



Grace Home Schoolers Handbook

2020-2021



Table of Contents:

Statement of Faith.....	2
Getting Started.....	3
Co-op classes.....	5
Membership & Agreement Policy.....	6
Behavior Standards.....	8
Dress Code.....	9
Students Rights & Responsibilities.....	10
Emergency Procedures.....	11

Statement of Faith

I believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts.

I believe in one God, the creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe that by one man, Adam, sin entered the world and death by sin, therefore, all men are born into sin, lost without hope of salvation apart from the grace of God and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

I believe in the deity and virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. His sinless perfection and voluntary death upon the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice of all sinners, that He rose bodily from the dead and ascended into heaven, from whence He will return with power and glory.

I believe that marriage consists of one man and one woman and that this institution is a reflection of Christ's relationship with His Church.

I believe that salvation is a gift from God by grace through faith apart from any human merit or worth, that this eternal life is received by personal faith in Jesus Christ alone and that works of obedience to Christ are evidence of, not requirements for, salvation.

I believe in the life after death; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; that the just will be raised to everlasting life in heaven and the unjust raised to eternal punishment.

I understand that anyone who would like to be a teacher and/or in leadership must be in full agreement with the above Statement of Faith and that their life will be consistent with these beliefs.

❖ Getting Started with Grace Home Schoolers, Inc.

We're glad you are considering joining Grace Home Schoolers (GHS), also known as Grace. Particularly for new members, the process of joining a new group can at times seem confusing. We want to make this process as easy as possible. Please read this informational paper before filling out the membership and registration forms. GHS is a support group, **not** an umbrella school. We do **not** keep any records, nor do we assign credits or grades. Additionally, we ask you to remember that we are composed completely of volunteers.

We offer opportunities to have informational meetings, co-op classes, picnics, fairs, student portrait pictures, a yearbook, standardized testing, parent-led field trips, a Fine Arts night, and fellowship.

Grace Home Schoolers is overseen by a group of parents, called the **Grace Board**. The Grace Board is responsible for overseeing all programs and events with GHS, including classes offered by Creative Learning Days (CLD) and Friday Enrichment (FE). Joining GHS covers costs for most activities throughout the year, except for field trips, yearbook, testing, and a few other optional activities.

You **must** first **join GHS** to participate in classes offered by Creative Learning Days (CLD) and/or Friday Enrichment (FE), however you do not have to participate in classes to be a part of GHS, the classes require additional registration and cost.

Both new and returning members who wish to join GHS for a given school year need to complete **FORM 1-5**. This enables you to participate in all GHS activities (i.e. Fine Arts Night, Fairs, Promotions, Graduation, Picnics, yearbook, testing, etc...).

Not all activities are offered every year, as we provide those activities that we have volunteers willing to organize the activity.

All families who join GHS must read and agree to abide by the documents provided which address student behavior, dress code, and standards of conduct. These documents are found on our website and are included in this handbook.

Each family who joins GHS will receive timely emails for upcoming activities and events. Emails are also sent throughout the year with information pertaining to our group. (If you are not receiving emails, please contact leadership and let them know.)

New members are placed in a service position of helping. Once they have served one year they will be eligible to chair an event or teach.

Your obligation to the group is to **volunteer at one (or more if you so choose!) of these GHS activities held throughout the school year** (Fairs, Fine Arts Night, Promotions, Graduation, Picnic, etc...), which is to help with planning, set-up, clean-up, and in-between during the event, as needed. When you sign up we want to know your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice of which event you would like to serve. We will schedule all members based on seniority.

Annual membership fees are as follows:

	Check/Cash	PayPal
Returning members paid by May 31st	\$45.00	\$47.00
New members paid by May 31st	\$65.00	\$67.00
Anyone joining after June 1st or later	\$80.00	\$83.00
Annual Insurance policy per family	\$48.00	\$50.00
Facility fee to participate in classes per family	\$60.00	\$52.00
Graduating Senior paid by May 31st	\$125.00	\$129.00

Fees are subject to change. PayPal fees include convenience charge

Co-op classes

Please remember that while we use the term “class” we are not a school, but rather provide enrichment for the education being directed by the parent. Classes meet weekly on Fridays, except the last Friday of each month, holidays, Christmas break, Spring break, and Good Friday. We want to accommodate all families, and if you have special concerns or needs, please speak to a member of the CLD or FE Committee.

Creative Learning Days (CLD) offers classes for students in grades K-5, which is overseen by a group of parents called the CLD Committee. To participate in classes offered by CLD, complete the **CLD Registration Form**. There are additional costs to participate in classes offered by CLD.

Your obligation to participate in classes offered by CLD:

- *Serve up to two hours each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.*
 - **Returning members** have the option to teach a one-hour class each co-op class day OR serve up to (2) two hours as a teacher’s helper, lunch monitor, cleaner, nursery worker, etc. each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.
 - **New members** must serve up to (2) hours as a teacher’s helper, lunch monitor, cleaner, nursery worker, etc. each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.
- *One adult member from each family will be required to stay for the full class day at least two times throughout the school year to cover absentees.*

Friday Enrichment (FE) offers classes for students in grades 6-12, which is overseen by a group of parents called the FE Committee. To participate in FE, complete the **FE Registration Form**. There are additional costs to participate in classes offered by FE.

Your obligation to participate in classes offered by FE:

Serve up to two hours each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.

- **Returning members** have the option to teach a one-hour class each co-op class day OR serve up to (2) two hours as a teacher’s helper, lunch monitor, cleaner, nursery worker, etc. each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.
- **New members** must serve up to (2) hours as a teacher’s helper, lunch monitor, cleaner, nursery worker, etc. each co-op class day for the duration of the school year.

If you have students taking classes in both CLD and FE you are required to meet the volunteer criteria for **BOTH** class programs. Please contact each class program’s leadership to help coordinate your time to serve.

❖ Membership and Agreement Policy

We are Bible-believing, evangelical Christians who desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ while teaching our children at home. This support group consists of home educating parents joining together to share our talents, resources, and time in order to enhance and enrich the educational experiences of our children. Parental involvement is a necessity to avoid a deteriorating program and lost opportunities for our children. A support group also provides a source of advice and encouragement for the parent/teacher.

➤ Membership Benefits and Responsibilities

- GHS, Inc., will communicate dates for field trips, events, and standardized testing by a certified teacher. This standardized testing is optional for member's children, but non-member children may be included with the approval of the Grace Board. The testing fee is **not** included in the annual membership fee.
- GHS, Inc., provides an address, phone and email list for communicating with other families with Grace Home Schoolers. This is **not** to be used for solicitation or business.
- Members will agree to abide by the behavior and dress standards adopted by GHS, Inc.
- Any teaching at GHS events must reflect a Biblical Christian worldview and will include signing our Statement of Faith.
- Each family pays a **nonrefundable** fee to cover our combined expenses such as supplies, facility costs, printing, and support for the Home Education Foundation. Optional expenses (field trips, yearbook, etc.) are to be assumed by families choosing to participate.
- Each member is **required** to serve in at least one of our activities that benefits GHS, Inc., as a whole. Renewal of membership in the group may be forfeited if the service commitment to GHS, Inc., is not fulfilled and arrangements were not made. Participation in classes offered by CLD and/or FE **requires** an **additional** service commitment for each program each week we hold classes.
- Each family agrees to respect the schedules of volunteers who establish deadlines for GHS, Inc., activities. Members must fulfill commitments and be punctual. If you cannot attend a class/event, for GHS, CLD and/or FE after signing up, please contact the organizer in a timely manner.

★ Parent Absentee Policy....refer to page 11 for more details.

1. Parents must find coverage for class and/or responsibilities.
 2. Parents must inform leadership (GHS, FE, and/or CLD) of the date, substitute person and class/event they will miss.
- Parents are responsible whenever their children are attending/participating in a GHS, Inc., function or classes.
 - Any facility damage is the responsibility of the student/family member that caused the damage. The family responsible for the damage is obligated to repair or pay for the damage.
 - In order to maintain the safety of our children GHS, Inc. will compare our family membership database with the United States Department of Justice National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) files and the Florida Sexual Offender Registry (FDLE). Any known offender matches with the GHS, Inc. family membership database may preclude the offender from attending any GHS, Inc. function. This, however, does **not** exclude the family, only the offender. Should an offender attend a GHS, Inc. function, the family members will be immediately and permanently revoked.

We encourage people who are not comfortable with our standards to seek other like-minded homeschooling support groups.

➤ **Conflict Resolution**

All members should do their best to treat each other with respect, gentleness, kindness, patience, and love. They should train their children to do the same. Members should do their best to live in peace with all other members.

When a dispute occurs between two or more individuals (adult or child), the guidelines laid out in Matthew 18: 15-16 must be followed, especially if sin is involved. One should immediately approach the individual face to face, in gentleness, speaking to one another in love. If the issue remains unresolved, bring it before GHS leadership who are directly involved. For example, if there is a Friday class conflict, you may contact the FE Committee member, preferably face to face (avoid email at this point). If the issue still remains unresolved, contact a Grace Board member. At this point, we will seek additional/outside Godly wisdom to help with conflict resolution. At all times confidentiality should be maintained.

❖ Behavior Standards

The following applies to all GHS, Inc., events

- The name, reputation, glory of God and His work will be protected and honored at all times. This pertains to field trips, classes, and all GHS functions.
- All event attendees (visitors and participants) are expected and required to demonstrate cooperation, courtesy, and respect for hosts, instructions, officials, adults, and each other.
- Property, furnishings, and supplies will be carefully maintained and respected.
- Proselytizing of any religion that does not conform to the GHS, Inc., Statement of Faith (verbal or written) will not be tolerated.
- Inappropriate subject matter, gestures, and/or language (i.e. abusive, crude, or obscene), verbal, written, electronic or any verbal conduct that shows hostility or aversion toward an individual may result in immediate expulsion from the event.
- Physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual will result in immediate expulsion from the event.
- Students must be under teacher/adult supervision at all times during GHS functions.
- Students will not engage in any inappropriate display of affections, (i.e. pairing off, romantic-type behavior, hand-holding, hugging, kissing, back rubs, etc.).
- Electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, iPads, laptops, handheld video games, etc.) are not permitted during class time, unless specified by the teacher. Cell phones must be on silent mode or turned off during class. Teachers reserve the right to collect cell phones or devices during class.

❖ Dress Code

- Members should dress appropriately, neatly, and modestly according to weather conditions and type of event.
- For swimming events, modest one-piece swimsuits (or dark t-shirt over 2-piece swimsuits) are required for girls.
- Shirts that are low cut, see-through, with spaghetti straps or tank tops must be worn with another appropriate garment.
- Hemlines of shorts, dresses, skirts, and skorts should be no shorter than a credit card length above the top of the knee.
- A long shirt (that completely covers the backside) is required with leggings or work out pants, etc...
- Bare midriffs (even when hand raised), or tight or revealing clothing is not allowed.
- Undergarment exposure, clothing with inappropriate writing or graphics, extreme faddish trends: i.e. gothic dress, gang-related paraphernalia, etc. will not be permitted.
- Only girls may wear earrings at GHS functions. Facial piercing, ear gauges, or tattoos will not be permitted.
- Hair color should be in the natural range of hair color. Red (primary), purple, green, etc. hair color is not appropriate at GHS, Inc., functions.

Infractions of this dress code are subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the leadership. If the leadership encounters many violations of this dress code, a uniform will be instituted for GHS, Inc. events.

❖ Student's Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

Students have the right to:

- Be informed of the GHS behavior standards/dress code.
- A safe and orderly environment in which to learn.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Be secure in their personal privacy.
- Reasonable and fair treatment.
- An Appeals Committee to voice their concerns for serious issues of conflict.

Responsibilities

Students are required to:

- Come to class or event with all the necessary materials and be prepared to learn.
- Dress and act in ways that will not distract other students from learning.
- Treat other people and their property with respect.
- Have in possession only those items allowed by law and GHS rules or policies: i.e. no weapons, pocket knives, illegal drugs, or illicit materials.
- Listen courteously to the opinions and points of view of others.
- Maximize their learning opportunities at all GHS events.
- Report hazardous or dangerous situations immediately to an adult in authority.
- Report bullying and threats to do harm immediately to an adult in authority.
- Protect the reputation of other GHS students in all forms of communication, (i.e. gossip, cyber-bullying, etc.).

❖ **Emergency Situation Policy**

In the event of an emergency situation such as a major weather condition (hurricane, tornado) or pandemic, we follow our local government agencies recommendations as well as our local school system (Seminole County) for canceling school. Stay in close communications. We will want to know you are safe and in many cases can help. Please notify us if you and your family evacuate. We will use email to communicate as long as possible, then we will switch to text.

❖ **Emergency Procedures at First Baptist Church of Forest City**

In the event of a warning, the following action should be taken:

- All groups and people will move to the appropriate area, depending on the warning: All bathrooms, interior hallway area or outside in case of fire.
- Teachers, helpers, and leadership on site will immediately begin to assist all people in the designated areas. Teachers are responsible for guiding their students to these locations. Teachers will bring attendance lists if possible.
- Leadership will monitor the emergency situation.

In the event of a fire emergency, the following action should be taken:

1. Leadership will immediately dial 911 and report that First Baptist Church of Forest City has a fire.
2. Teachers, helpers, and leadership on site will immediately reference the evacuation chart on their classroom/office wall, and begin to assist any class, group, volunteers, or parents out of the building through the nearest exit. **PARENTS SHOULD NOT TRY TO GET THEIR CHILDREN OUT OF CLASSROOMS DURING A FIRE ALARM. THIS WILL CREATE CONFUSION AND DIFFICULTY IN EVACUATION.** Teachers will take attendance lists with them, if possible. All fire exit doors are unlocked from the inside at all times.
3. All groups evacuating will come together in the front parking lot, a safe distance away from the structure and emergency vehicles.
4. **PARENTS MUST MEET CHILDREN AT THE FRONT PARKING LOT. DO NOT TAKE CHILDREN OFF GROUNDS UNTIL THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.** Any available adults will help supervise children. If there is direct knowledge of people still in the structure, inform the fire department immediately upon their arrival.
5. Cars and vehicles should not leave the parking lot. This may cause a bottleneck at entry, parking lot, and intersection. Let all emergency vehicles have the right of way.
6. Fire extinguishers are located: Hallway by main bathrooms, end of the hall by classrooms, and near the exit by the exit.
7. One designated staff member such as Grace Board Chair or Custodian will begin a search of the building to determine if there is smoke or fire or if it could be a false alarm. Upon the sight of any smoke, immediately evacuate and inform the arriving fire department where the smoke was located.

During a fire, evacuate directly outside through the nearest exit and proceed to the main parking lot.