Grace LUTHERAN
CHURCH | SCHOOL | CDC

Grace Lutheran CDC

Parent and Student

Handbook

2026 - 2027

Revised 7/2026

PHILOSOPHY OF GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL & CDC

COVENANT STATEMENT

Philosophy:

Grace Lutheran School exists to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, to prepare our children for today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities, and to equip children with the tools necessary for lives of Christian service.

Climate – An Exemplary School...

- Provides a place where students feel comfortable, safe and accepted (John 15:12)
- Promotes open communication between parent, teachers, and students

Staff – An Exemplary Staff...

- Focuses on increasing student growth and achievement with instruction methods that reflect research and proven effective classroom practices
- Collaborates to improve student growth and learning
- Views the child through the cross of Christ, by being concerned with the child's total needs physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual
- Encourages, trains, and equips young people to live faithful lives (Ecclesiastes 11:9-10)
- Inspires God's children to share their faith naturally and eagerly (Acts 4:19-20)
- Models professionalism through integrity, commitment, and ethical behavior (Isaiah 51:7-8)

Academics – Academic Excellence...

- Utilizes the curriculum to promote intellectual curiosity, cognitive growth, self-actualization, self-expression, optimal development, social growth, moral development, character, and natural learning
- Engages students through multiple learning modalities that develop a student's kinesthetic, tactile, visual, and auditory strengths
- Develops servant leadership opportunities for students to be active participants in their faith walk with Christ
- Christian theme-based curriculum that encourages learning through play

Parents – An Exemplary Parent...

- Forms partnerships with teachers to demonstrate the importance of learning (1 Timothy 4:12)
- Supports the school's vision, goals, and mission
- Plays an active role in the development and growth of their child
- Actively seeks ways to be involved in the school by volunteering their time and/or talents

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HISTORY

Grace Lutheran School is one of over 1880 elementary schools within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The LCMS also operates 97 high schools, plus universities, making it the largest Protestant school system in the United States. Grace Lutheran School was organized in 1963, adding a grade a year until it was operating a Kindergarten through Grade 6 program. Grade 7 was added in 1977. Pre-Kindergarten and Grade 8 were added in 1978. The Child Development Center (CDC) was added in 2012. The middle school wing in the upstairs of the Family Life Center was completed in 2020.

OPERATIONS/ADMINISTRATION

Grace Lutheran CDC is one of the many ministries operated by Grace Lutheran Church. Grace Lutheran CDC is overseen by the CDC Board of Directors. Grace Lutheran Church, through its members, assumes sole responsibility for the governing of school and CDC operations. The congregation elects the members of the Grace Lutheran Church (GLC) Board of Directors. The GLC Board of Directors formulates policies for the operation of the various ministries of Grace. The principal serves as a Director on the CDC Board.

The funding for Grace Lutheran CDC comes from various sources. Among those are student tuition, the Grace Lutheran congregation, friends of the CDC, the Parent Teacher League (PTL), and other programs.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Grace Lutheran CDC admits students without regard to race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at Grace Lutheran CDC.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT

Grace Lutheran Congregation operates a Child Development Center and Christian school for its members and others who are interested in an education where spiritual and academic qualities are emphasized. All students will be expected to submit to our total course of study and discipline. Admission may be denied due to space/class size limitations and the ability of Grace Lutheran CDC to meet the needs of a child. While Grace Lutheran CDC provides a high quality pre-school education for our students, it does not have full-time special education classes or employ special education teachers.

CLASS SIZE

CDC Level	**Ratio**
6 weeks to 18 months	5 to 1
18 months to 2 years	7 to 1
Preschool	11 to 1

The CDC Director may have to temporarily move students between same age classrooms to maintain student ratios due to staff illness.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application forms for enrollment in Grace Lutheran CDC may be found on the school website. When applying for admission to Grace Lutheran, the parent(s) must complete an enrollment form and provide a certified birth certificate and a current Alabama Certificate of Immunization for every child enrolled. Students must meet the age requirements set by the state of Alabama. An Exemption Affidavit must also be signed and notarized each year.

Enrollment acceptances are for one year only; therefore, re-enrollment is required each year.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

CDC children must be at least 6 weeks old before starting.

FEE COLLECTION

Tuition and fees are collected through FACTS. These funds are used to pay for curriculum, classroom materials, salaries, technology devices and licenses, etc.

If a payment is not made, the administration of Grace Lutheran School is allowed to impose any or all of the following actions until the amount due is paid or a payment plan is arranged with the principal and business office: removing a student from class; forwarding information to an outside collection agency.

A family experiencing financial difficulty should notify the principal to develop a plan to avoid defaulting on tuition payments.

DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS

CDC Full Day	7:00 am to 5:30 pm
CDC ½ Day	7:00 am to 12:00 pm

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER OPERATION

The CDC is open year-round from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Scheduled closings due to holidays or teacher in-services can be found on the CDC School Year Calendar and the school website. (www.gls-hsv.org) Formal class time begins at 8:00 am and ends at 11:45 am. Morning pick-up time for half-day programs is between 11:45 am and 12:00 pm.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Pupils may bring their own lunches or participate in the school's hot lunch program which runs from August – May of each year. Grace Lutheran's hot lunch program offers healthy choice items planned and implemented by our certified Lunch Manager. Hot lunches must be pre-ordered on RenWeb by the Sunday prior to the week served and are debited from a family's pre-paid food account the day of serving. A negative hot lunch balance is not permitted. Families with a negative hot lunch balance will not be permitted to order hot lunch or ala carte items.

Students who are not ordering hot lunch are expected to bring a healthy lunch with them to school. CDC students attending when the kitchen is closed (school half-days or school not in session) will need to bring a lunch.

CDC SNACKS/BIRTHDAYS

The CDC will provide a morning snack and an afternoon snack each day. Please send a non-spill cup labeled with your child's name for snack time. Water bottles will be sent home daily and washed after each snack time. We love celebrating your child's birthday. We have found that cookies, rather than cake or cupcakes are best for this special occasion. Parents may also send in a special drink.

PEANUT/NUT FREE POLICY

Grace Lutheran Church, School, and CDC do not claim to be completely peanut/nut free due to community use of the facilities, however, no food products made with peanuts/nuts will be served by the school to our students in our lunch program, after-school care snacks, or sold in the school store. This includes items such as peanut butter, trail mixes, or candies made with nuts. Nuts or peanut oil will not be used in food preparation by the cafeteria staff. CDC

classrooms will not permit allergens specific to that class to be brought in due to eating inside the classroom. Parents will be notified if a student in their child's class has an allergy or food sensitivity. Please make sure that birthday or classroom treats brought in are safe for these individuals.

We currently have students enrolled with nut allergies, as well as other allergies. The GLS peanut/nut policy is designed to help provide a safer environment for students and staff diagnosed with life threatening peanut/nut allergies. Although all staff are trained in recognizing the symptoms of anaphylactic shock and in the use of EpiPens, our goal is to not have to put children at risk to use these measures. Together, we can provide a safe environment for all.

STUDENT DRESS GENERAL GUIDELINES

All clothing worn should be neat, clean, and fit the child. Please dress your child in clothing appropriate to the weather and for playing. Shoes should be closed-toed with a back strap for playing on the playground and gym. Always have an extra outfit in your child's classroom or their backpack.

PUBLICITY RELEASE

Students participate in a variety of activities throughout the year. From time to time, Grace may take photographs or videos of school events for use in Grace publications, presentations, or web pages. Images or recordings will only be used with a parent's written permission.

PARENT CONDUCT

Parents are asked to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the Christian values of Grace Lutheran at all school events; treat each other respectfully; avoid foul language; dress appropriately; and be supportive of the school, staff, and each other.

CDC - PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Grace Lutheran CDC views its role in childcare as a partnership between the families and teachers. Parental support, encouragement, and cooperation assist the teachers in caring for and educating the children. Parents are expected to act in a manner that reflects the Christian values of Grace Lutheran in words and deeds.

UPDATING CHANGES OF INFORMATION

In case of emergency, it is very important that the school has your most current address, email, and phone numbers. Please notify the CDC office in writing or update your family's profile in RenWeb when there is a change.

TALKING/MEETING WITH THE TEACHER(S)

If a parent needs to speak with his/her child's teacher, parents are requested to send a note or email to the teacher or call the CDC office. The teacher will then contact the parent to discuss concerns or to set up a time to meet. Parents are strongly encouraged to not try to "catch" the teacher in the hallway, at lunchtime, in the classroom, or at dropoff/pickup. During the school day, the teacher's primary responsibility is to the children. This type of unplanned meeting does not result in quality communication, proper supervision of the children, or attention to the learning process.

SIGNING IN AND/OR OUT OF SCHOOL

Students in CDC must be signed in and out at the child's classroom.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UP

Students are not allowed to leave school premises with anyone except their parents, relatives, or individuals authorized in RenWeb. Anything different from this procedure must be in writing from the parent and given to the CDC office. In the event of a facility emergency, students will only be released to parents/guardians or individuals listed as Authorized Pick-Up List on RenWeb. No exceptions will be made.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

CDC Newsletter "Little Crusaders": Each month the CDC will send out a newsletter with monthly highlights, announcements, and upcoming event information.

Teacher Communications: Infant teachers provide parents with a daily Infant Report that details feeding, diapering, naps, and other notes for the parents. CDC teachers (T1-P2) provide a weekly newsletter/memo with curriculum, and upcoming activities.

RENWEB (FACTS)

Grace Lutheran School subscribes to "RenWeb", an education information system for parents and teachers. RenWeb is used in the CDC to manage family information and as a communication channel via email and text messages. A link to RenWeb can be found on the school website. Contact the school office for more details or for assistance in using it.

ATTENDANCE, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

ATTENDANCE OVERVIEW

When a child is ill, parents should contact the CDC office or classroom teacher to inform them of the absence. When the child returns to school, parents should provide a written statement explaining the reason for the absence or provide a note/excuse from the doctor.

CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION

All enrolled students must have a current Alabama Certificate of Immunization on file. The Certificate of Immunization, also known as the "Blue Card," is available from the family doctor or the Madison County Health Department. Proof of immunity to varicella (chicken pox) is required for all students in second grade or younger. Proof of immunity is evidenced either by history of vaccination, history of chickenpox disease, or an appropriate laboratory test. An immunization form must be submitted and updated as needed.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

A student who has been treated for a communicable disease or condition (lice, chickenpox, measles, etc.) will not be allowed to return to school without the written permission of the family physician. The doctor's note must further state that the child's condition is no longer contagious. In the event that a communicable/ contagious condition has been identified at school, parents of the other students will be notified. In all situations, the child with the contagious condition will not be identified.

GENERAL ILLNESS PREVENTION

With symptoms of contagious illness, a bad cold, diarrhea, vomiting, or any health condition which will negatively impact the child, he/she should remain at home until he/she has been symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Please notify the CDC office when your child will be absent for the day. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified to come and pick up their child.

FEVER

A student who has a fever of 100.4 degrees or more will be sent home from school. The student should not return to school until the fever has dropped and stayed at normal level for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. When the child returns to school, the parent should send a note indicating that the child was ill and has been fever-free for at least 24 hours.

FIRST AID

First aid is provided for minor injuries that occur at school. Parents shall be notified immediately if any serious or potentially serious injury occurs. An injury report will be signed at student pick up. The CDC Director may call parents right away to inform them of an injury.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

When a student receives an injury to the head or neck, the student will be checked for signs of a concussion and a parent/guardian will be notified of the injury. If a student is showing signs or symptoms of a concussion, the student will be removed from active play until a physician clears the student to return.

MEDICATIONS

Parents/Guardians may provide the CDC Director or teacher with non-prescription or prescription medication/ drugs, including an inhaler for asthma or epi-pen for allergic reaction. However, in order for the school to administer ANY medication, sunscreen, rash cream, etc. to a child, the parent or guardian must complete the Medicine Authorization Form when providing this medication. Medications will be administered by the CDC Director or classroom teacher according to doctor's or parent's written directions, and following established school procedures.

CRISIS PLAN

Grace Lutheran Ministries has developed an Emergency Operations Procedure Manual, aka Crisis Plan, to be used in the event of an emergency. This plan is reviewed annually.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

In accordance with the State of Alabama, Grace Lutheran School and CDC conducts monthly emergency drills. These drills include two (2) lockdown drills, two (2) shelter/tornado drills, fire drills, and other safety protocols.

BUILDING SECURITY

Doors into the buildings and classroom are locked during the school day. To maintain a secure campus, we ask that you do not open the door for other people when entering or exiting the building.

STUDENT SUPERVISION

During a PTL meeting, athletic event/practice, or any other meeting held during after school hours, parents must supervise their children. Children should remain in the building or activity area during the event rather than wandering around or playing on the playground. When students are on campus, during school hours or after school, they are expected to observe school rules.

NAP TIME

All children in CDC who attend in the afternoon (except infants) have a scheduled nap time after lunch. Cots are supplied for each child. Parents may send with their child a blanket and pillow, or nap mat for napping. Bedding must be taken home at the end of the week to be washed. Please send the bedding to school with your child the following week.

PLAYGROUND RULES

For the safety of all the students, the following guidelines have been imposed:

- Children are allowed to slide in only the downward direction on the slides.
- Children are not allowed to play chase on the equipment.
- Only one person at a time is allowed on a swing.
- Children are not allowed to jump from a swing.
- Children should not 'roughhouse' with each other.
- Children will be supervised by a teacher or adult.

Students are expected to:

- Be courteous to others
- Use good sportsmanship
- Use appropriate language
- Keep their hands and feet to themselves
- Refrain from unnecessary roughness

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Alabama law mandates that teachers, Extended Care personnel, counselors, and administrators report suspected cases of abuse or neglect of students in their care. Personnel on staff at Grace Lutheran School and CDC will abide by this law. Any teacher or employee of Grace Lutheran School or CDC who has knowledge of or reason to suspect abuse or neglect will report the suspected abuse situation to the proper authority. The administrators (principal or director) will be responsible for conferences, parent contact, or any other action taken in an abuse or neglect case.

TORNADO WATCHES AND WARNINGS

When there are "tornado watches," the school administration will notify the staff. The office staff will monitor weather service information. If there is a "tornado warning," the staff and students will follow established emergency shelter procedures, where students and staff will evacuate to protected areas in the centers of the buildings. When the official "tornado warning" is lifted for our area, the students and staff will be allowed to re-enter their regular classrooms. Parents are urged to leave their children at school during these watches and warnings. If a parent feels it is necessary to check-out a student during inclement weather, he or she must sign out the student. During a Tornado Shelter Protocol, the office staff will be unavailable since they are also required to seek safe shelter.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When schools in the Huntsville City system do not open because of ice and/or snow, Grace Lutheran School and CDC will evaluate the weather conditions to determine whether the facility will be closed. Often, there will be circumstances where Grace may not follow the Huntsville City Schools decision. Parents will be notified of the school's closing or remaining open through Parent Alert texts, emails, website update, social media posting, and announcements on local radio and television stations.

If inclement weather conditions force the CDC to close when it is in session, children will only be released to parents or an adult authorized in RenWeb as an emergency pick-up. Parents will be notified via text and email that school is closing. There is no need to call the school or the teacher. For the safety of the children and staff, children will need to be picked up as soon as possible. Please contact the CDC office if there is an issue.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES

- All traffic should proceed slowly at all times.

- Follow the established traffic flow and direction of faculty.
- Drop-off and pick-up students in the designated locations.
- Students will not be allowed to walk across the parking lot unescorted.
- Be aware of other students and families.

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES (CDC)

You must sign your child in and out each day using the attendance sheets in your child's classroom. If you have more than one child attending, please put his/her name on a separate line on the attendance sheet. Likewise, if you have children attending in different classrooms, sign their name on the attendance sheet in each child's classroom.

Children attending the morning session must be picked up by 12:00 p.m, no later. Our center closes at 5:30 pm for our full day students, no later. Please be mindful of the closing times to prevent late pickups!!

You may use the circular driveway directly in front of the entrance door for drop off and pick up only. Otherwise, please park in the designated parking spaces in our parking lot. Please be aware of the mailbox at the end of the circular driveway. Do not park in front of this area.

The entrance door is locked at all times and requires a door fob to enter. The door fob is programmed to work during CDC hours of operation only. Parents will be provided 1 door fob from the school office. Additional fobs can be purchased for $10. The door fob is to only be used by authorized persons on the list for pick-up and drop-off of a child. Please do not share fob with others. If lost, please contact the CDC office immediately so that it can be deactivated. Lost, stolen, or damaged fobs will need to be replaced at the parent's expense.

CARE OF PROPERTY

STORAGE OF STUDENT BELONGINGS

Each classroom has designated areas for student supplies, backpacks, coats/jackets, and lunchboxes. Please place your child's belongings only in their designated location.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Children should not bring valuable items or money to school. Electronic devices such tablets and gaming systems should not be brought to school unless special permission has been given by the teacher and at your own risk. The CDC is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.

SCHOOL CAMPUS

Students and their families are expected to do their part in keeping our school neat and clean and to respect the property of others. Any damage to personal or school property or to the facility because of a student's or family's actions will be paid for or repaired by the student's family.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES AND NEEDS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Parents, guardians, and family members are encouraged to volunteer at Grace Lutheran CDC and School. Many opportunities are available such as helping in the library or with after school clubs, coaching, doing office tasks, serving in the lunchroom, helping teachers with special class projects, working on Work Days, heading up or serving on committees, serving as room parents, or serving in the PTL, just to name a few. All parents are strongly encouraged to become involved.

PTL – PARENT-TEACHER LEAGUE

ALL Parents of Grace Lutheran School and CDC students are automatically members of the Parent-Teacher League (PTL). This organization supports our school in a multitude of ways such as supplying volunteers for events, fundraising, helping in various roles within the school (example: library, lunchroom, classroom parties, concessions). PTL provides an avenue for parents to meet each other, as well as gives people opportunities to serve and take on leadership roles.

PTL OBJECTIVES:

- To promote a close relationship between home and school by acquainting parents and friends with the work of the school and CDC and encouraging their participation and support
- To help develop a viable, cooperative working relationship between parents and teachers
- To lend assistance to the teachers in the performance of their duties
- To propose ways and means of aiding the school and CDC in the development of projects
- To sponsor various school fellowship, educational, and fundraising events to benefit students and teachers of Grace Lutheran School and CDC

ENDOWMENT FUND

An endowment fund helps our organization build a financial foundation by seeking contributions from various means. Grace Lutheran's Endowment Fund asks contributors to remember Grace Lutheran in wills or by sharing a portion of their life insurance. Endowment funds also come from charitable gift annuities, dividend interest, a portion of real estate sales, securities & bonds, and/or a simple cash donation. Our GLS Endowment Fund is established, invested and secured to protect the principal monies, while the interest is used to benefit the school.

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL READINESS

Students will be assessed formally and informally throughout the year. These assessments will be subjective, based on teacher observation and evaluation tools to see if students are meeting developmental and learning milestones. Since young children are not always able to read and write, their progress will be evaluated based on what can be expressed by word and action. If children need more time to be developmentally ready, they may be retained to have the time to reach the readiness level needed to succeed at the next grade level.

RETENTION PROCEDURES

When considering retention, Grace Lutheran CDC will use all available information, which includes teacher/staff observation, classroom assessments, other measures of developmental readiness, and any special diagnostic testing available.

In retaining or promoting a child, the school and CDC will consider not only the child's academic achievement and needs but also the child's age, social growth, and emotional maturity. The age of the child may be one of the factors involved when discussing retention or promotion.

In all instances of retention/academic probation, the child's parents will have been kept informed throughout the year of the child's lack of progress. Communication will begin as early in the year as possible.

Every effort will be made to receive parental agreement prior to retaining a child; however, the final decision of retention is the responsibility of the CDC and School Administration.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Grace Lutheran School and CDC has a small staff of classroom teachers. As a result, certain services are limited. For children who may have learning difficulties, the staff at Grace Lutheran will work with the parents and local public school systems, as appropriate. If teachers suspect that a student has learning needs or struggles, they will contact the CDC director and parent.

If special needs are diagnosed, the parents and staff will meet to determine if Grace can provide the support the child needs. We will work as much as we can with all students, but we cannot meet all needs of all children. If Grace cannot meet the needs, the parents will be strongly advised to seek another school where appropriate services can be provided. It would be unfair to give a false sense of hope if a child's needs are beyond the resources of our school and staff.

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