



# **Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024**

**2713 Flagler Avenue  
Key West, FL 33040  
(305) 296-8262**

# **GRACE LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

Grace Lutheran School (GLS) is a member of the Florida-Georgia District of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. GLS was established in 1951 and exists as a specialized ministry of Grace Lutheran Church. The Unique purpose of GLS is to provide an excellent educational program in a Christ-centered environment where children may grow spiritually as they develop their God given talents and skills.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of GLS is to share God's Word according to Scripture and increase each child's knowledge of God as the Creator of all things with the certainty of His personal love for everyone through His redemptive gift of His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

## **Administration and Faculty**

GLS is owned and operated by Grace Lutheran Church. The Voters' Assembly of GLC is the final authority of control of GLS. The Voters' Assembly delegates responsibility for the operation of GLS to the Board of Education to carry out the purpose of our school.

The Voters' Assembly also employs a school Principal/Director who is responsible for administering the approved policies and required regulations of our school. The school Principal/Director makes recommendations for changes in policy, curriculum and facilities based on professional and personal knowledge and input provided by the faculty.

The School Principal/Director is the primary contact person for the facility, parents, and public in all areas of school operation.

## **Objectives**

1. Guide children to develop a deeper understanding of Jesus as their best friend, Lord and Savior and encourage them to desire and establish a trusting and loving relationship with Him.
2. Establish a positive bond between parents, child, and teacher for the exchange of information beneficial for the success and well-being of the child, parent, and teacher.
3. Encourage children to further develop their social skills and practice wholesome interaction with peers.
4. Assist children in development of a positive attitude and self-esteem.
5. Provide interesting and stimulating learning experiences to increase the skill, talents, abilities and knowledge of each child and promote understanding that learning is a natural, exciting, and continuous process.
6. Guide children to the mastery of academic excellence to enable their meaningful productivity in the church and society.
7. Assist children to begin to understand their responsibility to family, classmates, neighbors, and all of God's creation.

8. Provide children opportunities to begin development of independent thinking.

**Consistent with Christian principles, Grace Lutheran School does not discriminate in regard to religion, sex, or national origin in our admission policies.**

### **Entrance Requirements – Preschool 3 & 4 year olds**

Children entering our Early Learning Center (ELC) 3 year old program must be three years old. Children entering our VPK program must be four years of age on or before September 1 of their anticipated entrance year.

All children entering our ELC program (3 years and VPK) must be fully toilet trained and able to completely manage all personal needs when utilizing the restroom. If at any time a child exhibits excessive difficulty in the proper use of the restroom, the parents will be notified and requested to confer with their child's teacher to exchange information and plan together a solution to the problem. If the problem is not resolved, the parents will be requested to remove their child from our program. The use of pull-ups (or similar types of underwear) is prohibited.

### **Entrance Requirements – Kindergarten - 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

Children entering our Kindergarten must be five years old on or before September 1 of the anticipated entrance year. This same rule applies each grade/year thereafter. Special situations concerning transfers from other states that have a different policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All new applicants are dependent upon review and interview by the prospective teachers and administration, consideration of available school records, and/or a screening of academic achievement.

There may be circumstances where GLS does not have the adequate resources to meet applicants with special needs. Each applicant's admission will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

### **Required Forms and Documents**

The following forms and documents must be read, completed and presented in our church/school office at the time of each child's registration:

1. Registration Form for Grace Lutheran School
2. Original Florida Certification of Immunization Form (DH 680) OR Religious Exemption form (DH 681)
3. Original State of Florida School Entry Health Exam Form completed by physician (DH 3040)
4. Copies of certificates of Birth and Social Security Card or Passport
5. Influenza Virus form (Pre - K Only)
6. Grace Lutheran School Discipline Policy
7. Contract of Commitment
8. Publicity Release
9. Distracted Adult Form (Pre-K Only)

10. Permission for Food-related Activities & Special Occasion food consumption
11. Parent Attestation of Daily Child Screening

## **Orientation**

The first few weeks of school may prove to be a difficult time of adjustment for parents and their child. Feelings of apprehension and anxiety may be lessened if your child attends “Meet-the-Teacher-Day” with his/her parents. Visiting with the teacher and viewing the classroom together is exciting and an important step in the formation of a beneficial partnership for your child, family, and teacher.

We understand that some children separate from parents more readily than others; however, all children appear to need their own time to adapt to new surroundings and experiences. It is for this reason we request parents not to linger during the first days of school to allow your child and his/her classmates their personal time for adapting. We invite your phone calls for your time of adaptation and reassurance during this period of transition.

## **Preschool 3 year olds and VPK 4 year olds Arrival/Departure**

Classroom doors will open at 7:45 a.m. for morning drop off. School begins at 8:00 a.m. Timely arrival is important and beneficial to your child and others. Our staff carefully schedules organized activities and instruction to build one upon another to provide the best academic experience for each child. Late arrivals are disruptive to classmates and teachers. Late arrivals miss the continuity of learning opportunities and the special comradeship that develops as children and teacher(s) team to learn and socialize throughout the entire day. The gates will be closed at 8:15 a.m. and any student arriving after will need to report to the office with the parent for a tardy slip.

Children enrolled in our half day preschool (VPK 4 year olds) program are dismissed at 11:00 a.m. Children enrolled in our full-day preschool program (3 year olds) and our VPK Wrap program are dismissed at 2:45 p.m. Please be safe and exit your vehicle to escort your child to the entrance of his/her respective classroom during arrival and pick up your child from their classroom for departure. Ensure all adults picking up your child are aware of this procedure and that they must present a valid identification to all our staff when substituting for you. Your authorization for other adults to pick-up your child must be documented on your child’s registration form. Any changes to this need to be done in the office.

It is the parents’ responsibility to ensure their child is picked up promptly at the scheduled dismissal time. Those children not picked up from their classroom by their dismissal will be placed in our after school daycare program and the parent account charged a minimum of \$25.00.

## **Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle Arrival/Departure**

School begins at 8:00 a.m. Timely arrival is important and beneficial to your child and others. Our staff carefully schedules organized activities and instruction to build one upon another to provide the best academic experience for each child. Late arrivals are disruptive to classmates and teachers. Late arrivals miss the continuity of learning opportunities and the special comradeship that develops as children and teacher(s) team to learn and socialize throughout the entire day.

Students in our K-8<sup>th</sup> grade classes will be considered tardy after 8:15 am. The gates will be closed at 8:15 a.m. and any student arriving after will need to report to the office with the parent for a tardy slip. Students are dismissed between 2:45 and 3:00 p.m. Ensure all adults picking up your child are aware they must present valid identification to our staff when substituting for you and your authorization is documented on your child's registration form.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child is picked up promptly at the scheduled dismissal time. Those children not picked up from their classrooms by 3:00 will be placed in our after school daycare program and the parent account charged a minimum of \$25.00.

### **Attendance Policies – Kindergarten/Elementary/Middle**

Similar to state law, all kindergarten and elementary children are held to a regular and punctual attendance. Parents are asked to bring their child to school on time to help him/her to begin the development of punctuality and promptness to last a lifetime. As a courtesy and safety measure, parents of all students are required to call the school office by 9:00 a.m. when their child is absent from school. Immediately following the absence and upon return to school, the child must present the school with an excuse that includes the following: date, full name and grade of student, date of absence, reason for absence, signature of parent/guardian/doctor. Various state funded scholarships require students to attend regularly. If a child has numerous absences, the scholarship will not pay the tuition of the student. In this case, the parent will be responsible to pay their child's tuition.

Excessive absences and repeated tardiness, without good cause, is unacceptable. Consistent tardiness and absences without good cause will require a meeting with parent, child, teacher and school Principal/Director to determine academic eligibility. A student who is absent from school more than 20 days in a school year may not be promoted to the next grade unless the principal grants an exception and determines a way in which the student can make up the work or receive additional instruction.

### **Elementary/Middle School Grading Scale**

100 – 90      A – Outstanding

89 – 80      B – Above Average

79 – 70	C – Average
69 – 60	D – Below Average
59 – 0	F – Failing

Parent /Teacher conferences are held for an exchange of ideas between teacher and parents regarding the methods and procedures to aid the progress and growth of the child. Parents are urged to consult with their child’s teacher whenever they are concerned regarding the progress of their child. They are also encouraged to meet with the teacher to extend concerns, praise or offer suggestions. The child’s teacher may also send home supplementary reports or request additional Parent/Teacher conferences, if necessary.

Progress reports are issued as necessary. Report cards are issued every quarter.

### **Tuition and Daycare Payment**

Parents of children enrolled at Grace Lutheran School are provided with a tuition contract at the time of registration. Parents of our school are subject to the policies and fees as stated in the tuition contract. Parents with children registered in our afterschool care program are subject to the policies and fees as stated in their tuition contract.

1. Tuition and aftercare is due and payable by the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each month. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month a late fee of \$35.00 will be charged. Any returned payments will be assessed a \$35.00 administration fee in addition to a late charge of \$35.00.
2. If your account has not been paid in full by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, your child may not attend school until the account has been brought current. After the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month the enrollment may be forfeited.
3. Tuition is due regardless of the number of days the child has been in attendance. Tuition is assessed until a written notification (30 days prior) of termination of enrollment is received. A disciplinary suspension or expulsion will not affect the parent’s obligation of payment of tuition.
4. The report card and record transcripts will not be issued to any child whose parents’ accounts are delinquent until all accounts are paid in full.
5. Registration fees are non-refundable.
6. Parents experiencing a temporary financial problem are encouraged to meet with the school Principal/Director to formulate a payment plan.

### **Electronic Devices, Toys, Jewelry and Cell phones**

School is a child’s full-time “job” and requires a “full-time” commitment to learning. It is requested that toys and objects for play from home remain at home. On show-and-tell days, or other times at the discretion of the teacher, the child may be permitted to bring a “toy” to school. Toys brought in on all other days will be removed by the child’s teacher.

Any jewelry that a student wears to school is not the responsibility of the teacher/school.

Electronic Devices such as cell phones, musical listening devices, games, computers, etc. are strictly prohibited for use during school hours unless the teacher assigns its use for educational purposes. If your child brings an electronic device out during the school day, it will be collected by the teacher during the day. If there is an emergency, or a parent needs to contact his/her child, all communication should go through the school office.

### **After School Day Care (ASDC)**

Our After-School-Day-Care Program is available for children of GLS to provide quality care by trained and certified adults. Please refer to our tuition and fee's schedule for rates.

ASDC begins at 3:00 p.m. and closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. Late fee of \$15.00 will be assessed if a child remains in after care from 5:30-5:35 plus \$1.00 per minute thereafter and will be charged to parents' accounts if their child remains in our care from 5:35 – 5:45 p.m. If the child continues in our care from 5:46 – 6:00 p.m., an additional \$50.00 fee will be assessed. If a child remains in our ASDC beyond 6:00 p.m., the proper authorities will be notified and the child may be handed over for protective custody and additional fees will apply. Chronically late pick-up may result in dismissal from this program.

On designated early dismissal days and those days when school is not in session, **SPECIAL DAY CARE** may be offered. Please refer to your school calendar or special day care sign up forms to ensure the availability of this service. Children must be registered and all fees paid in advance for day care services. All day care service is limited to a specific number of children and availability of space/staff as mandated by State of Florida Statutes.

### **Weather-related School Closings**

In the event of a hurricane or severe tropical storm warning for our area, GLS will follow the plan of the Monroe County School District regarding the closing of school. Please be alert for our communication with you.

### **Health Policies**

When your child exhibits symptoms of illness during the day, he/she will be isolated and you will be called to come as quickly as possible. **Your child must be picked up within one hour.** If you are unable to come, please call a person on your child's authorized pick-up list to come in your place. Please call the school and advise us as to the person coming to pick up your child. It is at our discretion on whether your child is too ill to remain at school. If we feel that your child is still exhibiting symptoms, a doctor's note does not guarantee re-admittance.

Below is a list of common illnesses among children and our policies regarding these symptoms.

<b>Fever</b>	If the child has a fever for any reason he/she cannot attend school. The child should be fever free for 24 hours <b>without medication</b> before returning to school. If the child develops a fever of 100 or higher during the school day, parents will be contacted and the child will need to be picked up immediately. If the child is sent home with fever during the school day they cannot attend school the following day.
<b>Pinkeye</b>	The child should be on medication for 48 hours and be clearly responding to the treatment before returning to school.
<b>Strep Throat</b>	The child should return only after 36 hours on medication. The child must be showing signs of improvement and be willing to eat and drink.
<b>Diarrhea and/or vomiting</b>	The child should not come to school until he/she is deemed non-contagious by a physician or has had no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.
<b>Chicken Pox</b>	The child should not return to school until all pox are scabbed over.
<b>Runny noses/coughs</b>	If your child's runny nose will require frequent attention from the teacher or if the child is irritable or running a fever or if mucus is any color other than clear he/she may not be in school.
<b>Head Lice</b>	Monroe County has a "No Nit" policy. If a child is identified as having head lice, he or she shall be excluded from school and shall not be permitted to return to school until his or her head is free from lice and nits. Nits are the white eggs that lice lay which adhere to strands of hair. Parents are responsible to provide the appropriate treatment to eliminate head lice and nits before the child returns to school and provide proof of treatment (receipt) upon return. A child should miss no more than one or two days of school because of head lice. Excessive absences due to head lice shall be addressed according to the provisions of the compulsory school attendance law.
<b>COVID 19</b>	The child should not come to school until he/she has been cleared by the physician and followed the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for reentry. If your child has been exposed to someone with COVID 19, then the parent should notify the school office to determine the reentry plan based on CDC and Monroe County Health Department guidelines.

By keeping children home when they are ill, the spread of illness among our school community is greatly reduced. This means fewer illnesses for children, teachers, parents, and other family members, fewer visits to the doctor, and fewer days lost from work for parents.

When an enrolled child or employee of Grace Lutheran School has a reportable communicable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We take care to notify families via email and/or printed letter about exposure so children can receive preventative treatments

## Medication

It is the general policy of the school not to dispense medicine except in life-threatening situations. In these circumstances the following guidelines must be met:

### Prescription Drugs:



1. Before any prescription medicine is dispensed, a written and signed authorization that includes date, name of child, name of medicine, prescription number if any, dosage, current date, and time of day medication is given must be provided.
2. Medicine must be in its original container labeled with the child's name.
3. Parents must provide and label any necessary equipment for the dispensing of the medicine.
4. Medications will not be sent to school stored in lunch boxes, back packs, etc. All medications must be received by the office staff and will be kept in a locked cabinet

### **Non-prescription medications**

1. Parents/guardians are required to administer over-the-counter medication to the child.

### **Snacks and Lunches**

GLS does not provide snacks or lunches. Children will be required to bring snacks and lunches from home or as requested by the classroom teacher. Please provide an additional snack if your child is in our Aftercare Program. If special lunch days are offered, your teacher will notify you.

### **Dress code**

#### **PreK 3, VPK, Elementary and Middle School**

Grace Lutheran School has adopted a policy of dressing for success. We believe school is where students prepare for success in, and the challenges of, the real world. Dress is a part of the balance of success and challenge.

Please use the following as a guideline.

#### **Shirts**

- Collared uniform shirts/t-shirts/athletic shirts with GLS logo (purchased from Ramona's).
- Other GLS t-shirts that may be available for purchase.
- You may have any solid colored sweater or jacket embroidered with GLS logo

#### **Slacks, Capris, Shorts, Skorts, Skirts, Scooters and Jumpers**

- Solid or patterned color like khaki, navy and black
- Worn at the natural waistline
- Skirts/skorts/jumpers/shorts worn at an appropriate length (not shorter than the end of the thumb when the arms are straight down by the sides)
- Athletic, spandex shorts or tights must be worn under skirts and jumpers, but may not be worn alone.

#### **Shoes**

- Shoes with “heels” or platform shoes may not be worn. Sandals should have a strap around back for safety. Closed toe shoes are preferred. Tennis shoes are required on Physical Education days.

### **Additional notes**

- Caps, hats and sunglasses will not be worn inside the school building.

### **Chapel and Church**

Chapel is an integral part of faith life education at Grace Lutheran School. Chapel services are held each Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. at Grace Lutheran Church. Parents and visitors have a standing invitation to attend anytime.

GLC encourages all children and parents to attend the divine services of their church. We invite families without a church home to worship with us at Grace Lutheran Church each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

### **Volunteers**

GLS values the close interaction between parents, children, and staff. We encourage all parents to become involved in our school. Volunteers promote success and strengthen bonds between our school, children, and families. Volunteers will be required to adhere to our child safety policy as described in the Grace Lutheran Church and School Personnel Manual.

### **Parent Teacher League (PTL)**

PTL serves as an auxiliary of GLS and is coordinated with the school by our school Principal/Director. PTL members are parents, guardians, and GLS staff. The purpose of PTL is to promote and support Christian education by convening meetings of information and interest to parents. PTL may undertake activities that help provide funds for school equipment and improvements. It may assist the school with its plans and participation during special events, activities, and projects.

PTL promotes understanding and communication among parents and our school. PTL and our school Principal/Director plan the years' program and meetings. General meetings may feature speakers, provide committee reports, receive input, plan fundraisers, or other appropriate business. Committees are appointed as needed. Decisions of PTL may be subject to the review and action of the Board of Directors of Grace Lutheran Church and School.

Any parent desiring to raise a concern or issue relating to a teacher, assistant teacher, or classroom is advised to first speak with the child's teacher and subsequently with the

school Principal/Director if the concern is not resolved. PTL is not a forum to hear and manage complaints.

### **Parent Volunteer Hours**

Each parent signed a “Contract of Commitment” when applying for/enrolling their child at Grace Lutheran School. It is our primary objective to offer a high quality, Christ centered program in a nurturing setting and this requires the active involvement of parents. Parents are expected to give a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer service per school year to benefit their child and the school. Such service may include (but is not limited to) classroom time, guest reader, field trips, grounds maintenance, technology support, PTL participation, and school parties/events.

### **Communications**

The administration, faculty, and parents of GLS will work together to partner in the education of our students. Teachers share with parents the privilege and obligation of educating their children. Therefore, every effort should be made by parents/guardians to keep informed of the communication outlets. School news and announcements are posted in the newsletter and emailed to parents. If you do not seem to be receiving regular communications from school, please check with the office or classroom teacher so the accuracy of your contact information can be checked.

For elementary and middle grades students, a planner will be given to each student. The teacher will ensure that the planners are going home nightly. The planner has a built-in pocket folder that will be used to send home notices and any work. Parents are required to check the planner and sign/initial it nightly. Parents should also ensure the planner is returned to the student’s backpack and returned to school daily. If a student loses his/her planner, families will be charged a \$10 replacement fee for a new planner.

### **Parental Cooperation**

The school views the education of a student as a partnership between the parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials, whether it be at school events, on or off school campus, or on social media or other public forums. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from the school if desired, the school has the right to administratively withdraw a student if it determines at its discretion that the parent or student partnership with the school is irretrievably broken or the parent/family’s behavior is being detrimental to the educational mission of the school.

### **Security**

The administration, faculty, and parents of GLS will work together to ensure our school remains a safe and secure place. Teachers and assistant teachers are responsible for the care of Grace Lutheran School students and are required to have those children in their physical presence and eye sight at all times. The pedestrian gates on Staples Avenue and

10<sup>th</sup> Street and breezeway gates will remain closed at all times. No trespassing/loitering signs are posted throughout our campus. All personnel are trained to immediately report to the school Principal/Director unknown or suspicious acting individuals or unusual occurrences. Parents are requested to also follow this procedure.

Gates will be opened at 7:45 a.m. and closed at 8:15 a.m. Gates will be reopened at 2:45 p.m. Any parents entering the campus between 8:15 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. must enter through the main office entrance and sign in through the main office (even parents picking up students early or for an appointment). Parents must securely close the gate behind them. Parents that come in to volunteer should also sign in through the front office and sign out in the front office upon leaving the campus.

## **Discipline Policy**

The purpose of this information is to acquaint parents with the disciplinary policy of Grace Lutheran School. Please read the following statements carefully.

Physically harmful, destructive and disruptive behavior and inappropriate language will not be tolerated in our school. Parents of a child exhibiting any of these behaviors must meet to confer with their child's teacher to formulate an end to the unacceptable behavior. The school Principal/Director has the authority, however, to immediately suspend any child whose behavior is unhealthy and/or harmful to his/her self, classmates, school staff, facility and/or equipment.

Verbal abuse or corporal punishment is not administered or tolerated on the campus of Grace Lutheran School.

The following statements are taken from the State of Florida Department of Children and Families Child Day Care Standards, which GLS has adopted as policy:

### **402.305-12 CHILD DISCIPLINE –**

- A. Minimum standards for child discipline practices shall ensure age-appropriate, constructive disciplinary practices are used for children in care.
1. Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening.
  2. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or toileting.
  3. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Additional policy statements of Grace Lutheran School:

- A. Any parent on the premises shall abide by the GLS discipline policy with respect to their own child and others.
- B. Any child that persists in creating a problem is removed from the problem area. This usually involves spending a small amount of time playing quietly by him or herself while observing his or her friends sharing and having fun.
- C. If actions such as extreme verbal and physical disruption of the class, habitual biting, aggression towards self, other students, or staff occur; the student is subject to removal from the classroom and possible suspension or expulsion. In the case of any of these

problems, the parents of the child will be requested to attend a conference with the Teacher and/or the Principal/Director.

Children need to be guided in their actions towards others so that they will develop knowledge of communicating in a social setting. It is our hope that the children enrolled in our school will feel secure and loved during the time they spend with us. Our Christian employees strive to create an atmosphere of love, fellowship, and sharing that can have a lasting effect on children during these early years of training. We encourage you to come and discuss with us any questions you may have concerning your child.

Our staff is expected to maintain a respectful and professional relationship with parents at all times. We also expect the parents/guardians of our students to treat staff, children and other parents in the same manner. Mistreatment of any person on school grounds or mistreatment of staff/school on social media can be cause for dismissal from our program.

**Notice of Receipt of the Student/Parent Handbook 2023/2024**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have received the Student/Parent Handbook for the  
GLS 2023/2024 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade Level

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date