

INTRODUCTORY NEWSLETTER GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.



SCHOOL THEME GRIT



Grace: Ephesians 2:8–10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Responsibility: Mark 12:29–31 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Integrity: Psalm 25:21 May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, Lord, is in You.

Trust: The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise Him.

Grit: 1 Timothy 4:12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

SCIENCE FAIR

The Science Fair at GCA includes all students. Teachers present the Scientific Method and introduce all needed elements for the projects. Please consider any special interests of your child as a topic is chosen. The elementary children may need your help with experimentation at home, keeping their materials organized and putting their work on the board. The November 4 Science Fair is an evening open house event when parents and students can observe the work of other students and grade levels and learn from the general enthusiasm for Science.



PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year—once in September and again in April. These are 30-minute appointments when parents meet privately with their child's core academic teachers. It is an opportunity to discuss student progress with the teachers who work directly with their child each day.

To allow time for these meetings, students will be dismissed at 1:00 PM each day during the week of September 15–19.

GCA is proud to have 95% or higher parent participation in elementary conferences, reflecting the strong partnership between home and school.



TEACHER'S DAY ASSEMBLY

Teacher's Day

Our first school assembly of the year will be held in honor of Teacher's Day. We are proud of the dedication, care, and daily support shown by our faculty.

Students are encouraged to show their appreciation by writing cards or notes of thanks. However, please note that expensive gifts or cash gifts cannot be accepted. Parents who wish to be involved in Teacher's Day preparations may contact the school office for more information.



FALL FESTIVAL

Acts of Kindness! – Fall Festival Fun

Our elementary students look forward to the annual Fall Festival—a joyful event filled with costumes, games, and prizes.

Part of the fun is that students earn their place in the celebration by showing acts of mercy and kindness in the classroom and around the school. Positive behavior and character development are important values at GCA, and we work to encourage, recognize, and reward those efforts.

Ask your child how they are doing as they work toward the goal of attending the Fall Festival—and get ready for the costumes and fun ahead!



SWIMMING LESSONS

Swimming lessons are conducted quarterly for all students at Grace Christian Academy.

- Elementary students participate in a one-hour lesson.
- Middle school and high school students also have a one-hour lesson, held at the local junior high school.

Dress Code:

- Girls must wear a one-piece swimsuit.
- All students are required to wear a GCA swim cap for easy identification and safety.

The first swimming lesson of the school year will take place in September.



FIELD TRIPS

At Grace Christian Academy, we believe that field trips are an extension of classroom learning and a valuable opportunity for students to bond with one another. While weather can occasionally affect our plans, we do our best to adjust and make the most of every opportunity.

It is our goal to hold two field trips each quarter, however, this has been a challenge for us. We will continue to strive toward this objective. Further details will be shared directly by your child's homeroom teacher.



VACCINATIONS

GCA complies with laws and regulations in Taiwan in regard to standard vaccinations. We are grateful to the local government for including GCA in their plans to offer vaccinations at school. The flu vaccines are scheduled to be administered in October.

Parents will be informed via email and a note granting permission will be sent home. This is not mandatory; parents may prefer to visit their doctor or clinic.



COVID 19 RESPONSES AT GCA

GCA has lifted COVID-19 restrictions. As of August 2024, there are no remaining requirements in place. However, students and families who choose to continue wearing masks at school or in school vans are welcome to do so and will be supported in that choice.

We will continue to notify you if any symptoms of illness are observed at school. Please ensure you have childcare options in place for days when your child may need to rest and recover at home.

Handwashing:

Frequent handwashing remains an important part of personal hygiene. We hope the good habits developed in recent years will continue.



EMERGENCY CONTACT

For notification in extreme situations, please join our Emergency Line group. This is a one-way communication channel that will be used only in the event of an urgent situation where we must contact you immediately—such as a required evacuation.

The fire department, located near our school, conducts regular safety inspections. We also conduct routine fire, earthquake, and air raid drills to ensure that students and staff are well-prepared.

This emergency contact system is reserved for serious situations in which the safety of our students or the surrounding neighborhood is at risk.



FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCIES



Nangang City Hospital

Please be advised that GCA conducts regular fire drills in accordance with local fire department regulations and government safety standards. Students are well-trained to exit the building quickly and assemble in the skating section of the nearest public park. Our drill times have been consistently efficient and well-organized.

In the event of a real emergency, you will be able to contact your child via their personal cell phone or through the school office. For individual emergencies, the school will contact parents directly by phone. In the case of a medical emergency, we will bring your child to the emergency room at Nangang City Hospital. While we will attempt to contact you as quickly as possible, the child's safety and the urgency of the situation will guide our response.

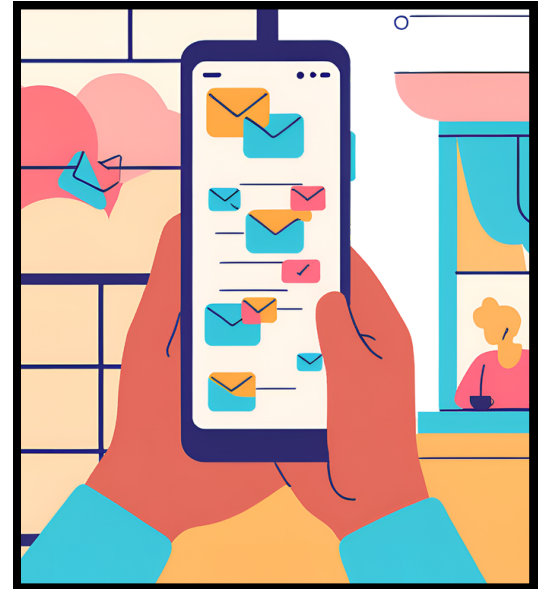
If you would like more detailed information, we would be happy to address your questions at a future PTA meeting. Please ensure that the school office has your most up-to-date phone numbers, as we rely on these in case of emergencies.

PARENT EMAIL ADDRESSES

Since GCA's first year in 1998, we have not shared parents' email addresses with teachers. Teachers were responsible for obtaining contact information directly from the parents of their students. Unfortunately, this sometimes led to missed messages and important updates.

Beginning in September 2024, we began sharing parent email contact information with teachers to ensure better communication. If you do not wish for your email address to be shared as indicated on the visitor's form, please contact the school office so that your information can be removed from the teacher distribution lists.

Please also remember to notify the office of any changes to your contact information or student pick-up plans at the end of the school day.



TUTORS

It is important for students to arrive at school each morning alert and ready to learn. For this reason, we do not encourage students to take on excessive after-school tutoring, as it can lead to fatigue and reduced classroom engagement.

However, if you are considering tutoring support for your child, we do offer the following services to assist our students.

Student Tutoring

Some of our high school students have received administrative approval to provide tutoring services at a rate of NT\$500 per hour.

All scheduling and payments for these sessions must be arranged through the school office.

Teacher Tutoring

A limited number of GCA teachers are available to offer after-school tutoring from 4:00–5:00 PM. All arrangements and payments for teacher tutoring must be made through the school office and not directly with the teachers. The fee for this service is NT\$1000 per hour.

SCHOOL CLOSURE NOTICES

When the government cancels school in Nangang, GCA will also be closed.

If GCA decides to close independently (even when government schools remain open), parents will be contacted by phone.

Please ensure the school office has your most up-to-date phone number so we can reach you promptly in such cases.

If you have questions outside of school hours, please contact Pastor John Chow at 0988-397-003.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION (P.E.)

The students have a great time during their P.E. classes, enjoying fun activities while staying active with friends. To help them participate comfortably and safely, please prepare a small backpack exclusively for P.E. use. This should include:

- A small towel
- A clean shirt
- A water bottle (students will not be allowed to join P.E. without one)

Students will be practicing ball-handling skills and other outdoor activities. We know the weather can be warm, but it's healthy and enjoyable for children to be outdoors, working and playing together. You can be confident that our teachers are attentive to each child's safety, health, and physical condition.

Our school building includes many stairs, and students use them daily. Please ensure your child wears appropriate footwear to school. Crocs, slippers, or shoes without support are not allowed, as they are not suitable for climbing stairs.

Throughout the year, we will include activities that promote an active lifestyle and encourage students to enjoy God's creation. When weather conditions do not allow outdoor play, P.E. classes will be held in the B1 indoor area.



TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Mrs. Bonnie Chow	gcateach@ms57.hinet.net	Principal
Ms. Sophia Hsiang	hsiangs@gcatapei.com	Student Support Services Counselor
Mr. DJ Chow	djchow@gcatapei.com	Middle School Coordinator
Dr. J Yang	yangj@gcatapei.com	Student Dean
Mrs. Amy Lee	office@gcatapei.com	Admissions Officer
Ms. Amy Chiu	Gca.office@msa.hinet.net	School Secretary
Mr. Tim Tarpy	tarpyt@gcatapei.com	IT and Bible
Ms. Estela Valle	vallee@gcatapei.com	Grade 1
Mr. Skyler Spaur	spaursg@gcatapei.com	Grade 2
Mr. Alvin Mitcham	mitchama@gcatapei.com	Grade 3
Mrs. Holly Lin	linh@gcatapei.com	Language Arts, Grade 4 and 5
Ms. Andrea Valle	vallea@gcatapei.com	Sciences, Grade 4 and 5
Mr. Kevin Liu	liuk@gcatapei.com	Elementary Chinese
Mr. Oliver Ongat	ongato@gcatapei.com	Athletic Director, Bible, Guitar, Ukulele
Mr. Austin Derrick	derricka@gcatapei.com	P.E., Health
Mrs. Esther Lin	chene@gcatapei.com	Music and Bible

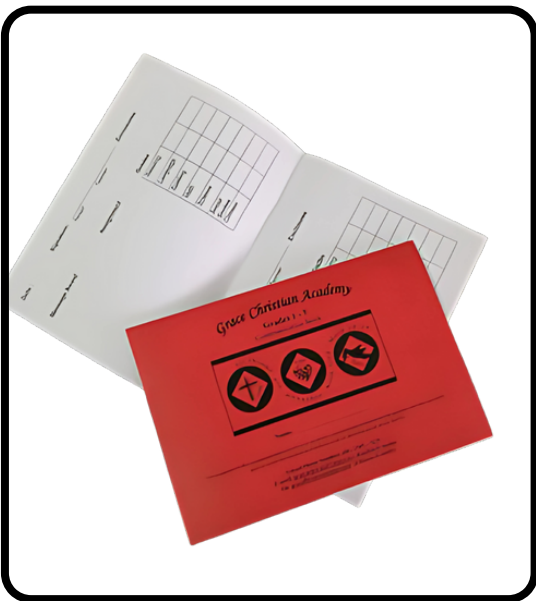
STAYING IN TOUCH

We value open communication and want to stay connected with you!

Elementary students use a daily communication book for notes between home and school. If you write in a language other than English, we'll do our best to find older students to help with translation.

Above are the email addresses of teachers who work with elementary students. Please keep in mind that, due to the demands of their daily schedules, teachers may not be able to check email immediately.

For urgent messages or time-sensitive matters, please call the school office directly at (02) 2785-7233.



LOST AND FOUND

We encourage students to take responsibility for their personal belongings and to keep track of their items throughout the school day. Despite our best efforts, items do sometimes go missing.

If your child has lost something:

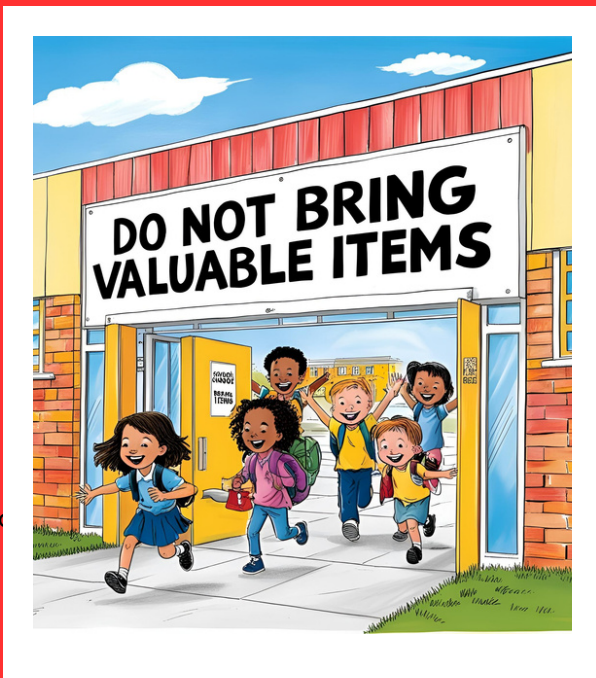
- The library is the first place to check, as it houses the main Lost and Found collection.
- If the item isn't there, our staff will assist in searching.
- We may organize a group search with students and teachers, check the nearby park, or notify the broader school community to help locate missing items.
- Our school secretaries are also a helpful resource in this process.

When items are found, they are taken to either the library or the school office. If something is missing, please contact the office for assistance.

Items such as clothing, sports shoes, coats, and jackets are frequently left in the B1 area. These will be cleared and donated at the end of each quarter.

- ➡ Please remind your child to check B1 and take home any belongings before the break.
- ➡ Items will not be available in January once cleared.

VALUABLE ITEMS



Unfortunately, there are rare cases where items go missing due to theft, regardless of a student's background or intentions.

To prevent this:

- Please do not send valuables to school.
- If your child must bring something of value, such as a phone or special item, please ask the school office to store it securely for the day.

Thank you for helping us maintain a respectful and responsible learning environment!

DRESS CODE

While elementary students at GCA do not have a formal dress code, we ask families to follow these important guidelines:

1. Field Trips & Excursions: Students should wear the red GCA polo shirt on all outside excursions.
2. Footwear: Proper footwear is required for safety. Shoes must provide sufficient support and grip for navigating stairs. ❌ Flip-flops, Crocs, and sports sandals are not permitted.
3. Performance Attire: For school performances or special events, students should wear black and white attire:
 - Girls: Long black skirt and white blouse
 - Boys: Black dress pants and white collared dress shirt
4. Preparing for Middle School: Grade 5 girls should begin preparing for additional dress code guidelines that will apply at the middle school level.



CELL PHONE POLICY

GCA will continue the policy of having homeroom teachers collect all cell phones and smart watches each morning. These devices will be kept securely and returned at the end of the school day.

If you need to contact your child during school hours, please call the school office at (02) 2785-7233.



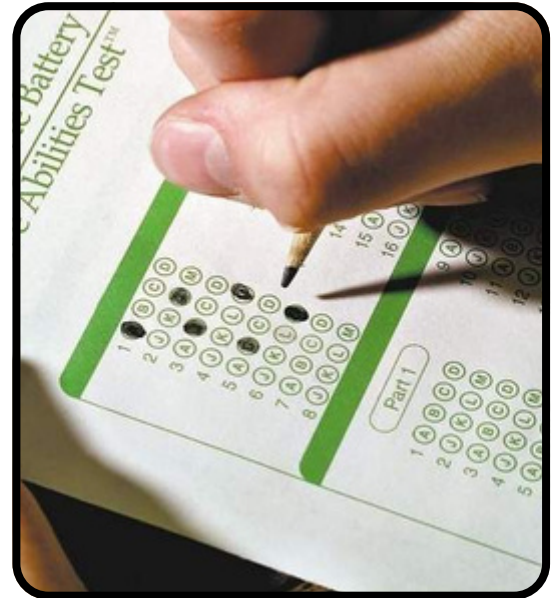
IOWA TESTS (APRIL)

GCA administers the Iowa Assessments each spring. These standardized tests serve two key purposes:

- To track individual student progress
- To evaluate overall school performance

The data collected helps keep both teachers and parents informed about academic growth and areas for improvement. We are proud of our students and their continued efforts to do their best on these assessments.

Parents will be notified once test results are available. Please note that no make-up dates are scheduled for students who are absent during the testing period.



READ THEORY



Teachers at GCA use the ReadTheory website to help students strengthen reading comprehension and build vocabulary skills.

Parents are encouraged to link their email addresses to their child's account for regular updates and easy access to progress reports.

www.readtheory.org

AI POLICY

At Grace Christian Academy, we recognize the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and society. However, we are not adopting AI tools as a regular part of our curriculum, nor do we view their use in student assignments as an acceptable norm.

Our primary focus remains on helping students develop strong study habits, critical thinking, and writing skills. While AI can, in theory, offer writing support, the reality is that many students use these tools to bypass the learning process—seeking shortcuts that improve scores without improving understanding.

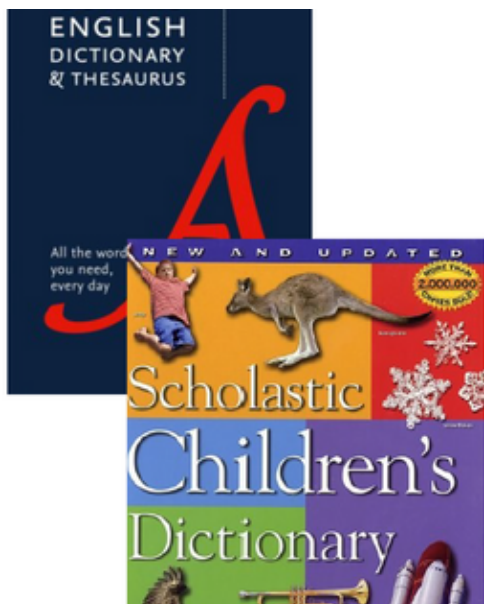
To uphold academic integrity and ensure genuine skill development:

- Some assignments will be completed only in the classroom and not taken home.
- Any work found to be generated by AI will receive a score of zero.
- If a student submits AI-generated work, any opportunity to redo the assignment must be completed in person.

Our goal is to guide students toward becoming thoughtful, independent learners. We appreciate your support as we maintain high standards for academic honesty and personal growth.



DICTIONARIES



Dictionaries are an essential tool for building vocabulary and developing strong reading and writing skills. Having access to a dictionary both at school and at home helps reinforce language learning across all grade levels.

Middle school and high school students are required to purchase a specific paperback dictionary for school use. These have been pre-selected and are available for purchase through the school office (sourced from Caves Bookstore).

Children's dictionaries are available in elementary classrooms. We also encourage families to consider having a children's dictionary at home. While online dictionaries can be helpful, we've found that students sometimes encounter confusing or age-inappropriate definitions. If you choose to use an online resource at home, please make sure it is designed specifically for children.

MYANMAR MISSION SUPPORT

The ministry of the Charity Orphanage in Yangon, Myanmar is very close to our hearts. Grace Christian Academy has supported this work for over 20 years, and we continue to be inspired by the orphanage's commitment to self-sustainability and the wise use of all funds raised through GCA.

The orphanage faced tremendous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing political instability in Myanmar. Sadly, Pastor Kou, who began and led the ministry faithfully for many years, lost his battle with COVID. During the pandemic, all of the children and their caretakers contracted the virus—but thankfully, they survived.

In the current climate, securing and affording basic daily supplies remains a constant struggle. Ms. Esther Kou, (the daughter of Pastor Kuo) now married and living in southern Taiwan, continues to raise support and personally oversees the secure transfer of funds into the country.

If parents or students would like to contribute to this ministry, please contact the school office. Your support is deeply appreciated and continues to make a meaningful difference.



CALENDAR EVENTS

September 15–19 Parent Conferences

September 12 midterm

September 29 Teachers Day Holiday

October 6 Moon Festival Holiday

October 10 Double 10 Holiday

October 17–23 Quarterly Exams

October 17–23 National Holiday

November 4 Science Fair 7pm attendance required

November 20 midterm, second quarter

November 27–28 Thanksgiving Vacation

December 2 MS/HS Christmas Program attendance required 7:00pm

December 3 Elementary Christmas Program; Faculty Workshop, no MS/HS classes

December 4 Faculty workshop, no Elementary classes

December 15–19 Quarterly Exams

December 19 1:00 pm dismissal for all students

December 20–Jan. 4 Christmas Vacation

January 5 Third Quarter

February 13–25 Chinese New Year Vacation

STUDENT HANDBOOK

For more detailed information on school policies, procedures, dress guidelines, and expectations, please refer to the GCA Student Handbook.

 The handbook is available online at the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DYYPYtf04yjcy3pF5tjnhga36VRtRa5v/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=118142721474333468601&rtpof=true&sd=true>

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All students are expected to uphold the values and behavioral standards of Grace Christian Academy. Our Code of Conduct outlines expectations regarding respect, responsibility, academic integrity, and personal conduct.

 You can access the Code of Conduct at the following link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1W8CbK-vFVCOvSsUrrlXy0Uf_UdFhCa6v/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=118142721474333468601&rtpof=true&sd=true