

Grace Homeschoolers Handbook

2024-2025



Welcome to Grace Homeschoolers!

Who We Are

Grace Homeschoolers (GHS) is a support group which offers a K – 12 co-op, formal senior graduation ceremony, educational student-led fairs, picnics, optional standardized testing, yearbook, Fine Arts night and field trip opportunities. We are not an umbrella school. We do not keep records or assign credits or grades. We have no paid positions. We are simply a group of moms looking to enhance the educational experience of our children. GHS is led by a volunteer leadership team of moms who are responsible for overseeing all events and programs.

How to Join

If you are interested in joining GHS, please fill out the GHS Membership Form. All members (new and existing) must complete a GHS Membership Form each year. This enables you to participate in all GHS activities. Please note, not all activities are offered every year, as we can only provide those activities that we have volunteers for that are willing to organize the activities.

All members/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.

Communication

Upon joining GHS, each family will receive an invitation to join the Band App (available for all phone/computer systems). Band is the primary communication tool for GHS. On the GHS Band app, you will find a calendar of events, notices and other valuable information. It is vital that each member check and/or respond to communication postings in BAND on a regular basis.

Membership Requirements

All members are required to complete at least one annual service position in addition to their weekly Friday responsibilities. The annual position(s) will be assigned shortly after sign-up. These service positions can include chair/or helpers of Fairs, Fine Arts Night, Graduation, Student Testing etc. These annual service positions will involve helping with planning, set-up, clean-up and in-between during the event as needed. Assignment of positions is based on seniority. Once you have served one year, you are eligible to chair an event.

Co-op Jobs

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 an average of 3 times a month on Fridays (usually the 4th Fridays are off days). Classes meet at First Baptist Church Forest City from 9:15 am until shortly after 2:25 pm. A copy of our most recent course offerings can be found on our website.

We offer classes for elementary, middle, and high school students. To participate in co-op, you will be required to serve up to 2 hours during each Friday, helping in a variety of capacities (teaching, teacher’s helper, set-up, lunchroom monitor, etc). After your initial year, you may teach a class.

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

1. GHS 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.
2. GHS provides an address, phone and email list for communicating with other member families. This is not to be used for solicitation or business.
3. Members will agree to abide by the behavior and dress standards adopted by the GHS Board.
4. Any teaching at GHS events must reflect a Biblical Christian worldview and will include signing our Statement of Faith.
5. 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.
6. Each member is required to serve in at least one of our activities that benefits GHS as a whole. Renewal of membership in the group may be forfeited if the service commitment to GHS is not fulfilled and arrangements were not made. Participation in co-op classes requires additional service commitments each Friday that co-op is in session.
7. Each family agrees to respect the schedules of volunteers who establish deadlines for GHS activities. Members must fulfill commitments and be punctual.

If you cannot attend a class/event, for GHS or co-op after signing up, please contact the organizer in a timely manner.

8. Parents are responsible whenever their children are attending/participating in a GHS function or classes.
9. 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.
10. In order to maintain the safety of our children GHS 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 family membership database may preclude the offender from attending any GHS function. This, however, does not exclude the family, only the offender. Should an offender attend a GHS 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.

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 member of Grace Homeschoolers must be in full agreement with the above Statement of Faith and that their life will be consistent with these beliefs.

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 to the GHS Board. At this point, we will seek additional/outside Godly wisdom to help with conflict resolution.

If a teacher/helper/student has issue:

1. Address the individual directly in love. “¹⁵ *“If your brother sins^[d], go and show him his fault in private; if he listens and pays attention to you, you have won back your brother.” Mathew 18:15*

2. Bring the issue to a GHS board member. The GHS Board will speak with all parties involved either individually or in a group setting, whichever is most appropriate, at all times, maintaining confidentiality. “¹⁶ *But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two others, so that EVERY WORD MAY BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.” Mathew 18:16*

3. If negative behavior continues, the entire GHS Board will meet with individual teacher/student(s) and their parents. *Extending extra grace.*

4. If negative behavior still continues, the entire Board will vote on if the teacher/student will/will not be permitted to return to GHS. “¹⁷ *If he pays no attention to them [refusing to listen and obey], tell it to the ^[e]church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile (unbeliever) and a tax collector. Mathew 18:17*

Behavior Standards

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 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/Hygiene Policy

Students are required to demonstrate care with personal hygiene. This could include brushing hair, brushing teeth, wearing deodorant, washing hands in the restroom, no excessive cologne or perfume.

Members should dress appropriately, neatly, and modestly according to weather conditions and type of the event.

Shoes must remain on feet at all times. English Country Dance and P.E. may require closed-toed shoes.

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 mid-thigh length. We recommend that shorts be worn under skirts.

Jeans may not have rips, tears, or holes above mid-thigh that expose skin.

A long shirt (that completely covers the backside) is required with leggings or workout pants, etc.

Bare midribs (even when hands 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 female students may wear earrings at GHS functions. Students are not permitted to have facial piercings, ear gauges or tattoos.

No GHS member's hair color will be of an unnatural color (such as primary colors; red, blue, green, etc). We may require that you wear a hat or other head covering. Please see the board with any questions or concerns..

*Infractions of this dress code are subject to disciplinary action
at the discretion of the leadership team.*

Student's Rights and Responsibilities

Students have the right to:

1. Be informed of the GHS behavior standards/dress code policies.
2. A safe and orderly environment in which to learn.
3. Be treated with dignity and respect.
4. Be secure in their personal privacy.
5. Reasonable and fair treatment.
6. An appeals committee to voice their concerns for serious issues of conflict.

Student are required to;

1. Come to class or event with all the necessary materials and be prepared to learn.
2. Dress and act in ways that will not distract other students from learning.
3. Treat other people and their property with respect.
4. 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.
5. Listen courteously to the opinions and points of view of others.
6. Maximize their learning opportunities at all GHS events.
7. Report hazardous or dangerous situations immediately to an adult in authority.
8. Report bullying and threats to do harm immediately to an adult in authority.

Parent Absentee Policy

Parents must find coverage for class and/or responsibilities. Parents must inform leadership of the date, substitute person and class/event they will miss.

Absentee Guidelines/Sick Policy

We cannot run without all hands on deck. Please do your very best to be present every week and to be on time with the obvious exception of illness and emergency situations.

**We do ask that your family be cleared of fever, throwing up, etc. for 48 hours.
Please be considerate.**

In case of an unavoidable absence please do the following:

Grace Annual Events:

1. The parent must find coverage for their service position.
2. The parent then must notify the chairperson of the event and notify Amie Hurley with the date, substitute person, and the event they will miss.

Co-op Classes:

1. The parent must find coverage for their service position. Verbally speak with others in person, or via phone/text to secure coverage. As a last resort, you can go to the Band app. On the calendar, click on the day and class you need coverage for and post your need.
2. Once you find coverage, post on the Band app on the day/class with the name of the person who is covering for you.
3. If you have a short notice emergency situation, please text Cheryl Dapkus (954) 682-2780 before 7am the day of co-op. Take a moment now to add her phone number into your phone.
4. If your student will be out, please notify their teachers via Band.

****If you miss more than 6 co-op class days, you may be asked not to return the following year to co-op. Please speak with the Board for special consideration.****

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 if we can help. Please notify us if you and your family evacuate.

Emergency Procedures at First Baptist Church of Forest City:

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 walls 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 on the grass volleyball area past the parking lot, a safe distance away from the structure and emergency vehicles.
4. Parents must meet children in the designated area. 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 availability.
5. Cars and vehicles should not leave the parking lot. This may cause a bottle-neck at entry, parking lot and intersection. Let all emergency vehicles have the right of way.
6. Fire extinguishers are located: Hallway by main bathroom, end of the hall by classrooms and near the exit by the main doors.
7. One designated staff member 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 sign 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 designated area.

GHS 2024/2025 Leadership Team

Dana Brenyo	Chair
Amie Hurley	Events Coordinator
Lois Kimmig	Treasurer
Cheryl Dapkus	Absentee/Membership Coordinator
Cathy Burk	
Kelaine Brothers	