



**Middle School
Handbook
2017-2018**

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

Welcome to Middle School at Grace Christian. Since there are so many unique aspects of the Middle School experience, the staff has compiled this handbook to help you with the transition to this new phase in your child's life and to help you better understand the changes your child will be experiencing over the next few years.

Remember that we are here to support you during these exciting and sometimes taxing times. Please communicate any challenges you are having with regard to middle school so that we can help you with any frustrations and share your joys over the next few years.

Finally, we pray that you and your family will continue to grow closer to God and ask His guidance as you experience the joys and challenges of parenting your emerging adult.

We pray that this handbook will be helpful in your journey.

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

In Christ Jesus,

Middle School Faculty

Sara Jones-- 6th grade Language Arts and Social Studies

Andrew Kish-- 6th grade Math and Science

Isaac Endermann-- 7th and 8th grade Math

Karisa May-- 7th and 8th grade Science

Victoria Swanson-- 7th and 8th grade History, Academic Writing

Lee Zabinsky-- 7th and 8th grade Language Arts

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

Michelle Quezada--Director of Student Ministries

Kara Warner--Assistant Principal/School Counselor

Ben Elliott--Principal

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 (Indian Hills Camp)
- Middle School Choir and Musicals
- Track Meet
- Cross Country
- First Communion
- End of the Year Party

7th GRADE

- Catalina Science Trip
- Middle School Choir and Musicals
- Medieval Times (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
- Blue/Gray Ball (every other year)
- Confirmation
- Dances
- Track Meet
- Cross Country
- River Trip
- Ditch Day (Last Grace Escape)
- 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.**

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 desk when teacher is ready to begin.
- Be prepared for class with required materials.
- No rude phrases or gestures.

Rewards

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

Consequences

- Warning
- Time out of class
- Detention: sent home to be signed by 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 parent and returned to school the following day. Consultation with the principal is required. This document is filed in student's behavior file.
- Severe Clause--Serious behavior problems such as overt defiance, fighting, cigarettes, 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' citizenship (or behavior) "grade" using a point system. Students will accumulate points equal to the number of times they have broken one of the classroom rules. The accumulation of these points will constitute students' behavior grades.

At the end of the day on Wednesday, all citizenship grades for the week will be totaled, and the students will be issued a citizenship grade for the preceding week (**Thursday through Wednesday**). This will be emailed each Friday to the parents. 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.

HOMEWORK POLICY

It is very important that students in the Middle School complete their assigned work on time. You will be informed via email each Friday of any late or missing assignments from the previous week. If students have 4 or more late or missing assignments in a month, they will be required to attend an after-school Academic Recovery period (Wednesdays after school 3:15-4:15).

In addition to the late or missing homework tally for the week, there will also be a cumulative total for the month. This way, you know if your students are getting close to being required to attend Academic Recovery.

If students have completed all assignments from the previous week, look for a colored certificate in their Special Delivery commending them for their responsibility.

Please check your email and the “Special Delivery” packet each weekend for either the missing homework sheet or the colored “All Homework Completed” certificate and the citizenship grade.

If you are diligent in reviewing these reports with your child each week, you will always know how well your child is making the adjustment to Middle School, and you will be able to effectively help him/her with this transition.

UNIFORMS

One of the major ways your middle school student will be asserting his/her independence will be the dress code. It was decided many years ago that a uniform policy would be one way to level the playing field and help our students put less emphasis on what they are wearing and how they look. We try to make personal appearance take a back seat to character development, academics, and building a strong relationship with Jesus Christ. 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.

GRACE ESCAPE

Grace Escape is a reward system implemented by our faculty to encourage the most positive, God-pleasing behaviors 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 less behavior points in a month, they will be allowed to “Escape from Grace” (with their teacher) for an hour once a month during lunch time. Each class will decide where to go, within walking distance, and each student can bring money to buy themselves lunch and/or a treat (i.e. Starbucks, Burger King, Panda Express, Carl’s Jr., etc.)

*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:

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

Missing or Late Homework: 1 point

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

Lunchtime Alert: Given by lunch duty personnel for failure to follow rules. **1 point**

Pink Behavior Detention: Pink 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 detentions. **Automatic exclusion from Grace Escape**

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 will not be receiving their hot lunch that day. Please check the Grace Escape schedule before you order each month, as there are no refunds once ordered. In the unlikely event of any of the dates being changed, we will alert you as soon as possible.

Grace Escape Schedule 2017-2018

08/15 - 08/23	Language Arts
08/24 - 08/30	PE
08/31 - 09/06	Math
09/07 - 09/13	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Sept. 19th</u>
09/14 - 09/20	History/Academic Writing
09/21 - 09/27 (7th & 8th class trips)	Jeans Day
09/28 - 10/04 (6th class trip)	Science
10/05 - 10/11	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Oct. 17th</u>
10/12 - 10/18	Language Arts
10/19 - 10/25	PE
10/26 - 11/01	Math
11/02 - 11/08	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Nov. 14th</u>
11/09 - 11/15	History/Academic Writing
11/16 - 11/29 (Thanksgiving Break)	Jeans: Monday, 11/27
11/30 - 12/06	Science
12/07 - 12/13	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Dec. 19</u>
12/14 - 12/20	Language Arts
12/21 - 01/10 (Christmas Break)	PE
01/11 - 01/17	Math
01/18 - 01/24	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Jan. 30th</u>
01/25 - 01/31	History/Academic Writing
02/01 - 02/07	Jeans: Monday 02/12
02/08 - 02/14	Science
02/15 - 02/21	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, Feb. 27th</u>
02/22 - 02/28	Language Arts
03/01 - 03/07	PE
03/08 - 03/14	Math
03/15 - 03/21	Grace Escape: <u>Thursday, April 5th</u>
03/22 - 04/04 (Easter Break)	History/Academic Writing
04/05 - 04/11	Jeans: Monday 04/16
04/12 - 04/18	Science
04/19 - 04/25	Grace Escape: <u>Tuesday, May 1st</u>
04/26 - 05/02	Language Arts
05/03 - 05/09	PE
05/10 - 05/16	Math
05/17 - 05/23	Final Grace Escape: <u>Thursday, May 24th</u>

GRACE ESCAPE DATES: 09/19, 10/17, 11/14, 12/19, 01/30, 02/27, 04/05, 05/01, 05/24

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

Any student who violates the academic honesty policy will receive a behavior detention and a "0" on the assignment. Subsequent violations will result in suspension for a minimum of one day.

HIGH SCHOOL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registering for high school can be a stressful process for both students and parents. Here is some information in advance to help you navigate the registration process:

In November, 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 December, 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 you have not heard from your child’s public high school by the end of January, take the initiative to call them!

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, 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 orientation 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 in which courses to enroll 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.

If you have any questions regarding the registration process, please contact Kara Warner, Grace Christian School Counselor at (760) 747-3029 ext. 7108.

A Message from the School Counselor...

ADOLESCENT SOUP

Directions:

To create the base of the soup, pour two foundational ingredients into a large pot:

- 2 cups of puberty (primarily made-up of fluctuating hormones)
- 2 cups of “developmental combinational logic” (a fancy psychological term for when children develop the logical thinking and abstract reasoning abilities of an adult without the real world experiences to balance it out).

To add flavor, try any or all of the following:

- 1 tablespoon of desire for independence
- 1 tablespoon of rebellion (especially the kind that constantly questions authority)
- 1 tablespoon of moodiness and/or attitude (rolling of eyes is a plus)
- 1 tablespoon of self-consciousness
- 1 tablespoon of self-centeredness
- 1 tablespoon of the Internet, T.V., Video games, magazines, etc.

Cook under high societal pressure to be beautiful, “buff”, perfect, promiscuous, rich, etc, for however long it takes. Don’t worry about the exact temperature - it will simmer on its own for at least 5 to 6 years!

What a combination! It is no wonder that parents often fear the stage of adolescence.

Understanding the basics of why adolescents act the way they do may help alleviate some of that fear. So, read on...

All of the behaviors you see and hear about from adolescents – rebellion, moodiness, self-centeredness, attitude, preoccupation with looks, etc. – are a direct result of two processes: one that happens in the developing body and the other in the developing mind.

Most parents are fairly comfortable with puberty and the characteristics that come along with this stage of development - marking the physical transition from a child to a young man or woman. Students, on the other hand, have to learn how to deal with fluctuating hormones and moodiness, as well as a very different body inside and out. It is not uncommon for the student themselves to not understand why they act one way one minute, and a different way the next.

What is much harder to identify and understand are the changes that happen in the mind. Just as the body takes on adult characteristics through puberty, the mind undergoes maturation as well. During and after puberty, the brain develops the ability to think logically, separate what is “real” from what is “possible”, use abstractions, use hypothetical and deductive reasoning, and the ability to “think about thinking”. This development of “combinational logic” as it is known, allows adolescents to reason about problems on a higher level than they ever could during childhood. Hence, adolescents will not simply obey as usual, or go along with how things have always been. Instead, with these new reasoning abilities they will begin to question things, push the boundaries, and desire to choose for themselves what is right or wrong. They will seek independence and gain the motivation to begin building a life of their own based on their own thoughts and interpretations of the world.

This brain development does not happen seamlessly, however. It takes time for adolescents to understand their new ways of thinking and how to best use it. It takes time for them to develop confidence in themselves as a person and in the decisions they make. This is one of the reasons why adolescents seek to have more and more real world experiences long before parents want them to.

This is where the work of the parent is so important. During this time of fluctuating hormones and behavior, students need the guidance and support of their parents more than ever. Here are some basic guidelines for helping you and your child transition through adolescence successfully:

Maintain Your Expectations

Adolescents will likely act unhappy with expectations their parents place on them. Know this going into it, and don't take it personally. In their hearts, adolescents understand and need to know that their parents care enough about them to expect things from them. Appropriate grades, behavior, and adherence to the rules of the house are important standards to maintain. If parents have appropriate expectations, students will likely try to meet them.

Inform Your student – Inform Yourself

The years of adolescence are often a time of experimentation, and sometimes that experimentation includes risky behaviors. Don't avoid the subjects of sex, or drug, alcohol, and tobacco use. Discussing these things openly with your child before he or she is exposed to them increases the chance that your adolescent will act responsibly when the time comes. Know your child's friends – and know your child's friends' parents. Parents can help each other keep track of their children's activities without making the child feel that they're being watched.

Monitor What Your Child Sees and Hears

Your child has access to tons of information – T.V., the Internet, movies, music, magazines, etc. Be aware of what your child is watching and reading. Set limits on the amount of time spent in front of the T.V. and computer. Know what your child is learning from the media and whom he or she may be communicating with over the Internet. Monitor your child's email account and instant messages. Make sure your child communicates only with people on their buddy list. You may wish to purchase a software program such as Content Watch (contentwatch.com) or Cyber Patrol (cyberpatrol.com) to help you keep track of what your child is doing on the computer. Grace Christian encourages parents to keep their student's computer in an open part of the house where you can easily monitor what your child is doing. The staff also recommends that you keep your child from joining social websites such as Facebook, and apps like Snapchat and Instagram.

Help Your Student Form the “Homework Habit”

During Jr. High a large percentage of a student's total grade is based on homework. If students do not complete their daily work on a consistent basis they can easily fail a class even if they do well on tests. In high school, homework is a much smaller percentage of a student's total grade. The largest percentage of a student's grade is based on test scores. If students do not have the homework habit developed at this point, it is likely they will disregard daily homework, wait until the very last minute, and cram for the test. Obviously, this practice will not allow your student to reach their full potential. No matter how you look at it, homework is important!

By 6th grade we do expect students to be independent learners, but that does not mean you should take a totally “hands off” approach. Here are some basic things you can do to support your student:

- Especially at the beginning of the school year, make sure your student is organized and writing in his or her assignment book. For 6th grade parents this is imperative since this will most likely be the first time your student has had several different teachers and classrooms to get used to.
- Set a regular time for doing homework. Talk about assignments and help your child avoid last minute cramming by working out a schedule of what he or she needs to do.
- Help your child get started when he or she has to do a research report or other big assignment.
- Check your email and your student’s Special Delivery envelope every Friday for their weekly Homework and Citizenship Report. This will allow you to hold them accountable for what they did or didn’t do for the week.
- Check Gradelink frequently to stay on top of how your child is doing. Your student should also be checking their own gradelink account as well as Google Classroom online for their assignments on a daily basis.
- Go over your child’s schedule together to see if he or she has got too much going on at once. Talk to him or her about setting priorities and doing the most important things first.

Develop the Parental “Prayer Habit”

Don’t forget your number one resource is God. He has a definite plan for your adolescent and desires for you to use Him in all situations. (*Cast all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you. 1 Peter 5:7*). Spending time in prayer about your child should be a daily parental habit. When adolescence gets especially challenging remember Paul’s words in Philippians chapter 4 verse 13: *I can do everything through Him who gives me strength!*

The following resources were used in this article:

[The Human Odyssey, Life-Span Development, 2nd Edition](http://www.ed.gov/print/parents/academic/help/adolescence/partx2.html) by Paul S. Kaplan

www.ed.gov/print/parents/academic/help/adolescence/partx2.html

www.focusas.com/Adolescence.htm

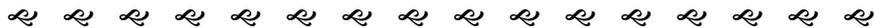
www.idshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/adolescence.htm

www.family.org

MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK
2017-2018
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 adhere 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.



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)