the lives of those given into his/her care. If for any reason we are unable to meet the needs of any child, it would be unfair for that child to continue here. The well-being of each individual child is our greatest concern. We understand kids will be kids and do not anticipate perfection. For situations where guidance is needed, we will correct the children in love and pray with them for God's help to keep us mindful of one another.

We are licensed by the Bureau of Child Care Licensing through the Arizona Department of Health Services. This requires all of our staff to have a background check through the FBI and a copy of their fingerprint clearance card on file. Our staff is experienced in Early Childhood Education and maintains continuing education programs quarterly. Our staff is also CPR and First Aid certified.

Facility

Insurance Information

We carry liability insurance and maintain eligible coverage, which is available for review.

Grace Fellowship is a Licensed Three, Four, & Five Year-old Preschool

A copy of our facility report is available for public viewing. Grace Fellowship Preschool is regulated by:

The Arizona Department of Health Services
150 N. 18th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 364-2539

Emergency Procedures

The fire escape plan is posted in the entryway. Fire and lockdown drills are performed monthly. Our doors are kept locked for the safety of your children.

The Recommended Accident, Evacuation, and Emergency Plan is posted inside the classroom and updated every 12 months.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on the grounds at any time.

Use of Pesticides

A notice will be hung on the school doors at least 48 hours before pesticides are applied on our premises.



Please sign this page and keep for your records.

We (I) have read, understand and agree with the Grace Fellowship Academy Preschool Handbook, rules, payment policies and procedures.

Child's name _____

Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____



Please sign and return this page to the school.

We (I) have read, understand and agree with the *Grace Fellowship Academy* Preschool Handbook, rules, payment policies and procedures.

Child's name _____

Parent Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____