

INTRODUCTORY NEWSLETTER GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



1 TIMOTHY 4:12 NIV

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 where 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. Unfortunately, the high school Science Fair does not experience that same level of participation from parents.



TEACHER'S DAY ASSEMBLY

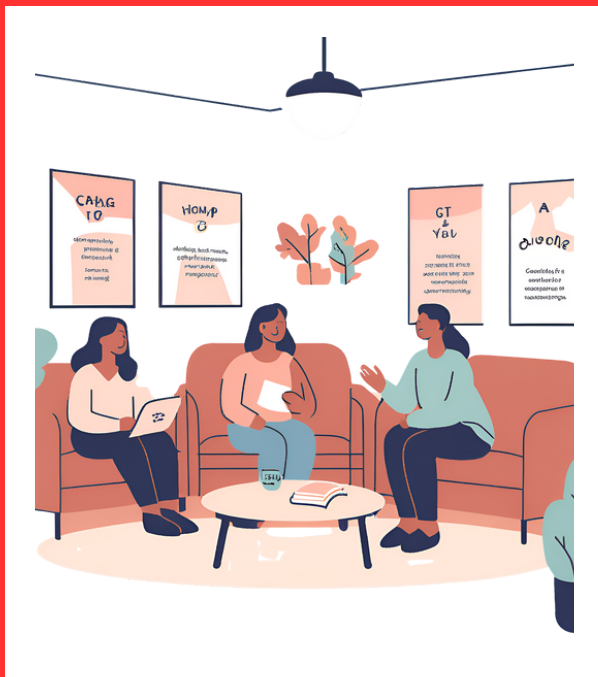
Teacher's Day

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.



STUDENT SERVICES AND COUNSELING



Grace Christian Academy provides student support services to help meet the academic, emotional, and spiritual needs of our students. Through regular check-ins, classroom observations, and individual conversations, our Student Support Services Counselor works with teachers and families to guide students through challenges and encourage personal growth.

While we strive to support each student with care and compassion, our services are not a replacement for professional mental health counseling. If a student exhibits needs beyond the scope of school support, parents will be encouraged to seek assistance from licensed professionals outside the school.

We aim to build strong partnerships with families and create a safe, Christ-centered environment where every student is seen, heard, and encouraged.

QUARTERLY EXAMS

Middle school and high school students at Grace Christian Academy will take exams at the end of each academic quarter. These assessments may be cumulative, or focus on the content and skills covered during the most recent unit.

The purpose of quarterly exams is to help students build study habits, reinforce key concepts, and prepare for the expectations of high school assessments. Students are encouraged to review class notes, quizzes, and assignments in preparation



ABSENCES AND EXTREME TARDINESS



If your child rides a school van and won't be attending school, please call the driver directly. If you do not have the driver's number, contact Pastor Chow (0988-397-003) outside school hours. To report an illness, call the school at 2785-7233. For planned absences, please notify the office in advance so teachers can be informed.

Students are tardy if not in their homeroom before the 7:45 AM bell. Please allow time for elevator delays. GCA does not distinguish between excused and unexcused tardies—all late arrivals are treated the same. For example, arriving at 10:30 after a 9:00 medical appointment still counts as tardy.

Parents are notified by email after four tardies per quarter, and again for each subsequent tardy. Students may not exceed eight tardies in a quarter. On the ninth tardy (or beyond), the student will be sent home, regardless of the reason. If we cannot reach a parent, the student will still be dismissed. They may not return until the next day and may not attend after-school programs on that day.

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 are sometimes schedule for a 45 minute lesson, which may be held after 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, field trips are considered an extension of classroom learning and a meaningful opportunity for students to build relationships with their peers. While weather conditions may occasionally affect scheduling, we strive to adapt and ensure each experience is worthwhile.

Please note that some trips may require additional out-of-pocket expenses from families. When such trips are arranged, parents have an option of not attending the trip, but instead, attending classes.

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 elect 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.

It is noted that sleeping in class is considered to be a symptom of illness or a lack of essential sleep. As such, students who sleep in class will be sent home to get that crucial bedrest.



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.

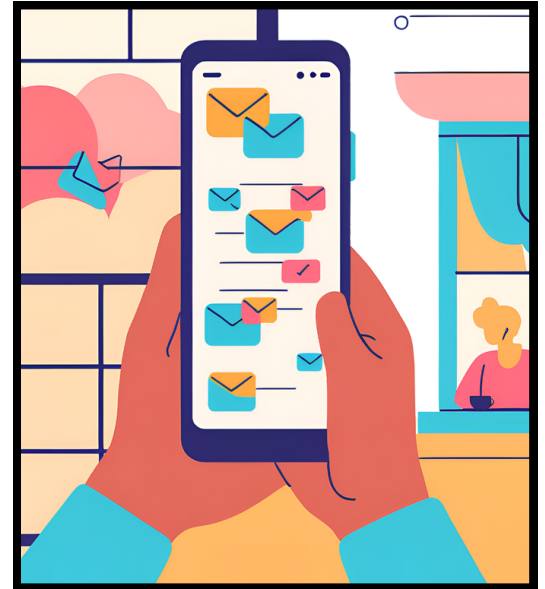
If you would like more detailed information, we would be happy to address your questions at a future PTA meeting. Please ensure that the school office has your most up-to-date phone numbers, as we rely on these in case of emergencies.

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.)

High school students have P.E. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 8:00 AM. All students are required to wear the official GCA P.E. uniform, which consists of a gray GCA t-shirt and red GCA shorts, along with proper athletic shoes. If a student does not bring or wear the required uniform on a P.E. day, they will be required to purchase a new uniform immediately and report to class without delay.

To avoid missing class time or incurring additional costs, students are strongly encouraged to own two full sets of the P.E. uniform—keeping one clean set in their locker and rotating the other for home washing. Students should also bring a water bottle, a small towel, and a set of clean clothes to wear after P.E.

Students must change out of their P.E. clothes after class and return to regular uniform attire. Shower facilities are available, though optional. If the weather prevents outdoor activities, P.E. will be held in the B1 level of the school.

The red GCA polo is required for all field trips and outdoor school events. If students are not wearing the proper attire when required, they will be asked to purchase a new item before participating in the activity.



TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATION CONTACT INFORMATION

Mrs. Bonnie Chow	gcateach@ms57.hinet.net	Principal
Dr. Joseph Yang	yangj@gcatapei.com	Student Dean
Mr. David J. Chow	djchow@gcatapei.com	Middle School Coordinator
Ms. Sophia Hsiang	hsiangs@gcatapei.com	Student Support Services Counselor
Ms. Amy Lee	office@gcatapei.com	Admissions Officer
Mrs. Trudie Pan	pant@gcatapei.com	Science
Mr. Jordan Flanagan	flanaganj@gcatapei.com	American and British Literature
Mr. Tim Tarpy	tarpyt@gcatapei.com	IT and Bible
Mr. Ken Te	tek@gcatapei.com	Literature 3 and 4
Mr. Tyler Polonio	poloniot@gcatapei.com	Literature 2, 3, and 4
Mr. David Chow	chowd@gcatapei.com	Math
Mr. Twapon Bol	bolt@gcatapei.com	Science
Mrs. Bonnie Bol	bolb@gcatapei.com	HS Bible
Mr. Oliver Ongat	ongato@gcatapei.com	Athletic Director, Bible
Mr. Austin Derrick	derricka@gcatapei.com	P.E., Health
Mrs. E Lin	chene@gcatapei.com	Music and Bible
Mr. FLJ Manatad	manatadflj@gcatapei.com	Math
Mrs. Manatad	manatadflj@gcatapei.com	Math
Mr. Michal Hsu	hsum@gcatapei.com	Social Studies and History
Ms. L Wang	wangl@gcatapei.com	Chinese
Mr. Martinez	martinezi@gcatapei.com	Spanish
Mr. Sean Okimoto	okimotos@gcatapei.com	Social Studies and Science

TAILORED UNIFORM PANTS AND SHORTS



All high school students are required to wear a standard polo each day, along with tailored uniform pants or shorts. These items are custom-tailored and cannot be purchased by general size. The tailor visits GCA twice a year to take student measurements at no cost. If a student misses the on-campus fitting, they must visit the tailor near GCA to be measured—this service costs NT\$50.

Students may not attend regular classes unless they are in the proper uniform. Please allow for a four-week manufacturing period after placing an order. We strongly encourage families to plan ahead, especially before the start of a new term or after a growth spurt.

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:

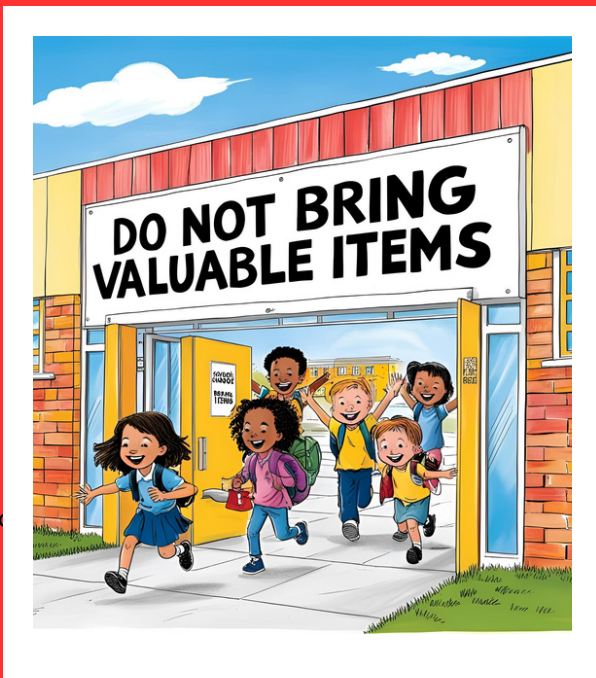
- The library is the first place to check, as it houses the main Lost and Found collection.
- If the item isn't there, our staff will assist in searching.
- We may organize a group search with students and teachers, check the nearby junior high, or notify the broader school community to help locate missing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

Daily Uniform:

- All students must wear a polo and black GCA uniform pants or shorts.
- Polos can be any color or design but must have a collar, 3 buttons, sleeves, and cover the chest, back, and waist.
- Inappropriate images, messages, or humor (e.g. violence, drugs) are not allowed.
- Buttons should remain fastened to avoid low necklines.

P.E. Uniform:

- The gray GCA t-shirt and red GCA shorts must be worn for all P.E. classes, practices, and sports clubs.
- Students must change out of P.E. clothes after class.
- If not wearing the uniform, a new set will be provided and charged to the family.

Footwear:

- Crocs, flip-flops, and sandals are not allowed due to safety.
- Athletic shoes must be worn for P.E.

Performance Attire:

- Girls: Long black skirt and white blouse
- Boys: Black dress pants and white collared dress shirt
- Black dress shoes are preferred but not required.

Modesty Standards:

- Clothing must fully cover the chest, back, waist, and thighs.
- Shorts must reach the knee.
- Leggings may only be worn under P.E. shorts in cold weather.
- Pants/shorts may not be altered.

Jewelry & Appearance:

- Gang-related clothing or accessories are not allowed.
- Boys may wear transparent studs but not earrings.
- Girls' makeup, hair color, and jewelry are allowed unless they become a classroom distraction.

Infractions:

- Students not in uniform will be sent home to change or provided a replacement at cost.
- Dress code notices will be sent home for violations.
- Repeated violations may lead to suspension.



HIGH SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS

Parents of high school students are welcome to make an appointment to discuss course selections. Likewise, parents are welcome to make an appointment with Dr. Yang to discuss college plans. Course progression is listed here for your reference.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Required: 3-4 years

- US Civics
- World History
- AP Psychology
- US History
- AP Micro/Macro Economics

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Required: 2 years

- Spanish 1
- Spanish
- Spanish 3
- Spanish 4
- French 1
- French 2
- French 3
- French 4
- Chinese 1
- Chinese 2
- Chinese 3
- Chinese 4

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

Required:

- PE required 4 years
- Health class as available
- Bible required 4 years; transfer students are waived for years prior to attending GCA
- Art and Computer classes are required 1 year; students seeking careers in these areas may schedule additional years

ENGLISH

(required: 4 years)

- Literature 2
- Literature 3 or 4
- American Literature
- British Literature

MATH

(required: 3-4 years)

- Basic Math
- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- Algebra 2
- Pre-Calculus and Statistics
- Calculus and AP Calculus

SCIENCE

(required: 3-4 years)

- Environmental Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- AP Biology
- AP Chemistry
- AP Physics

SPEAKING ENGLISH

GCA is a multilingual community, with students representing over 25 countries each year. While most students speak more than one language, it is essential that English remains the only language used at school, both in and out of the classroom. Students are expected to speak English from the moment they arrive on campus until dismissal each day. No translation services are provided during school hours.

Elementary students receive one hour of Mandarin instruction daily. High school students may choose Spanish, French, or Mandarin as a foreign language. There are currently no language classes offered to middle school students. We hope to expand our Mandarin program to include grades 1–12 in the future, but it will not be available this school year.



CELL PHONE POLICY

GCA will continue the policy of having homeroom teachers collect all cell phones, smart watches, and lap tops 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.

FOUL, UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE

Foul language and inappropriate speech have no place in our school community. GCA expects students to speak with respect in both tone and word choice. We ask parents to partner with us in helping students recognize the difference between respectful, real-time communication and the coarse, casual language often found online.

Negative speech, profanity, or hurtful criticism will not be tolerated. Students who use inappropriate language will receive after-school detention.

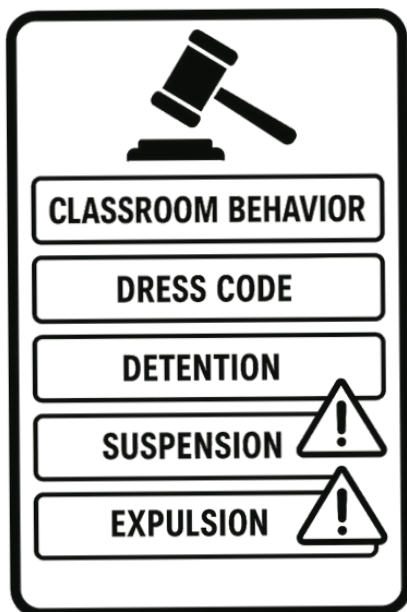


SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

GCA maintains a clear system of discipline that includes classroom behavior management, dress code enforcement, lunch detention, suspension, and expulsion. These procedures are explained to students at the beginning of the year. Here are two example offenses that result in immediate expulsion:

1. Deliberate damage or destruction of school property
2. Bullying, including cyberbullying

While these cases are rare in GCA's 26-year history, they are taken very seriously.



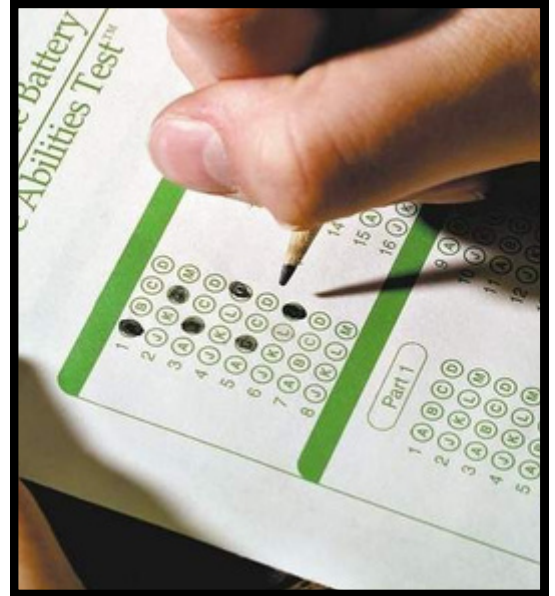
IOWA TESTS (APRIL)

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. When possible, certain Iowa test scores are added to the fourth quarter grade averages.

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



GCA high school students use the ReadTheory website to improve reading comprehension, build vocabulary, and observe organizational strategies. Students may invite their parents to view their progress by adding a parent's email address. All students are required to invite their Literature teacher to monitor their account.

As a summer assignment, students must complete 50 ReadTheory articles before the first day of school. Those who do not finish the requirement will be sent to the computer lab, or home, to complete it before joining classes.

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.

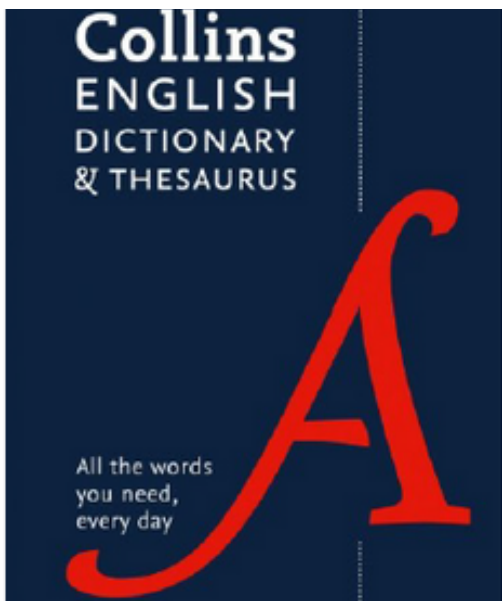
To uphold academic integrity and ensure genuine skill development:

- 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).

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 has 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, 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, Pastor Kou's daughter, 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