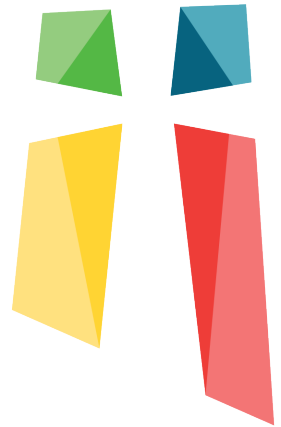


Grace Crossing Academy
Early Education Center



2023/2024

Parent

Handbook

Policies and Procedures

Updated July 2023

Grace Crossing Academy
Parent Handbook

Contents

SECTION

	Welcome
	Mission Statement
	Non-Discrimination Policy
1	Hours of Operation
2	Release of Children
3	Illness and Exclusion Policy
4	Pandemic Policies/Procedures
5	Medication
6	Procedures for Handling Emergencies
7	Parent Notifications
8	Discipline and Guidance Policy
9	Suspension and Exclusion of Children
10	Safe Sleep Practices for Infants
11	Food Service and Preparation
12	Immunization Requirements
13	Hearing and Vision Screening
14	Enrollment Procedures
15	Water Activities
16	Animals
17	Sunscreen and Bug Repellent
18	Questions or Concerns
19	Parent Participation
20	Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers
21	State Contacts
22	Emergency Preparedness Plan
23	Breastfeeding
24	Child Abuse Reporting
25	Well Checks
26	Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
27	Open Door Policy
28	Gang Free Zone
29	Fire Arms

SECTION

30	Tuition & Fees
31	Drop In Care
32	Enrollment Changes
33	Discounts
34	Extra Fees
35	Before/After School
36	Arrival & Pick Up
37	Confidentiality
38	Parent Code of Conduct
39	Parent Responsibilities
40	Right to Refuse Admission
41	Withdrawal
42	Custody Situations
43	Inclement Weather and Emergency Policies
44	Curriculum
45	Classroom Assignments
46	Child to Staff Ratios
47	Nap Time
48	Clothing / Uniforms
49	Personal Belongings
50	Outdoor Play
51	Birthdays and Celebrations
52	School Safety Policies
53	Cameras
54	Photographs
55	Outside Employment
56	Social Network Websites
57	Biting
58	Potty Training
59	Cell Phones
60	Promotion of Physical Activity

Welcome to Grace Crossing Academy! The decision to entrust your child – your most valued possession – to Grace Crossing Academy is an honor we do not take lightly. By making the decision to educate your child in a Christian environment, you are laying a strong foundation for your child's future; we are honored to be a part of that process. We at Grace Crossing Academy commit to helping your child grow in a well-balanced manner. Our goal for your child is that they are fulfilled and prepared in every way for the challenges that face each of us in everyday life.

Grace Crossing Academy Mission Statement

Grace Crossing Academy's goal is to be the leading Early Education Center in Conroe. Our program gives children ages 6-weeks through Pre-K enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved in a safe, loving, faith-based environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching children's lives. We are committed to providing a Christ-centered environment that creates an educational experience of challenges, provides security, growth, and fulfillment. Our principle goal is to work with the family and church to build a firm foundation for further development through educational excellence and Biblical values. We pray Grace Crossing Academy is a place away from home and family where children can feel a sense of love, security, and self-worth while learning about the love of God and His son Jesus.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

Grace Crossing Academy does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

Required Policies from The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Grace Crossing Academy is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The following policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501.

1. HOURS OF OPERATION

Grace Crossing Academy is open from 6:30 am-6:00 pm, Monday-Friday. The educational hours of operation are 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Grace Crossing Academy follows closely with the Conroe ISD calendar with a few exceptions. We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, the day before Thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Grace Crossing Academy will also have a few Teacher In-Service Days in which the school will be closed.

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Grace Crossing Academy may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule in February.

2. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. However, we request that parents drop off their children by 8:30 am each day so that the child can take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor under the age of 18. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

Drop off and pick up must be done through the front doors of Grace Crossing Academy. It is imperative that parents do not drop off or pick up their children from the playground. Licensing requires that children be signed in and out daily. This is done through the front doors of our facility.

3. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Grace Crossing Academy observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in child care activities, ***including outdoor play***. If a child is too ill to go outside, they must stay at home on this day. Per child care licensing 746.3601(1) (See #59)
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. Tympanic (ear) temperature of 100.0 or higher, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours. (This time is 48 hours during pandemic situations.)
5. Contagious examples: Pink Eye, Rashes, Hand Foot & Mouth, etc.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of **severe** illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Grace Crossing Academy **may** call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is **symptom-free without medication** for 24-hours (48 hours during pandemic situations). Grace Crossing Academy has the right to ask for a doctor's statement when a child must leave due to illness.

When a statement is provided by the child's health care professional, the document must state that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.

4. PANDEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

We place special emphasis at Grace Crossing Academy on our employees as individuals and recognize that no manual can cover all situations. The following policies are placed into action during pandemic situations.

Arrival Procedures

Upon arrival at Grace Crossing Academy, the parents or the adult dropping the child off will enter the first entrance to the circle drive. They are asked to pull up to the first available numbered cone closest to the covered sidewalk. A health check will be completed on the child/children. If a temperature above normal or signs of a possible illness, the child could be excluded from care. Children will be dropped off at the front door and escorted to class by a member of management or designated staff.

Illness Exclusion

Children will not be admitted into care if they have the following symptoms during time of a pandemic:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees

When children are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for **48 hours**.

Disclosure Statements

As a parent, I understand that outside of care, in order to control my child's exposure in the community, I will comply with any and all state, county or local stay-at-home orders.

Parent Handbook

I will immediately notify Grace Crossing Academy management if I become aware of any person with whom my child had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to

self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness. Further, I will immediately notify Grace Crossing Academy management

if anyone from my place of employment is presumed positive or tests positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness whether or not I have had direct contact with that person.

Out of the Country Travel

Parent will notify Grace Crossing Academy management anytime they have traveled outside of the United States. Grace Crossing Academy has a right to exclude the child from care if they or a

member of the household has traveled to a country that has been identified by the CDC as an “at risk” country.

Employee Illness Exclusion

Employees will not be allowed to work if they have the following symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees

When employees are ill, they must not return to the facility until they are symptom free without medication for **48 hours**.

Disinfecting/Cleaning Protocols

Cleaning and disinfecting are done constantly in the classrooms. The staff at Grace Crossing Academy has increased the number of times they clean and disinfect during the day. The janitorial service hired by Grace Crossing Academy has also received certification in COVID Disinfecting. Every Wednesday the entire school will go through a disinfecting fogging after hours. Grace Crossing Academy strives to be a clean and healthy environment for children and staff.

Material Sharing

Children will be given individual boxes of materials and are discouraged from sharing materials when possible.

Mixing Classrooms/Combining Children

Employees are not to combine classrooms or mix groups without approval from center management. Combining classrooms and mixing groups is strongly discouraged unless absolutely necessary.

Personal Protection Equipment

Employees may use Personal Protection Equipment such as masks, gloves and faces shields as needed, as long as this is done in a way that does not harm or scare the children.

Employee Disclosure Statements

As an employee of Grace Crossing Academy, I understand that outside of the center, in order to control my exposure in the community, I will comply with any and all state, county or local stay-at-home orders.

I will immediately notify Grace Crossing Academy management if I become aware of any person with whom I have had contact exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness.

Exposure Policy

If an employee or child has direct contact with someone that exhibits any of the symptoms listed above, is advised to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19 or any other infectious illness, this exposure will mandate a 5-day quarantine period. The employee or child may return to the center after the 5-day quarantine if no symptoms present during those days. They may return before the end of the 5-day quarantine if they are tested and the results are confirmed as negative.

5. MEDICATION

Please inform your health care professional that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, Grace Crossing Academy is designed for **well** children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- **Prescription medication can only be accepted if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**
- **All medications will be kept in the front office in a locked cabinet.** Topical ointments, inhalers, epi pens, and heart medications are kept with the child in their classroom. These must be kept in a location that is secure and out of the reach of children.

Parent Handbook

- All medications will also be administered in the front office. The exception to this is the above medications listed above are kept with the child in their classroom.
- Refrigerated medications will be kept in the Director's office refrigerator.
- Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. All medications (prescription and nonprescription) must remain in the original packaging. A note from the child's health care professional must be provided if manufacturer's recommendations are not listed.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen, Grace Crossing Academy must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication forms and enter instructions into the Daily Medication Log Book, which is located in the front office. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- **Medication will only be given if prescribed three or more times a day.** If your child is prescribed medication once or twice a day, parents must administer this before dropping off and after pick up at home.
- Children under the age of two cannot be given over the counter medications without a doctor's note.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. These are located in the front office.

6. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance, the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

7. PARENT NOTIFICATIONS

Open Communication with parents is very important to a child's success. Grace Crossing Academy has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Grace Crossing Academy may communicate with parents:

- Through weekly email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/gcakids
- Smart phone notifications through Remind101
- Private Facebook classroom page
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year in the Spring and Fall, and parents are encouraged to attend. Your partnership and understanding of our curriculum and expectations is imperative for the success of your child.

8. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY

Grace Crossing Academy staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Grace Crossing Academy staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues.

9. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN

The safety of all children and employees is important to us. While our goal is to work with children and families, aggressive behavior may place others at risk. Grace Crossing Academy reserves the right to terminate care for aggressive behavior at any time. No reduction or refund of tuition fees will be given in these situations. Aggression and violence toward staff is not tolerated. Suspension or expulsion is a consequence of such actions. Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with Grace Crossing Academy by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

10. SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES FOR INFANTS

Grace Crossing Academy follows the Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as listed in the Child Care Minimum Standards and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib but the infant, including blankets and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited unless instructed by the child's health care professional, in writing. An "Infant Sleep Exception" form must be completed by the health care professional. All cribs at Grace Crossing Academy meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file in the front office and classrooms. Pacifiers are allowed; however, straps that attach to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited.

11. FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION

Grace Crossing Academy provides breakfast bars for all children present at 6:30 am. Children are to bring their own lunches each day. Lunch is served around 11:30 am. Snack times vary from class to class. Snack menus are posted in each classroom. Please advise the center of any allergies that have been diagnosed by medical professionals. If a child requires an alternative meal, milk or substitution, a note from a health care professional may be required. The health care professional's note must include a recommended substitution which will be provided by the parent.

Grace Crossing Academy must be notified of all known food allergies. A Food Allergy Emergency Plan must be completed by the child's health care provider. Children with known food allergies will not be allowed to attend until the Food Allergy Emergency Plan is completed and on file. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Food Allergy Emergency Plan must be posted where food is served and prepared.

The Food Allergy Emergency Plan must include:

- The child's name
- What food the child is allergic to
- Sign of allergic reaction if given the food
- How to treat this reaction
- Alternative food to be given when substituting
- Signature from the child's health care professional

12. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in Grace Crossing Academy. A copy must be in the student's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

From time to time Grace Crossing Academy may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children.

Per federal law, child care programs are prohibited from discriminating against a family's personal belief, including immunizations.

13. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Parents must bring in screening proof from their local health care professional.

14. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon selecting Grace Crossing Academy to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required 3 days before the child is allowed to start our program.** Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Application Forms
- Copies of Parent/Guardian's Driver's Licenses may be requested
- Consent Check List
- Acknowledgement of Policies Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Physician's Statement / Immunization Record
- Tuition Agreement
- ACH Draft Form or Credit Card Authorization Form/Consent
- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)
- Food Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)
- Infant Sleep Exception Form (if applicable)

Parents will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

Parents must notify Grace Crossing Academy in writing of any change in enrollment information, such as telephone numbers, email addresses, home addresses and payment information.

Grace Crossing Academy reserves the right to dismiss a child at any time with or without cause.

15. WATER ACTIVITIES

"Splash Days" are held during summer camp sessions and occasionally throughout the year. This special event involving water play will be limited to the use of sprinklers, slip and slides and individual water dispensing handheld apparatus. State mandated ratios are followed for this special activity. Parents will always be notified in writing before water activities.

16. ANIMALS

From time to time, Grace Crossing Academy may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care Licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any

classroom door when a pet is present, which could also include Petting Zoo and special guests' pets.

17. SUNSCREEN AND BUG REPELLANT

Grace Crossing Academy will apply sunscreen and/or bug repellent as needed. Sunscreen and bug repellent must be provided by the parent, must be in the original container, and must not have expired. A "Sunscreen/Bug Repellent Permission Slip" must be completed by the parent before these items can be applied.

18. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. Please understand that there are times that information cannot be shared with parents about decisions made for the best interest of Grace Crossing Academy.

19. PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage parent involvement, especially with all school events. Before having direct access to children, Grace Crossing Academy will run a criminal background check on all volunteers. Parents must complete a "Volunteer Orientation" before participating in center events on a regular basis.

20. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

Grace Crossing Academy is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Grace Crossing Academy follows the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp

Grace Crossing Academy encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection is posted on our parent communication board or you may view this at:

www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp

Parents may also contact our local child care licensing office at 512-438-4800.

21. STATE CONTACTS

Parents may access the Texas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

Parents may access the Department of Family and Protective Services and Health and Human Services website at www.dfpd.state.tx.us/child_care

22. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Grace Crossing Academy has an Emergency Preparedness Plan that is located in the front office. Parents may request a copy of the full plan. A brief synopsis is listed below. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, Grace Crossing Academy will ask parents to participate accordingly.

In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to the director on duty. In the Director's absence, the Assistant Director on duty assumes the role of Director and then designates another staff member to assume the responsibilities of the Assistant Director. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of their duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as they deems necessary.

Sign in and out sheets from all classrooms are to stay with each caregiver responsible for the group. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the caregiver and director will use the sign in and out sheets along with the emergency binder to contact each parent and verify authorized release of children once reunited. Grace Crossing Academy has two locations. Children will be evacuated to the Atrium in the Grace Crossing Church's main building or the apartments directly north of Grace Crossing Academy.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan covers Tornado/Severe Weather, Communicable Disease Outbreak, Lock Down Procedures, Accident, Illness, Explosion, Chemical Spill, Gas Leak, Bomb Threat, Fire, Off-Site Evacuation and Relocation.

23. BREASTFEEDING

Grace Crossing Academy will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care.

24. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

Grace Crossing Academy staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to **suspect** the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect,

Grace Crossing Academy
Parent Handbook

including sexual abuse. Grace Crossing Academy has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Grace Crossing Academy will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

The staff is prohibited under Texas law to notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are: leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

25. WELL CHECKS

Grace Crossing Academy staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual, they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects. A Grace Crossing Academy staff member may complete an "Incident Report" to document these situations.

26. VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

All Grace Crossing Academy employees are encouraged to receive an annual flu shot.

27. OPEN DOOR POLICY

Grace Crossing Academy has an open-door policy. Parents and legal guardians may visit the center at any time to discuss the care and education of their child with the center director and staff or to observe their child. This visit may be limited to the office area due to other entry restrictions and/or disruptions to the classroom setting. (State Licensing can close a campus during a pandemic. This means only registered children and staff may be inside the facility.)

28. GANG-FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a licensed child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

29. FIRE ARMS

Fire arms are prohibited in an educational facility serving minors. Individuals who have an Open Carry or Concealed Hand Gun License may not bring these fire arms into our facility. Fire arms may be kept in the licensed individuals' personal vehicle while on our premises.

Grace Crossing Academy Policies

30. TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is paid by ACH draft or Credit Card draft. **All accounts are required to be set up on ACH Draft or Credit Card Draft.** Monthly drafts can include tuition, AM/PM Care charges, supply fees and sign in/out fees on the account. (There is an additional 3% charge for credit card use. ACH drafts do not incur addition charges.) **Grace Crossing Academy cannot turn drafts "on and off" instantly.** Declined credit cards and ACH drafts will be charged \$35 fee. If your card information changes you must notify Grace Crossing Academy immediately. Failure to do so could result in a \$35 fee for declined charges. (Grace Crossing Academy does not offer refunds or credits on Inclement Weather Days or other emergency closures.)

Tuition is a yearly amount (school year) that is divided into 10 equal installments. Tuition ***is not*** based on the number of days or weeks school is session that month. Tuition installments will be due on the 1st of the month. Tuition installment drafts will be made monthly. Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner (within 5 days of agreed due date on the 1st) will be charged a \$50 late fee and will result in your child's enrollment suspension until the account is paid in full. It is imperative that families in financial distress communicate with the director in order to create a financial plan that is mutually beneficial. Families with a balance at the end of the school year will not be eligible for reenrollment until the balance is paid. A tuition installment chart is available to determine your specific tuition installment charges.

AM Care is from 6:30 am to 8:00 am. During this time, children will be served cereal bars by 7:30 am. PM Care is from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Snacks will also be provided during this time. Extended Care fees will be charged at the first of the month and must be paid in advance for children who regularly participate. Due to changes in procedures families that need extended care must sign up and pay the monthly fees. For emergency situations the administration can **approve** extended care. The Emergency Drop-In Fee is \$20/hour for AM/PM Care Services. These charges will immediately be drafted daily.

Holiday Care is available during the Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break and Spring Break. We have extended the number of days that the school is actually open and reduced the number of

Grace Crossing Academy
Parent Handbook

actual Holiday Care Days. Holiday Care is non-refundable even when not used. Holiday Care charges are \$75 per day. This fee covers the entire day, open to close (6:30 am to 6:00 pm). This fee must be paid prior to use. Those paying the Holiday Care Package do not pay for any Holiday Care when used but must sign up during times when it is offered. The Fall Holiday Care Package covers Thanksgiving break and Christmas break and is due September 1st. The Spring Holiday Care Package covers Spring Break week. This package is due January 1st. Once Holiday Care Packages are paid they are non-refundable. These packages are designed to replace Full Care that was offered previously.

Grace Crossing Academy makes every effort to keep the tuition cost reasonable and competitive. There may be unforeseen situations or circumstances that may arise during the course of a school term where changes may be necessary. Therefore, Grace Crossing Academy shall have the right to increase its tuition rates during the duration of this contract when deemed necessary by its governing board. Changes to tuition may be made following a 30 day written notice to affected parties.

31. Drop In Care

Drop In Care is only available to students presently enrolled in Grace Crossing Academy. Families must first check with the administration to see if space is available of the requested day for Drop In Care. A \$80 per day fee is charged for Drop In Care. The Drop In Care fee is for school hours and does not include AM/PM Care charges, which are extra. This fee must be paid on the day of use. If using several days of Drop In Care, the total must be paid on the first day of use. **All Drop In Care must be preapproved by the office prior to the day of use.**

32. ENROLLMENT CHANGES

We understand that from time to time families may need to change the status of their child's enrollment. A request for enrollment change must be made in writing or electronically (Change of Enrollment Form). Changes are to take place and be effective on the first of the month. Whenever a change in enrollment takes place, a new Tuition Agreement form must be completed and signed so that a record of the change can be placed in Grace Crossing Academy's files. The Director will correspond with you about how the changes will effect your tuition payments. Grace Crossing Academy will not offer refunds or credits on your account when enrollment is changed in the middle of the month. There will be a Change of Enrollment Fee of \$25 for each change.

33. DISCOUNTS

Families who enroll two or more children will pay full tuition on the oldest child. Each additional child enrolled will be given a 10% discount on tuition. Sibling discounts do not apply to registration fees, supply fees or extended care charges.

34. EXTRA FEES

A non-refundable annual registration fee of \$150 is due at the time of enrollment. Returning families will pay a \$100 registration fee for the first child and \$90 for each additional child. A \$100 curriculum / supply fee is due on September 1st and January 1st. The supply fee is not discounted for additional children enrolled. The registration and supply fees are also not prorated or refundable for the semester.

The registration fees and curriculum/supply fees are non-refundable.

Our program is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm. Grace Crossing Academy is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to care for children during these specified times. If you are late picking up your child (after 6:00 pm), a **\$5 PER MINUTE late penalty** will be charged to your account.

35. BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL CARE

The school day hours are 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Any child arriving before 8:00 am will be charged an addition fee unless they are enrolled in the before school care. AM Care is the before school care, which is 6:30 am to 8:00 am. Any child still at school after 3:00 pm will be charged an addition fee unless they are enrolled in the after school care. PM Care is the after school care that begins at 3:00 pm and lasts until 6:00 pm. Special monthly packages are available for any family that needs before or after school care. The packages are based on the enrollment of the child. For example, a child that is enrolled in the school day for Monday – Friday can only enroll in the Monday – Friday AM / PM Care packages. The before and after care packages are based on the school day enrollment.

AM Care is from 6:30 am to 8:00 am. During this time, children will be served cereal bars by 7:30 am. PM Care is from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Snacks will also be provided during this time. Extended Care fees will be charged at the first of the month and must be paid in advance for children who regularly participate. Due to changes in procedures families that need extended care must sign up and pay the monthly fees. For emergency situations the administration can **approve** extended care. The Emergency Drop-In Fee is \$20/hour for AM/PM Care Services. These charges will immediately be drafted daily.

36. ARRIVAL AND PICK UP TIMES

Children need to be in attendance by 8:30 am each day so that they may benefit from our curriculum, routines, and rituals. Exceptions can be made when children have appointments with health care professionals or related services. Grace Crossing Academy's regular school day ends at 2:30 pm.

Children who arrive after the classroom's designated lunch time should eat before coming to school. Feeding will be confined to the time scheduled for the class. Children cannot be

dropped off in their classrooms during nap time. This causes too much of a disturbance for children napping.

Drop off and pick up must be done through the front doors of Grace Crossing Academy. It is imperative that parents do not drop off or pick up their children from the playground. Licensing requires that children be signed in and out daily. This is done through the front doors of our facility.

37. CONFIDENTIALITY

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from Grace Crossing Academy must remain confidential at all times including, but not limited to

posting confidential information about Grace Crossing Academy, our children, staff and/or families on social media. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.

38. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Grace Crossing Academy prohibits swearing or cursing on our property.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Grace Crossing Academy has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

Grace Crossing Academy must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. Failure to follow discipline and guidance rules will lead to immediate termination of care.

In the event that a parent is dissatisfied with any situation at Grace Crossing Academy, parents are to maintain composure and handle issues professionally with the center Director and/or staff. Conversations that take place in the classroom must be developmentally appropriate for the children who are observing and must not be aggressive in tone. Any behavior that places a child at risk will lead to immediate dismissal from the program.

PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

39. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, children do not need to bring playthings from home. Grace Crossing Academy staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime and for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Tell.

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to the center Director.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder and/or posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child. This can help the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled meal times of breakfast and lunch. Make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals. Meals cannot be saved or rearranged for children who arrive after these times.
- Staying hydrated is very high on our priority list during the day. Please provide a container of water that your child will use throughout the day. This will be sent home daily for cleaning purposes.
- Grace Crossing Academy does not provide lunch for children. Each child will be required to bring their own lunch for the day. It is requested that you do not send sugary items for lunch. A healthy lunch will help to give your child a boost during the day. Classrooms will have a designated lunch period daily.
- Nap mats are needed for nap time. These will be sent home on Friday so that you can launder them over the weekend.
- Uniforms are to be worn by those in the three year old and Pre-K classes. More details on uniforms can be found in section 48 of this handbook.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly. Grace Crossing Academy cannot provide clothing for children that have accidents.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services do not allow smoking, vaping, or the use of any tobacco product on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

40. RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION

Grace Crossing Academy reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
3. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at Grace Crossing Academy if the child were present at the school.
4. Parents failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
5. Parents' failure to complete and submit required documentation in a timely fasion.

41. WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

A Thirty (30) day written or electronic notice (Withdrawal of Enrollment Form) must be given for withdrawing a child from Grace Crossing Academy. If a family fails to give a thirty-day notice, Grace Crossing Academy has a right to draft from the family's bank account when proper withdrawal notice has not been given. Grace Crossing Academy has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason. Partial tuition installments will not be refunded.

42. CUSTODY SITUATIONS

Grace Crossing Academy will **NOT** to get involved with custody disputes. Grace Crossing Academy will follow court orders exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. ***PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.*** With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Grace Crossing Academy has the right to terminate care, including, but not limited to decisions about the child's care, health, and education. Parents must have these conversations at home and notify the center of any mutual decisions made by both parties involved.

43. INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICIES

Grace Crossing Academy will follow the standard set by the Conroe ISD for inclement weather closures. In the event that the school closes due to inclement weather related issues, the closure will be posted on our school's Facebook page, Remind 101, website, and parent email group. Grace Crossing Academy does not offer credits or refunds on inclement weather times or other emergency closures.

Grace Crossing Academy will follow Conroe ISD ***in most cases but not all***. You will be informed when this takes place. Grace Crossing Academy does not offer credits or refunds on emergency closures that are in the best interest of the safety of the children, families and community.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive. Please refer to our Emergency Preparedness Plan for more information on evacuations and relocation of children.

44. CURRICULUM

Grace Crossing Academy believes that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. Grace Crossing Academy is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environment. An example of the curriculum used is Frog Street Press.

45. CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, as of September 1st. Grace Crossing Academy typically will only do a transition during the school year for children in the infant and toddler classrooms on a needs basis. Placement in our classes are designed and coordinated with the local school system. Classroom assignments are done so that a child will transition smoothly from Grace Crossing Academy into Kindergarten at the appropriate age. Promotion to new classrooms take place at the beginning of the school year in August.

46. CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS

Grace Crossing Academy follows national ratios set by the Association for Early Learning Leaders. These ratios exceed state ratios and licensing expectations. From time to time, Grace Crossing Academy may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

47. NAP TIME

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at Grace Crossing Academy for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Parents will need to provide a sleep mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket and sheet for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing. Parents may also bring in a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in the child's cubby. Child care licensing requires that all children be offered a nap or rest period. Children should in class prior to or after nap time in their classroom. **Do not drop children off during nap times.**

48. CLOTHING / UNIFORMS

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left in your child's backpack at Grace Crossing Academy. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. Flip flops, etc. are prohibited at Grace Crossing Academy for safety reasons.

We at Grace Crossing Academy believe uniforms provide a variety of benefits. In addition to promoting community spirit, uniforms promote safety and discipline on our campus and help students and faculty maintain focus on spirituality and academics. Therefore, children three years and older at the start of school are required to wear school uniforms. **UNIFORMS MUST BE WORN UNLESS NOTIFIED ABOUT SPECIAL DRESS DAYS.** This policy does not apply to students who turn three throughout the school year. Uniforms are not required during the Summer Program.

Children Three and Older

- Boys: solid khaki or navy pants or shorts; solid dark green, dark navy, or white polo shirts.
- Girls: solid khaki or navy pants, shorts, skorts, or jumpers; solid dark green, dark navy, or white polo shirts
- Modest shorts, leggings or diaper cover under all dresses or skirts

Likewise, parents and visitors are expected to dress appropriately when on school campus. Clothing that does not promote modesty is discouraged.

Children not in uniform may be sent home or charged a \$25 uniform rental fee.

49. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents must supply all bottles for their child. **Please label everything with your child's first and last name.** Child care licensing prohibits children from walking with or sleeping with cups or bottles. During drop off time, parents are to ensure that children are sitting at a table if they are leaving their child with cups.

Grace Crossing Academy uses washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since Grace Corssing Academy cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

50. OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may not wear flip flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground. (See #59 for UPDATE)

51. BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a “store bought” treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance. Your child’s teacher is aware of any allergy restrictions and can keep you informed as to what can and cannot be brought into the classroom. If parents wish to invite children in the classroom to private parties, teacher will only be able to pass invitations out if one is provided for all children in the class.

52. SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES

Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly. In the event that a parent is present in the building when the alarm system is activated, parents are asked to assist the center in emergency preparedness.

Parents will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. Grace Crossing Academy will also give a written report at pick up time. A signature from the parent or responsible individual will be required acknowledging that this information was shared. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. **Parents are responsible for all medical fees.**

53. CAMERAS

Grace Crossing Academy has closed circuit cameras located in each classroom and various locations throughout the facility. The Director and Administrative Staff has access on site to monitor these cameras. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet. Cameras are for surveillance only. Audio and video footage is not available to parents.

54. PHOTOGRAPHS

Grace Crossing Academy believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera or phone and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other

parents. Please note that during certain parent events, such as Christmas programs, and all school events, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

55. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees of Grace Crossing Academy are prohibited from outside employment with parents of the organization including but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs. This is only allowed when both the parents and childcare staff sign a “Child Care Waiver for Worker” form which must be turned in to Grace Crossing Academy. A copy of this form will be kept in the student’s file and the staff’s personnel file.

56. SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of Grace Crossing Academy are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children including but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. Special closed classroom Facebook groups have been created so that parents and staff can communicate and share pictures from the day.

57. BITING

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. Grace Crossing Academy will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. Every effort will be made to solve the issue as soon as possible.

58. POTTY TRAINING

Although *potty training is not a part of the preschool curriculum*, our staff will be happy to support you in your efforts. Because we know each child is different and develops at his or her own natural pace, Grace Crossing Academy will not refuse admission of a child based solely on whether or not she or he is potty-trained. The only exception is in our Pre-K Classes. Please communicate your individual needs to your child’s teacher, who will assist you in a reasonable manner. Frustrated or distressed child will not be made to sit on the toilet. Staff will provide regular opportunities to go to the restroom and implement simple reward systems at the parent’s request. Non-flushing potty chairs and potty seats are not permitted. In potty training rooms the child will be placed in a pull up when accidents happen that may cause unsanitary conditions. The staff will keep a record of “incidents” to help determine when a child can wear underwear instead of a pull up. The standard is to go two weeks without any accidents.

59. CELL PHONES

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones and personal electronic devices in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building so that our staff can properly communicate with you. Teacher's personal cell phone use is prohibited. Please call the school phone number and calls can be transferred to your child's classroom.

60. PROMOTION OF INDOOR & OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Grace Crossing Academy strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day. When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

Grace Crossing Academy will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits, which includes our extended care times.
- One session of P.E class that will promote moderate to vigorous activities daily.
- Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Parent Handbook

Physical activity may take place in the classroom, P.E class or on the playground, when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
- Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for "rainy days".

We, at Grace Crossing Academy, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in early education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Grace Crossing Academy.

