# GRACE

## EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

**and**

## ABOVE & BEYOND

# PARENT HANDBOOK

23 Cedar Shore Drive

Massapequa, New York 11758

516.798.1122

www.gracedayschool.org

Table of Contents

1. Welcome Letter ..... 3
2. Our Mission Statement ..... 4
3. Our Philosophy ..... 5
4. OCFS Certification ..... 6
5. Policies ..... 7

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Grace Early Childhood Center and Grace Above & Beyond. Here you will find a secure and loving environment for your child(ren).

Our children are cared for in a nurturing, family-oriented environment. Our young students are encouraged to be creative, independent thinkers and enthusiastic learners. Our curriculum provides a combination of constructive play and discovery that is crucial to the healthy development of a young mind.

The Parent Handbook provides guidelines and information for parents and guardians of children in our care. I would like you to take some time to familiarize yourself with Grace and our day-to-day procedures. Our policies outline parent/guardian responsibilities as well as those assumed by the Early Childhood Center. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call our office at 516-798-1122.

Once again, welcome to the Grace family. Thank you for choosing Grace and allowing us to help you lay the foundation for your child's education.

Sincerely,

The Very Rev. Dr. Walter V. Hillebrand
Rector, Head of School

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

**Grace Early Childhood Center and Grace Above & Beyond provide a community of security, love, acceptance and appreciation for the unique qualities with which each individual has been endowed by God.**

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

Grace Early Childhood Center and Above & Beyond are Ministries under the direction of Grace Church. Grace offers a loving, nurturing, family-oriented, learning environment for children ages 6 weeks through prekindergarten.

The Grace community believes as children of God we are directed to love our neighbors as ourselves. We believe that, through the Church, Jesus Christ gave us a redeemed community in which the gospel of love is nurtured and proclaimed.

We believe that the parent and teacher are the most important mentors in your child's life, and we will work with you to enhance your child's learning and development. Both you and your child will receive the personal attention that is required to create a trusting relationship. We are committed to providing the highest quality care in a setting where his/her cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development will be embraced.

Children are admitted without regard to race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion and gender.

*Become a part of the Grace family - Where Life-long Learning Begins*

# OCFS Certification

## NY State Office of Children and Family Services

Grace Early Childhood Center and Grace Above & Beyond Programs are licensed by New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). For Grace, this license fulfills multiple functions. It offers flexibility for our arrival and dismissal times, increased quality and safety management, and activities previously offered from September through June can now run for 50 weeks.

We now operate under one NY State office only - OCFS which becomes the umbrella, so to speak, for all programs offered at Grace Early Childhood Center. We strictly follow all policies and procedures given to us by the NY State Office of Children and Family Services which were put in place for the protection and safety of the children in our care. Rigorous inspections by the NY State office will keep us accountable and keep you informed about our performance. Violations will be posted at our entry hallway as well as online at the OCFS website: ocfs.ny.gov

As a ministry under the direction of Grace Church, it was decided to add the NY State OCFS license to accommodate working parents living in Massapequa and its nearby communities. In addition to our academic early childhood programs, we are able to offer curriculum based programs with extended hours, infant care beginning at 6 weeks and programs with flexible hours and days throughout the entire year.

Meeting the needs of our parents and parishioners is always a top priority.

## POLICIES

**Admission/ Placement Reservation:** We enroll children throughout the year on a first-come, first-served basis for the Early Childhood Center starting in September, and for the Above & Beyond Program for immediate admission. Your child will be accepted and a place reserved when we receive your application, your signed enrollment agreement and payments as requested on the application and enrollment agreement. The enrollment agreement is then signed by the Head of School. A signed copy will be returned to you. Please note that all fees and deposits are non-refundable.

Please Note: For all 50 week programs, because we have waiting lists for all spots throughout our programs, after your final payment which is taken from the last month's prepaid funds, there will be no placement guarantee given should you decide to re-enroll. The first-come, first served rule will apply.

Also, parents often calculate their child(ren)'s school time in hours. Please take into consideration that New York State Law imposes on us a ratio for teacher/students as well as room quantity restrictions. Therefore, your child's attendance is not calculated in hours but rather per used capacity spot that is no longer available.

**Hours:** The **Grace Above and Beyond Program** is open from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday. You may use any or all of these hours. The program CLOSES at 6:30 p.m. After 6:30 pm, late charges will be added at the rate of $30.00 at the BEGINNING of each hour. The Grace school clock is the time used to determine the late payment.

The **Early Childhood Center (ECC)** is open from 9:00am to 2:30pm. Please note: **We do not provide make up days.** If your child misses a day, they cannot come to school on another day. For example, if your child is out on Monday, he or she cannot "make up" a day on Tuesday. Because of our curriculum based programs, the schedule that you signed up for must be kept.

From September through June, all children 2 years and older will attend our curriculum-based/academic classes between the hours mentioned above at the Early Childhood Center. In order not to disrupt class, **please make every effort to arrive in a timely manner.**

**Attendance:** It is never too early to begin to build the habit of good attendance. However, if your child is not well enough to participate in all aspects of his/her daily schedule, please keep your child at home. Please call the school office at 516.798.1122 (follow prompts) to call your child in sick.

**Above & Beyond (Full-Time Program for 2 years and older):** The Full Time Program was designed for families that commit for the entire year (12

months). If you plan to withdraw your child(ren) or change days during the summer months please contact our Director and change to the Academic Program (September - June). Not to worry, we have plans available for you that will cover your care needs for any situation.

Most Above & Beyond Enrollment Agreements for children that are 2 years old and older begin in September and end on August 31st. of the following year. If your agreement is dated before September your annual agreement begins in September and ends on August 31st of the following year. For Grace Families, Grace offers an early placement opportunity. Please understand that you must follow the early enrollment schedule in September of each year to be able to choose the desired spot for your child(ren) for the next school year. Placements are depending on availability.

Please understand that the Above & Beyond Full-Time Program for 2 years old and older is a year round program. The Full Time students stay together throughout the entire year and grow close to each other providing the children with a comfortable family setting. Withdrawing before the summer months would end this relationship. Also, withdrawing at any time means your child no longer has a reserved spot at Grace. We serve our community on a first come first serve basis. If you would decide to come back after withdrawing you would have to re-apply and most likely would be added to our waiting list.

**Biting Policy:** The Biting Policy is outlined in an independent document.

**Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting Policy:** The Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting Policy is outlined as an independent pamphlet.

**Drop off/Pick up:** Children and parents will wait in front of the main building. Early Childhood Center parents should arrive ten minutes before the start of class and five minutes before dismissal. Specific procedures will be explained at the beginning of the school year by the head teacher in your child(ren)'s class. From the moment you arrive to pick up, you are in charge of your child(ren). When you drop off or pick up, please do not linger. Experience has shown us that a quick goodbye kiss or hug works best if your child becomes teary-eyed. Continue to reassure him/her that you will return when class is over.

In order not to disrupt class, please make every effort to arrive in a timely manner. However, if you are late and classes are still entering the building, please wait until everyone is in. Ring the bell and come directly into the school office. Please do not walk your child to the classroom. The Assistant will be called to pick up your child. We ask that you do not walk your child to his/her classroom. We do not want to create a disruption in the room. The children have settled in, and we want to keep them focused on the activity

at hand. Also, at Grace safety and security of your child(ren) is our highest priority - that is why we installed door access control systems and video cameras. Thank you for helping us to keep your child safe!

Arrival Times on Days with Inclement Weather: We will NOT line up in front of the school, but will receive the children at the front door. The teachers will receive the students and escort them to their Head Teacher in the hallway. When all have arrive,d the teachers will walk the children to their classrooms and begin their daily academic routine.

During arrival and dismissal times, staff members must devote full attention to all of the children. Please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate, send in a short note, email, or schedule an appointment with your child's teacher.

**Incidents and Reports:** In case a child is hurt in any way, the faculty will immediately attend to the child's needs. Depending on the severity of an incident, EMT/911 will be called. After the child is taken care of, the attending Teacher will write an incident report to be signed by the parent. Depending on the severity of the incident, the parent will be informed by pick up, or the parent/emergency contact will be informed by phone immediately after the incident takes place. Incident reports will be held at Grace for 3 months after which they will be archived and/or shredded.

**Nondiscrimination**: We do not discriminate in relation to admissions of any child on the basis of nationality, religion, sex, or disability. We do, however, evaluate each case to determine if Grace can provide the promised education or if another, more specialized school might be a better choice for a specific situation.

**Safety**: Your child's safety is paramount. All cabinets have safety locks. All electrical outlets have child-proof safety covers. All buildings have NY State-approved fire alarm systems and fire extinguishers. Our providers are trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid. Our buildings are locked and secure, and no unauthorized individuals are permitted within our buildings. In addition, we installed video surveillance in every room. We meet or exceed all Nassau County and/or NYS rules and guidelines in our facilities.

All visitors/parents must sign in/out at the school office.

**Video Cameras:** For security and supervision purposes, Grace installed video cameras in each classroom and throughout our campus. This video equipment was installed voluntarily by Grace and is used for administrative objectives. However, in an emergency case such as a lockdown the cameras will be used to help in any way they can. Under no circumstances does

Grace provide video recordings of our classrooms and/or children to our parents. Data protection inhibits us from using recordings of children and employees.

**Parking:** Parents/guardians are urged to use great caution when driving to and from the School/Church parking lot areas. Please abide by parking signs & regulations. Be especially mindful of children, parents, employees and guests as pedestrians in the parking lot.

The entrance to the parking lot is located at the Church side. The exit is located at the School building side (red brick building). Please adhere to the Entry and Exit ways (one-way direction) as it was put in place to prevent accidents, hence, for your child(ren)'s safety.

**Curriculum/Programs/Trips:** Grace Early Childhood offers developmentally appropriate programs. We follow a strict curriculum based on a child's age. We are committed to providing your child the highest quality care in a setting where his/her cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development will be embraced. We have a wide array of learning centers for imaginary and dramatic play, building blocks, literacy, and manipulative play. We also offer music enrichment, arts and crafts, use of smartboards, and American Sign Language. Outdoor free play and gym class contribute to the physical development of each child. We offer an indoor gym and three outdoor play areas.

Our programs include guest speakers, specialty programs, and field trips.

**Nap Time/Resting Time**: Nap time is after lunch for those that choose to lay down on a mat. Others may sit quietly and read a book or do some other quiet activity. All children are expected to respect this "quiet time". Grace Above and Beyond parents are discouraged from visiting during this time unless the child is being picked up for the day. It is very disruptive to the other resting children. Grace Above and Beyond parents should provide a blanket for nap time.

**Diaper /Restroom:**
*Nursery Class (3 years of age):* We acknowledge that each child is at a different stage of development when it comes to potty training. However, all three-year-olds are more or less on the same journey. Before the start of school in September, we ask you to begin to potty train your child. Our Nursery curriculum is developed specifically for this age group and includes several potty breaks to support training efforts. In addition, our faculty will work with you and your child to achieve this important milestone in your child's development.

Children that are trained or in training are asked to wear comfortable, age appropriate clothing that they can easily pull up and down and move about

freely. Examples include elastic waist short/sweatpants/slacks. Please remember that clothing with zippers, buttons, etc. increases the chances of an accident, requiring the teacher to provide additional assistance.

Help provided: Faculty/staff will provide verbal assistance - talking the child through the necessary potty steps from the outside of the restroom. If the child needs additional assistance, the faculty member will provide the help needed. In doing so:

a.) The restroom door will be open at all times
b.) The faculty/staff member will never be alone with a child. There will always be multiple children with a teacher and/or assistant during the break period.

*Pre-K Class (4/5 years of age):*
We expect all Pre-K children to be fully potty-trained and self-sufficient when using the restrooms. Children are asked to wear comfortable, age-appropriate clothing that can be easily pulled up and down, and he/she is able to move about freely. Examples include elastic waist shorts/sweatpants/slacks. Please remember that clothing with zippers, buttons, etc., increases the chances of an accident, requiring the teacher to provide additional assistance.

Help provided:

1) If needed, the Faculty/staff will provide verbal assistance - talking your children through the necessary potty steps from the outside of the restroom
2) If an accident happens (wet or soiled underwear/clothing, playground accident), the faculty will provide assistance in cleaning and changing the child to his/her new clothing.

**Classroom Rules**: The children will be taught by example to have respect for themselves and each other. Any negative behavior will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to: hitting, punching, kicking, biting, standing or jumping on furniture, throwing anything, bad language etc.

We treat each child with respect and reinforce his/her values as an individual student of the Grace Early Childhood Center. Our faculty works to teach acceptable behavior and to promote a positive self-image in all children in our care by preventing problems, praise, encouragement and the development of a classroom structure with age-appropriate rules/guidelines for all the children.

**Behavior Management**: We strive to offer praise for good behavior and find that positive reinforcement works well with children. Also, please read our "Biting Policy" which is attached to this handbook.

**Redirection:** When a conflict occurs, children will be redirected to another activity or area. We will focus on what we can do instead of what we can't do.

**Talking:** Listen to children and respond before trouble starts, work with children to achieve their goals by keeping them engaged using visual pictures that promote good spirits. Teach them good manners like please and thank you. Use of sticker charts to demonstrate positive behavior.

**Supervision:** Children will be under direct supervision at all times.

**Parent Responsibilities:**

**1. Provide Nutritious Meals:** Parents are encouraged to provide healthy, nutritious meals including breakfast, snacks, lunch and drinks depending on your child's schedule. Please send only non perishable food and drink choices to school. Each child must have an individual ***lunch boxe and water bottle clearly marked with their first and last names.*** No glass, please.

Please use only water-proof containers for food items. The same is required for water bottles. We experience the best results with stainless steel, straw water bottles. Please do not use regular plastic water bottles such as Poland Spring, etc.

**2. Clothing:** NY State Law requires that the children go outside every day if the temperature is above 35 degrees. We ask parents/guardians to dress their child(ren) weather and temperature appropriately (raincoat, rain or snow boots, gloves, etc.).

Also, parents/guardians must provide diapers, wipes, diaper creams, change of clothes and sunscreen in a labeled backpack. Students are required to wear sneakers or shoes with nonslip soles.

**3. Communication:** Communication between home and school is vital to a successful program. We emphasize an open line of communication with your child's classroom teacher. Any changes in a child's daily life should be brought to the attention of your child's teacher. Examples include the death of a family member or pet, divorce, separation of parents, a new baby, a new job, or anything you feel will impact your child's daily routine.

If a concern arises regarding your child, please inform your child's teacher as soon as possible. You may use email, send a note, or leave a message at the

school office.  If the situation warrants, the Early Childhood Director will be called in to intercede.

The Early Childhood Center communicates with parents/guardians in a number of ways: email, telephone, website, Facebook, FB closed parent group, Notices sent home in backpacks, Newsletters  and Orientation.

**4. Before Drop Off and After Dismissal:**
Parents and guardians, please be advised that before drop off and after dismissal, you are fully responsible for your child(ren).  According to the State Office for Children and Family Services, we can no longer invite you to stay and play at our official school playgrounds, as these must be kept ready to be used by our teachers with their students. In no case are we allowed to have dismissed children mixed with students of ongoing classes. Please note: After dismissal, your child(ren) are no longer under the supervision of Grace; they are playing on our front lawn and parking lot at your own risk. In addition, after dismissal, we cannot allow students to re-enter our buildings for restroom use, etc.

**Vacations/Holidays:  Grace Above and Beyond** will be open 50 weeks a year and closed on all major holidays: New Year's Day,  President's Day, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4th, the day after Labor Day - (Staff Development), Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day.  Notification will be given well in advance of any other closed days. Above & Beyond is closed for the week of July 4th and Christmas week. It is the parent's responsibility to find alternate care during these times.

The **Early Childhood Center** generally follows the Massapequa School District calendar. In addition to the holidays mentioned above, the Center will be closed on Election Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and Veterans Day. The Early Childhood Center is closed for Christmas recess, Winter recess, and Easter recess.
Our yearly calendars are posted online at www.gracedayschool.org. Check the calendar link.

**School Closing:** School closings are made to assure the safety of our families and children. It may become necessary to close the school in extreme weather situations or other unforeseen emergencies that prevent our faculty/staff from reaching the campus. You will be notified through our automated calling system using the home and mobile phone numbers we have on file.  A notice will be posted on our website.

**Faculty and Staff:**
All our faculty and staff members are highly qualified professionals. Grace follows all guidelines of the NY State Office of Child and Family Services. All our faculty fulfill the strict educational and continuing educational requirements of the above-mentioned office. Class development, as well as assignments of rooms and head and assistant teachers, usually take place in late August. This process involves various school internal criteria, thus, the school reserves the right to select the teacher for your child. Parents are not involved in choosing the teacher for their child(ren). Also, the School reserves the right to interchange or substitute head or assistant teachers if necessary. Such transitions, if necessary at all, are guided by the school so that our children can adjust smoothly. Parents/guardians will be informed about such personnel changes, and we ask you to support such transitions to help ease the emotional adjustment to your child(ren).

**Class Size and Teacher-Student Ratio**:
Class sizes and teacher-student ratios are provided by the New York State Office of Child and Family Services. We strictly follow the rules.

**TUITION**
Grace Above & Beyond payments are due by 6:30 pm on the last Friday of the month. Payments made after the given time are considered late, and a late fee of $10 per day will be added. In addition, 22% interest will be charged for the outstanding amount. Please remember that there is a non-refundable down payment of the full first months and last months to reserve your spot.

Early Childhood tuition payments are due according to the terms established in your signed Enrollment Agreement and the tuition schedule of the specific academic year. Please remember that there is a non-refundable down payment of $ 500.00 to reserve your spot. If you decide to no longer send your child to Grace, your down payment is non-refundable. If you stay to the end of the school year your down payment will be applied to your tuition payment account.

Children may not attend school unless FULL payment and ALL late fees have been paid up to date. THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE. Partial payment is not acceptable. Your child may not be permitted to attend school activities (i.e., graduation, moving up).

Please contact our Business Office at 516.798.1122 ext. 22 for any tuition-related issues.

**Late Payments & Fees**:
There is a minimum $35.00 fee for checks returned non-sufficient funds (NSF). Should the NSF result in any charges to our bank account, you will be expected to cover all costs on top of the $35.00 fee. A second NSF check will result in all fees being paid strictly in cash.

Persistent late payments are grounds for termination from the Early Childhood Center or the Above & Beyond Program. Child care/student spots will be lost after two weeks of non-payment. (Interest will still accrue until the account is paid in full.)

Clients are responsible for paying for all late payments, late fees, and a one-month notice even after termination of child care. Clients will also be held responsible for all court, attorney and collection agency fees involved in collection of late payments, late fees and one month notice.

**Absences/Sick Children**: Please advise the office if your child will be absent. Call 516.798.1122 and follow the prompts. It is especially important so we can inform families of any communicable disease while maintaining confidentiality. Some examples include strep throat, pink eye, or any other diseases common to the school environment. The teacher will conduct a daily healthcare inspection upon arrival. We follow NY State healthcare regulations. Sick children make the other children sick, too. "Sick", according to the regulations, is any child who may be running a fever, has a rash, unexplained symptoms, or who appears to be less than healthy. **It is up to the provider to decide if a child is too sick to be at school.**

24-Hour Rule: Any child who has shown signs of illness in the previous 24 hours may not attend the programs at Grace. A child must be fever-free for 24 hours, **without the use of fever-reducing medicine**. E.g., if your child was sick yesterday but doesn't have any symptoms or fever today in the morning, you must wait until tomorrow, hence, 24 hours, to send your child to school again.

Physician's Note:
We are an official NY State OCFS-certified school, therefore, we are responsible for notifying the State when we have more than three cases of the same illness in our school. Thus, if your child is sick for two or more days, our **Grace Physician Document must be filled out by a Pediatric Physician** stating the illness your child was diagnosed with and when it will no longer be communicable, hence, when the child may return to Grace. PLEASE NOTE: We will not accept any other Doctor's note than the form Grace provides to be filled out by the Pediatric Physician. Please see our Grace Sick Policy attached to the handbook and/or online posted on our homepage.

If a child becomes ill during the day, the parents or emergency contacts will be notified and expected to pick up the child within 30 minutes of our call. Ill children will be kept isolated from the rest of the children.

Please let your child's teacher know if your child will be out for an extended period of time (i.e. vacation). Again, please note that make-up days are not permitted.

**Emergency**: Should your child require emergency medical attention, we will have written permission to follow any steps necessary for his/her well being. We will notify you at the earliest possible time. You will be responsible for all medical expenses incurred. Upon injury, a parent will be called and an accident report shall be filled out and signed by the parent upon pickup.

**Birthday/Holiday Treats From Home:** Simple birthday snacks may be provided by parents to recognize children's birthdays. If you are bringing in a birthday or holiday snack for all to share, please consult with your child's teacher in advance. Food allergies, food sensitivities or medical conditions may exist. No gum and no lollipops are allowed. They are considered a choking hazard. We are no longer able to allow parties in the Infant through and inclusive the Two's club.

**Buildings and Grounds:** Grace has a rather large campus with various play areas and buildings. The Early Childhood Center and Grace Above & Beyond are ministries of Grace Church. Thus, the buildings and grounds belong to the Church and from time to time some buildings, rooms or areas might be used for Church programs as well. In all circumstances, our highest objective is the safety of your children.

**Damages:** Small repairs and accidents go with the territory when running a facility. However, parents/guardians will be held financially responsible for damages that cannot be classified as accident or fair wear and tear. (Such as deliberately breaking toys, poking holes in furniture etc).

**Notice of Termination <u>(Grace Above & Beyond only)</u>: In the event of termination of care by parents/guardians, A one-month written notice addressed to the attention of the Head of School is required.** The prepaid last month payment will be applied to your last month of use of our services. It is not refunded to you as it is part of a non-refundable payment to reserve your spot.

The **Early Childhood Center** enroll agreement is based on the academic year. We expect children to participate for the entire academic year.

The administration reserves the right to terminate Grace's contract for any reason. One month's notice will be given under usual circumstances. However, we reserve the right to immediate termination of services under certain circumstances. (i.e. children who might impose a threat to other children, non-payment etc.)

**Children's Health:** All children must have a completed health evaluation form and up-to-date immunizations according to NY State requirements

before the start of the program. Please also see our policy on sick children. In addition, permission slips (Blue Card) for health care such as medical emergency transportation to the hospital need to be on file for each child.

Please NOTE: By NY State Law, we are NOT allowed to admit children into our programs if we do not have all the required health documentation on file. Please ensure to make medical appointments asap after receiving the documents and hand in the forms on time. There will be no exception made. Also, there will be no deduction of tuition payments, nor will there be makeup days provided.

**Children are required to be up to date with all New York State mandated health laws, such as vaccinations etc.**

**Mandated Reporting:** As a childcare provider, we are mandated reporters. All providers must report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of a child to Child Protective Services (CPS) or to the police as required by law.

**Use of Tobacco, Alcohol and Illegal Substances**: Use of the above items is prohibited at all times for both the provider and parents of the children on school grounds.

**Supervision:** Children will be under direct supervision at all times.

**Authorized Persons:** Occasionally, your child may need to be picked up from school by someone other than a parent/guardian. Unless the names are listed on your emergency forms, your child will not be released. In case of any emergency, please provide a reliable list of people to reach.

**Grace Above & Beyond Parents (Infant Rooms):** You have the right to stop in anytime during your child's regular Above & Beyond hours. You do not need a reason. You are welcome to pop in anytime. (Please keep in mind that nap time isn't a good time to visit.) If you have any concerns, please speak to the director. We at Grace Above and Beyond will follow all NY State regulations, which can be found on the New York State Office of Children and Family Services website. If you suspect that your child has been abused or maltreated, you can contact the State's Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-342-3720.

**Forms:** All NY State required forms provided to you must be completed and returned to Grace prior to the first day of attendance. Please understand that we are not allowed to admit your child(ren) to school without the by NY State law required documentation. Also, all weekly fees must be paid prior to the start of attendance in any given week. If forms are not completed or fees are not paid, we will not be able to provide care for your child(ren).

**Parent Resource Programs:** Several times each year, **Grace Early Childhood Center and Above & Beyond** sponsor a series of lectures and

programs focused on child development and parenting. While certainly not mandated, we encourage parents to consider attending these programs. The goal is to make "good parents even better parents." Watch for notices.

**Grace Church Community Activities:** Each Year, Grace Church sponsors several community-wide events aimed at bringing the community together with family-focused activities such as our Harvest Fair, held at the end of September, Christkindl Market & Tree Lighting, held in December, and the Giant Yard Sale, held in June. In addition, these activities help raise funds to support our various ministries, including **Grace Early Childhood Center and Above & Beyond.** We would deeply appreciate your attending these events with your family and supporting our outreach ministries.

**Emergency and Disaster Planning:** The school has an emergency plan on file. We practice monthly evacuation drills and twice a year lockdown/lockout drills. An evacuation plan is posted in each classroom. Our primary location spot is inside the Church and our secondary location is inside the Floyd Jones House.

**Emergency and Disasters:** Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, super storms, disease outbreaks, and pandemics are no one's fault. In such cases, the school's first responsibility is to keep your children safe. Should there be more than one month that we are unable to provide education for your child, in person or online, we will return your tuition. Grace will not refund any non-refundable down payments or any fees that apply. Natural disasters are no reason to withdraw from your tuition agreement.

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual. Grace takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communications among faculty/staff and parents about children should be kept confidential. Just as the faculty/staff at Grace is keeping your data/information and private conversations confidential, we also expect the same from parents/guardians.

**Please make every effort to protect the doctrine of confidentiality in your dealings with others outside of Grace,** especially in regards to children. If you think of what information you consider sacred about yourself or your family, you will have an appreciation for what you would not want disclosed or revealed to others without your expressed permission. In essence, it is best to keep most school information as privileged. Don't disclose confidential data to others.

**Please Note:** Social Media, such as Facebook, etc., have become part of our daily lives. As they can be useful, they can also become a very dangerous tool, to say the least. Information can be spread in seconds and can create severe damage to yours as well as to your child's privacy and safety. Please DO NOT post anything about other children and families at

Grace without their permission. Confidentiality is key for the use of Social Media. Posting information about other children and families, as well as posting any kind of comments about Grace school without permission, can result in legal consequences.

*The policies in this Handbook continue to support the values that have sustained Grace for over 65 years.*

# Confirmation and acceptance of Grace Parent Handbook

I, _____ (please legibly print your full name) Hereby, confirm that I have read the Parent Handbook and accept all policies outlined in it. Moreover, I confirm that all my questions were clarified and explained to me to eliminate misunderstandings. I was informed that Grace is licensed by the NY State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and therefore operates following all NY State Laws and guidelines provided by the mentioned office. OCFS inspections take place unannounced and whenever the NY State office schedules Grace for such tasks. Grace welcomes OCFS and works closely with this office and the highly trained specialists recommended by OCFS. I also understand that the NY State Office of Children and Family Services' policies and guidelines, as well as the Grace Parent Handbook are living documents and they will be updated from time to time. Thus, it is my responsibility to ensure that I have the correct and updated copy available to me.

_____ _____

*Parent Signature* *Date*

_____ _____

*Signature Enrollment Officer* *Date*