

GCS



Elementary Handbook

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Please read, sign, and return the Commitment Agreements on pages 17.

Chapter 1

"An Introduction to Great Commission Schools"

I. Letter from the Principals

Dear Parents,

It is my privilege to introduce you to this unique Christian education ministry known as Great Commission Schools. Founded in 1996, Great Commission Schools is the product of a vision to provide quality, Christian education at an affordable price in a setting that is non-denominational yet markedly Christian. The primary purpose of this ministry is to make a difference in the lives of young people, leading them closer to Christ and providing them with the essential tools necessary to live a successful, productive Christian life.

The faculty, staff, administration, and board of Great Commission Schools are dedicated to providing the best possible Christian education to the children of our community. Thank you for considering Great Commission Schools for your child. May God bless you and your family.

Sincerely in Christ,

Mandi Bloom
Elementary Principal

II. Vision and Mission Statement

The *vision* of GCS is to see students excel in serving God and others; therefore, our *mission* is to provide a challenging Biblically based learning environment.

We achieve our vision and fulfill our mission by creating:

- Students that achieve excellence in academics and Christian character.
- A school that exhibits sound financial stewardship.
- Staff that models and cultivates excellence in the student body.
- Facilities that foster a positive learning environment.
- Families that covenant their commitment to the vision of the school.

III. Statement of Faith

Each member of the School Board, and each employee of the Corporation, having accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, shall subscribe annually in writing to the following Statement of Faith:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God (II Timothy 3:15; II Peter 1:21).

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30).

We believe in the deity of Christ (John 10:33); His virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:35); His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26); His miracles (John 2:11); His vicarious and atoning death (I Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:9); His resurrection (John 11:25; I Corinthians 15:4); His ascension to the right hand of the father (Mark 16:19); His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11).

We believe in the absolute necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit for salvation of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature; and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith are we saved (John 3:16-19; 5:24; Romans 3:23; 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved into the resurrection of life, and they that are lost into the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).

We believe in spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9, I Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28).

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life (Romans 8:13-14; I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

IV. The Corporation

Great Commission Elementary School, Great Commission Middle School, and Great Commission High School are owned and operated by a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation registered in the state of Pennsylvania under the name of Great Commission Schools.

V. The Bylaws

The Bylaws of Great Commission Schools outline the rules and procedures for the operation of the various schools under its ministry. Parents may request a copy of the GCS Bylaws.

VI. The Board of Directors

Great Commission Schools is governed by a Board of Directors who oversees the ministry and ensures that it operates according to the principles outlined in the Mission Statement, the Bylaws, and the Statement of Faith. The Board of Directors includes parents, and the school administration team.

VII. Faculty Selection

Faculty members of Great Commission Schools are selected according to the following criteria: Christian commitment, academic qualifications, teaching experience, and teaching skills. Article XI of the GCS Bylaws establishes the guidelines for faculty and staff.

VIII. Accreditation

Great Commission Schools is a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, GCS has the authority to issue diplomas recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

IX. A Christian School

GCS is above all else a Christian school. The core of this ministry revolves around the person of Jesus Christ. All those associated with this ministry, including board members, faculty, and staff, are held to a high standard of Christian conduct. Students who attend GCS should expect to hear, read, and study the Word of God on a daily basis. Every school day will be opened in prayer. Instruction will include frequent references to spiritual principles relevant to the topic of discussion.

Chapter 2 "Academics"

I. About the Curriculum

At GCS, ABeka, ASCI, and BJU curriculum materials are used in all elementary grades. These publishers use the King James Version of the Bible as part of their curricula, which for continuity will continue throughout all GCS academics. GCS uses the Positive Action Bible curriculum as a supplement to these programs. The Board of Directors of Great Commission Schools chooses curriculum materials based on their consistency in espousing Christian principles and their educational standards.

II. Progress Reports

The progress of the student may be viewed daily through the web site at www.renweb.com. Weekly progress reports are sent with students on the last school day of the week. Mid-term progress reports will be emailed home at the middle of each marking period. Report cards will be sent home at the end of each marking period in a white envelope. Parents are asked to sign the report card tab and return it to school with their child(ren) as acknowledgment of receiving the report card.

Chapter 3

"Parent Involvement"

I. Committee Service

GCS encourages parent involvement at all levels of its ministry. Incorporated into its bylaws are a number of standing committees in which parents, faculty, administration, and school board members work together to develop ideas and proposals to enhance the ministry of GCS. The GCS bylaws contain provisions establishing the following committees: Academic Affairs, Finance and Development, Personnel, Building and Grounds, and Legal/Legislative. Please be prayerfully considering how you as a parent can help develop and sustain this ministry.

II. News Updates

Parents with children in Great Commission Schools receive weekly email correspondence with up-to-date information concerning school activities.

III. Parent Orientation

GCS offers parent orientation at the beginning of the year that provides the opportunity for parents to meet with the principal and teachers and ask questions concerning the ministry of GCS.

IV. Parent-Teacher Conferences

GCS has scheduled parent/teacher conferences each year. These conferences are designed to keep parents informed of their child's academic progress. They are also a time for parents to meet teachers, ask questions, and discuss other issues related to their child's education. Parents may request a parent-teacher conference at any time during the school year to discuss the child in the classroom.

V. School Trips—Parents as Chaperones

There are times throughout the school year when parents may be asked to serve as chaperones. The school requires parents to follow the same standards of dress and conduct as required of the faculty and staff and must have appropriate state-mandated clearances. If a parent chaperone is being utilized as a driver, they must complete a parent driver form, complete with a copy of a driver's license and up-to-date insurance. Chaperones are to be considered an extension of Great Commission Schools. GCS policy does not permit younger siblings to attend field trips.

VI. Parent-Teacher Grievances

The Bible teaches that the best way to handle a problem with another person is by going directly to the party or parties concerned. The process is spelled out in detail in Matthew 18:15-17 and is amplified in Leviticus 19:15-18. The people of Israel were not to slander their neighbor, nor take revenge on their neighbor, nor bear a grudge against their neighbor. To put it another way, they were not to confess the sins of others to uninvolved third parties, nor were they to confess those sins to the person himself in a hurtful way, nor were they to confess those sins to themselves over and over again until bitterness and resentment resulted.

As we seek to resolve problems, let us always remember that it is God's reputation, not our own, that we are seeking to promote. We do that best when we seek to do things His way. His way involves attacking problems, not people. Guidelines to follow as we seek to do this are as follows:

Seek to gain knowledge of all sides of a problem before passing judgment on a matter. Go to your child's teacher and seek to resolve the problem at this level before going further. Go with the assumption that the teacher has your child's best interest at heart. If the problem cannot be resolved with your child's teacher, it is recommended that you present your concerns in writing to the Administration. Discussions at this level will most likely require the teacher's continued input.

If you feel that the issue has still not been handled in a proper and fair way you may bring your concern to the School Board. All concerns given to the Board must be in writing explaining the issue you have, the steps that have been taken to resolve the issue, and explaining how your concerns were handled at the teacher and administration level. Please make sure that you make clear your intent of the letter/concern.

****Note: Anonymous letters or phone calls will not be considered or accepted***

Chapter 4 GCS Policies

I. Admission Policy

Article XIII of the GCS Bylaws establishes the following guidelines for admission:

"Great Commission Schools admit students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic or other school administered programs."

In addition, GCS screens prospective students according to the following criteria: Christian commitment, academic record, and behavior. In admitting students to GCS, it is a priority to maintain a safe, Christian environment for all students in the school.

Special Student Circumstances

Pregnancy: Pregnant students may be required to withdraw from the school immediately or at the end of the grading period.

Marriage: Married students are not allowed to attend Great Commission Schools

Alternative life style: Great Commission Schools only admits and enrolls heterosexual students from heterosexual families.

II. Attendance Policy

Excuses

All absences require an acceptable written excuse or the absence is considered unexcused. The written excuse must be presented to the school on the day but no more than three days after the student returns from absence.

Absences – General

All absences require an acceptable written excuse or the absence is considered illegal. Acceptable excuses must fall into one of the following categories: illness, doctor's appointment, or participation in an educational trip for which a trip absence form has been filled out and approved by the school principal.

Absences – Excuses

Students must present an acceptable written excuse on the day they return from their absence to their homeroom teacher. Students who do not present their excuse on the first day back from absence will be given three days to provide an acceptable written excuse. In the event that the excuse is not presented the third day, the absence will be marked illegal. Once an absence has been marked illegal, excuses for it will no longer be accepted.

Absences – Unexcused

Absences that are unexcused are considered illegal absences. The compulsory school attendance law for the state of Pennsylvania dictates that private schools inform the school district in which your children reside whenever they accumulate three unexcused absences from school during a given school year.

The law requires Great Commission Schools to notify your school district after your child has accumulated three illegal absences. This includes illegal absences that accumulate as a result of excessive tardiness to school. Students who receive three illegal absences in a given school year will be in jeopardy of expulsion from Great Commission Schools. Schoolwork missed due to illegal absences will not be permitted to be made up.

Absences—Multiple

Students are permitted up to ten (10) excused absences in a given school year (this includes approved educational trip days). Documented extended medical absences* may be considered as one absence for the purpose of this clause. When a student reaches the seventh (7th) absence, parents will be notified. After the tenth day of absence during a given school year, parents/guardians will be notified and may be required to attend a meeting with the appropriate school principal. Additionally, parents/guardians will be required to provide a signed medical excuse for every absence after the tenth absence of a given school year. GCS reserves the right to retain (hold back) and/or dismiss any child who misses more than 35 days of school in a given school year.

Any absence of three or more consecutive school days will require a physician's excuse (or an approved educational trip absence form).

Extraordinary medical or surgical circumstances may be considered by the principal on a case-by-case basis.

Absences – Educational Trip

Students may be excused from school attendance to participate in an educational trip at the expense of their parents/guardians provided the following conditions are met. The school principal must approve a trip absence form that has been filled out and returned to the school five days prior to the scheduled trip and has been initialed by each of the student's teachers.

1. All excused absences must be considered in determining approval for educational absences. All requests for educational absences must include a written agreement between the parent and each of the student's teachers.
2. The parents/guardians agree that all assigned schoolwork will be completed prior to the student's return to school. Tests/Quizzes may be completed as determined by the teacher.
3. The student for which the request is made is in good academic standing and has an acceptable attendance record.
4. Special circumstances concerning non-vacation related absences or exceptions to this rule may be considered by the principal on a case-by-case basis. The academic standing of the student will be seriously considered.

Absences - *Extended Medical

Any absence of three or more successive days for which a physician's excuse is presented to the school may be counted as an extended medical absence.

Absence Policy

After students reach their 10th absence, they are required to have a doctor's excuse. Absences that are not accompanied with a doctor's excuse are considered illegal and are recorded as such. When a student accumulates three or more illegal absences the following consequences will be followed.

Illegal Absences

1. 3rd Illegal Absence – student will be assigned one day of detention
2. 4th Illegal Absence – student will be assigned one day of detention
3. 5th illegal Absence – student will be assigned one day of detention
4. 6th illegal Absence and all subsequent absences without a doctor’s excuse – student will be assigned in school suspensions.

*At the discretion of the principal, academic work missed on unexcused absences may be subject to point-deductions and/or not accepted.

Tardiness

Students must be in their homerooms prior to the opening school bell (8:30 for K-5th Grade and 8:20 for 6th—12th Grades). Students who are not in their homeroom at that time will be marked tardy. Students are not permitted to arrive at school after 11:00 AM unless they are at a doctor’s appointment.

Tardiness – Excused/Unexcused

No more than four tardies per year will be excused. When a student accumulates more than four tardies the following the consequences will be followed.

Unexcused Tardies

1. Fifth Unexcused Tardy – student will be assigned one day of detention
2. Tenth Unexcused Tardy – student will be assigned two days of detention
3. Fifteenth Unexcused Tardy – student will be assigned one day of in school suspension
4. Twentieth Unexcused Tardy – student will be assigned two days of in school suspension

Early Dismissals/Tardiness

Early Dismissal - General

Whenever possible, doctor’s appointments should be made for after school or weekends.

If this is not possible, the following procedure must be followed:

1. A note must be presented to the homeroom teacher stating the time and reason for early dismissal.
2. Come to the school office to pick up your child at the designated time. No student will be released to any individual other than a parent/guardian with written permission from the parent/guardian. Individuals other parents/guardians should be prepared to present proper identification.

Early Dismissal – Emergency

In the case of a family emergency, the student will be released when the request is made by a parent/guardian.

Early Dismissal – Return to School

A student who leaves the school for an appointment and return the same day will be given a half-day’s excused absence as long as the early dismissal procedures are followed and as long as the total time out of school does not exceed three hours. In the case of the total time exceeding three hours, the student will be given a full days absence.

Dismissal

1. If there is any change in your child's regular dismissal procedure (not riding regular bus/van or an alternate person for pick-up), a note **must** be given to the homeroom teacher in the morning. If a last minute change must be made, a parent must call the office.
2. If certain days will always be different, one note explaining the day(s) and change(s) will be sufficient.

****Please understand that we will not take a student's word for the change of dismissal. A note or call from a parent is a must.**

III. Behavior Policy

Great Commission students are expected to adhere to a Christian code of ethics and morality consistent with Christian principles of behavior; therefore, certain behavior is not permitted and will not be tolerated at GCS. The following guidelines establish the basic rules under which students should conduct themselves. The principal reserves the right to administer the maximum penalty or a lesser penalty depending on the severity of the offense.

Corrective Discipline

Order is necessary in any school to maintain control and to effectively teach. To teach self-discipline and respect for authority, certain standards of conduct are maintained at GCS.

Students are expected to comply with the standards and regulations of the school with a positive attitude. Correction by a teacher should be accepted without argument. If there is a question concerning the violation of a rule, the student should discuss it with the teacher privately. Courtesy and respect for fellow students is also expected. A student who does not respond to corrective discipline and who displays an attitude, which is consistently out of harmony with the spirit of the school will be considered for dismissal.

Discipline Categories and Consequences

Misconduct has been classified and divided into three categories, depending on the severity of the violation. The category and the consequences are at the discretion of the teachers, and/or the administration.

Category III

Violation of US, state, or city laws; Activities that violate biblical moral codes; Activities that seriously threaten the safety of the student or classmates Activities that show gross lack of respect for authority or property or conduct. Violations of Category III rules contain but are not limited to:

1. Acts of hatred and racial discrimination
2. Inappropriate use of anger
3. Using or possessing a weapon at school or at a school activity
4. Frequent and repeated violation of Category II rules
5. Fighting
6. Stealing
7. Destroying school property or personal property
8. Threats of any kind: verbal, written, or implied. GCS adheres to a policy of zero tolerance for this behavior.

Consequences: Offenses may result in suspension or expulsion/withdrawal after coming before a disciplinary committee.

Category II

Activities and attitudes that show a lack of respect for authority or frequent and repeated violations of Category I rules, such as, but not limited to, the following offenses:

1. Repeatedly ignoring homework responsibilities
2. Disrespect of authority
3. Leaving school grounds without permission
4. Using profanity
5. Damaging school property or personal property
6. Lying or Cheating

Consequences: Offenses may result in one or more of the following: Student-Administration conference, Parent-Administration conference, or Detention.

Category I

Activities of minor disturbances that prevent classroom order and instruction, such as, but not limited to the following offenses:

1. Disrespect of individual classroom rules
2. Dress/Hair code violation
3. Late homework
4. Food (including candy/gum) or drink in class or hallways (Water bottles may be permitted in classrooms with teacher permission, but never in the auditorium or computer lab.)
5. Using cell phone or other non-educational technology during the school day without permission. Cell phones must be turned off and in backpacks or in the office during the school day.

Consequences: Offenses may result in loss of recess, additional work, silent lunch, phone call or note home, Student-Administration conference, suspension of extra-curricular activities or Category II consequences for recurrent offenses.

Definition and Expectations Concerning Conduct and Discipline

Additional work - Work assignments to be completed before, during, or after school.

Detention is from 3:00 pm – 3:45 pm with the principal. Failure to attend detention at the appointed time will result in additional days being required. Subsequent failure to attend will result in action by a disciplinary committee. A one school day advance notice will be given for all detentions. Parents are responsible to pick up students after the detention is complete.

Expulsion will be recommended if it becomes apparent that the school will not be able to meet the needs of a student, or if that student's behavior is preventing classroom instruction. Expulsion may also be recommended for violation of Category III or II rules, unresolved academic or disciplinary probation, or failure to correct the deficiencies specified in probationary admission. When expulsion is recommended, a date of withdrawal from school will be set and the withdrawal procedure followed. The expulsion date may be immediate. Recommendations for expulsion will require the approval of the GCS Board of Directors before definitive action is taken.

The school reserves the right to dismiss any student who does not, or the parents who do not, cooperate with the educational process at GCS as determined by the administration. If the discipline at home and in school is not effectual and disobedience is continued, parents will be

required/asked to withdraw their child(ren).

Silent Lunch - Students may be isolated during the normal lunch period. The student will be allowed to eat or study. He/she will not be allowed to talk to other students during this time.

Cheating Policy

Cheating on a test or a quiz will result in a zero and a note or phone call home. Second offenses will not be tolerated and will result in a zero, academic probation, and a parent-administration conference.

If this behavior continues the student may appear before the school board for possible expulsion.

Cheating offenses apply to any cheating incident in any class on a test or quiz, cumulative throughout the academic year. The policy will apply to any student who cheats or enables another student to cheat.

IV. School Property

Campus Cleanliness

Keeping Great Commission Schools' campus clean is everyone's job. We believe that Christ would want us to have a servant heart and one that is responsible toward our facility and take care of not only personal belongings and classrooms, but also to keep all other areas of the building clean. It is important that our facility maintain a clean and orderly appearance not only for ourselves but also for those who come to visit. Their first impression of Christ and Christians could be based on how our school looks.

Respecting our community and neighborhood is an important value. It is important for all students to work toward building up the area in which we live, learn, and work. God calls Christians to respect the community where we live, and to impact it for Him.

School Property and Materials

All students at Great Commission Schools are expected to take good care of the equipment, materials and school property used during the school day/year. This is true of big (and often expensive) items such as computers, camcorders, VCR's/CD/DVD players, smartboards, projectors, etc., as well as small items, such as textbooks. This is being a good steward of what God has given our school. Should a student behave irresponsibly with any of the school's materials or equipment and as a result break, lose, or destroy the equipment or material, the student and/or family will be required to replace the item.

No food or drink is allowed in the hallways or auditorium unless there is a special event or party. All food and drink brought from home for lunch should be stored in the appropriated container and not taken out until the designated lunch or break time.

V. Dress Code Policy

The GCS "Dress Code" is designed to promote modesty and neatness. Modesty can be defined as making sure our bodies are covered in such a way as to honor the Lord and not to offend and/or tempt those around us. Neatness can be defined as a look that is clean with clothes that are properly fitting and in good repair.

Listed below are the guidelines students must follow when attending GCS. Students who come to school out of dress code will be pulled from class and asked to remedy the problem. In the event of a dress code violation that cannot be remedied at school (first offense), parents will be notified and asked to bring a change of clothes for their child. The child will remain out of class until the change arrives at school.

Consistent dress code violations will be disciplined as follows:

Second Offense – Students will serve a lunch detention.

Third Offense – Students will serve an after-school detention on a day that is approved by the administrative personnel.

Subsequent Offenses: A meeting with parents/guardians to discuss dress code

Female Dress Code

Slacks – Regular jeans of any color and capris are acceptable. Students are permitted to wear leggings providing that they are not see-through, of one solid color with no distracting patterns, and have a top that goes to finger tip length.

Shorts – are to be no shorter than 2 inches above the knee. For physical education and sporting events, students should wear mid-thigh length spandex underneath the shorts.

Inappropriate items include pajama pants and anything excessively tight-fitting. Undergarments should not be visible. Pants are not to have holes in them.

Shirts – Tops of shirts should be modest with no visible cleavage (even in bent over position) and no bare skin at midriff. Undergarments (bra straps, tank straps, etc) should not be visible. All shirts and tops must be able to be tucked into slacks, pants, or skirts. Hoodies are permitted, but the hood is not to be worn.

Inappropriate items include tank tops, sleeveless shirts, midriff tops, any tops with bare shoulders or off-the-shoulder necklines. Open-backed shirts are not acceptable. Any lace or see-through material must not reveal any of the previously mentioned prohibitions.

Dresses and Skirts - Casual dresses and skirts at the knee are acceptable. Slits in skirts and dresses must be at the knee. Top of dress must meet shirt requirements above.

Boys' Dress Code

Pants: All pants must be pulled up to the waist. Shorts to the knee are acceptable. No excessively tight-fitting pants/sweatpants. Pants should not have holes.

Shirts: Golf shirts, sweaters, turtlenecks, and short or long sleeved T-shirts are permitted. Hoodies are permitted but the hood may not be worn.

Facial hair: Must be kept neat and trimmed (at the discretion of administrative personnel)

Headwear: No hats are to be worn in the school during school hours

Inappropriate Items: Earrings, body piercing, and excessively tight fitting clothes are not permitted.

Both boys and girls at school or any school function:

Physical Education Uniforms - Athletic clothing and proper footwear must be worn that allows students to

safely and actively participate in physical education class. All athletic clothing must adhere to the previously mentioned dress code.

Footwear: Loafers, boots, flats, dress shoes, athletic shoes, sneakers, leather deck shoes, sandals, and flip-flops are acceptable. Elementary students must have a back strap if they wear athletic sandals/flip flops.

Inappropriate items include slippers. Lab sciences will have additional footwear guidelines.

Hair: Neat, clean, combed, and trimmed. No mohawks or other extreme styles or colors that would prove to be an educational distraction to others (to be determined at the discretion of the principal)

Tattoos: No visible tattoos permitted on students. Faculty, staff, and volunteers will attempt to cover questionable tattoos (at the discretion of administrative personnel)

Body piercing: No visible body piercings other than girls' ears. Small nose-studs for girls are permissible as long as they meet the "not an educational distraction" guidelines.

No clothing may have objectionable words, phrases, images of persons, characters, or groups; nor shall the placement (location) of any words on clothing be objectionable.

* Objectionable will be defined by school administrators as necessary.

* All dress code violations will be referred to administrative personnel by staff members and disciplinary action will be decided upon.

VI. Financial Policy

Tuition at Great Commission Schools is due on the fifteenth of each month. The first tuition payment is due in August and the last payment is due in May. There will be a \$25.00 late fee assessed to those accounts not paid by the fifteenth. It is the responsibility of parents to call the school office whenever a payment is going to be late. Those parents who notify the school by the fifteenth will receive a two week grace period to make their payment. Parents who carry an account balance into the next month must schedule a meeting with the superintendent to make payment arrangements. Parents who do not adhere to these guidelines may be asked to remove their children from the school.

Parents who wish to enroll their children must make a \$250.00 deposit per child by April 30th. The book fee of \$300.00 is due on June 1 (or the next business day). No student will be admitted to GCS until the first tuition payment and book fees are paid. Academic records will not be released until all accounts are cleared.

Enrollment deposits are not refundable after June 30. Book fees are not refundable after July 31. Refunds for students who transfer after these dates (because they have moved their place of residence or because of financial hardship) will be given at the discretion of the superintendent.

The following tuition rates fees have been approved for the 2019-2020 school year.

Tuition:

Elementary (grades K-5)	\$4,850.00
Middle School (grades 6-8)	\$5,120.00
High School (grades 9-12)	\$5,360.00
GACTC (9-12)	\$3,100.00

Fees:

Enrollment fees	\$250 per student
Book/Technology fees	\$300 per student

VIII. Scholarships

Scholarships are available upon completion of the online application through FACTS Management System. *All families* are encouraged to apply.

Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) Recipients: Students who are eligible for an OSTC scholarship will be accepted on a provisional basis. Families enrolling under the OSTC scholarship are responsible for the full tuition rates and any monies received through OSTC will be applied to the student’s account. Upon enrollment, families must begin paying off tuition. If the full tuition is received through OSTC monies, the family will be provided a refund. If the amount received is less than the full tuition, the family must pay the difference before re-enrolling their child(ren) for the following school year. If the balance is not paid-in-full before re-enrolling, denied enrollment is possible.

Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) – Families requesting scholarships need to fill out a FACTS application (online) to determine the need. Disbursement of monies will then be determined by the Central Pennsylvania Community Foundation (CPCF) and families that are selected to receive scholarships will be notified via a CPCF representative.

VII. Medication Dispensing Policy

State law allows over-the-counter acetaminophen and cough drops to be given to students with the permission of the parent. Prescription medication can be given by the school nurse with completed paperwork.

VIII. Report Card Policy

Report cards are issued the week after the end of the marking period. The envelope must be signed and returned to the school by the date designated.

IX. Standardized Testing Policy

GCS conducts standardized testing (Terra Nova) on a yearly basis for K, 3, 5, 8 and 11th grades. GCS will order and administer the tests and provide a comprehensive analysis of the test results to parents when requested.

X. Transportation

State law requires that school districts transport any student that resides in their district to the private school of their choice provided it lie within a ten-mile radius of the edge of the school district boundary. Students who attend GCS will have the opportunity for transportation according to the provisions of this law. The following school districts provide transportation for GCS students: Altoona, Hollidaysburg, Spring Cove, Bellwood, Penn Cambria, and Tyrone. Parents who wish us to request busing for their children should circle yes on the enrollment form.

SUPERVISION AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

Except for participation in official practices, rehearsals, detention, meetings, or help classes, elementary students on campus after 3:20 pm should report to the school office.

RULE FOR PICKING UP STUDENTS AFTER SCHOOL OR EVENTS:

It is not the responsibility of the coaches or teachers to provide child care for students not picked up by 3:20. After-care charges may be assessed for students who consistently remain after 3:20 (at the rate of \$5.00 per any portion of 1/2 hour up to \$10 per hour).

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL PICK-UP POLICY

To protect the safety of our students, parents, and dismissal staff, it is the policy of Great Commission Schools that all children in the elementary school (K-5):

- Be picked up between 3:00 and 3:20
- Must be picked up using the alley between the school and 7th Avenue (coming in from 12th Street going toward 11th Street)
- Must have access to their seat from the passenger side of the vehicle
- Must be able to buckle their own seatbelt
- The person picking up the student(s) must remain in their vehicle.

**If there are both elementary and older students being picked up together, the elementary procedure is to be followed.

It is the policy of Great Commission Schools that any student in the middle (6-8) or high (9-12) school being picked up between 3:00 and 3:05pm must be picked up using the same alley pick-up procedure as the elementary (due to busing). After 3:05 middle and high school students may be picked up using 11th Street. Cars must come up 11th Street from 7th Avenue toward 6th Avenue allowing students access from the sidewalk to the passenger side of the vehicle. If the vehicle comes down 11th Street from 6th Avenue toward 7th Avenue, the student is required to use the crosswalk at the top of the street along 6th Avenue to access the vehicle.

XI. Visiting the School

All visitors to GCS must report to the school office immediately upon entering the building. Parents, friends, and family members are not permitted to visit students while class is in session. However, an observation visit to the classroom can be coordinated with the school office and teacher(s). Parents also have the option to come and have lunch with their students (arrangements will need to be made to order lunch if necessary). Parents who need to speak with their children should come to the school office where a staff member will notify the student's teacher. If necessary, the student will be sent to the school office.

**If you are volunteering and need to speak with your child, please report through the office and the classroom teacher will be contacted.

Chapter 5 "Enrollment Information"

I. Enrollment Procedures

Parents who wish to enroll a child in Great Commission Schools must first schedule an appointment with the appropriate principal to discuss placement. Placement exams may be given in Math and English. Students will be placed in class based on test results. The admission will then be referred to an enrollment committee consisting of the administrator, principals, and a designated Board member.

Parents must provide the following items to GCS at the time of the initial interview:

~a copy of the child's most recent report card

~a copy of an IEP (if child has one)

II. Paperwork

The following paperwork must be turned in at the time of enrollment:

- ~Enrollment Form
- ~Record Request Form
- ~Original of Birth Certificate
- ~Original of Social Security Card
- ~a copy of the child's shot record
- ~a deposit of \$250.00 per child enrolled
- ~copy of parent driver's license and current utility bill (if AASD student)

III. Transferring Records

Parents who wish to enroll a child in Great Commission Schools must fill out and sign a record request form available in the school office. GCS will send this form to the previous school. Parents who wish to transfer their child must have the new school request the school records in writing. Note: GCS policy is to transfer all records, retaining only report card or transcript information.

GCS reserves the right to delay acceptance/attendance to GCS until all the appropriate documentation has been received and reviewed by the teacher, principal and enrollment committee.

GREAT COMMISSION SCHOOLS
Commitment Agreements

The Honor Code Commitment

Because I believe that honor towards God and man is essential, I promise not to lie, cheat, steal, defame others, intentionally damage the property of another, or remain silent when I have knowledge of these actions.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

The Student Commitment

I desire to attend Great Commission Schools and am willing to be under the authority of my parents in submitting and deferring to their wishes concerning enrollment at GCS.

I understand that Christian teachers are in partnership with my parents. I will strive to obey them also as they seek to train me according to God's Word.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will seek to live a godly life in and out of school in order that Jesus Christ will be glorified.

I understand that failure to uphold these principles and guidelines of the Student- Family Handbook may result in my dismissal from GCS.

I will actively participate in a church youth group while attending GCS.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

The Parent Commitment

We are in support of the educational philosophy, objectives, Student-Family Handbook, standards of conduct, and the principles of this covenant. We will cooperate with the teachers in a spirit of partnership in the training of our child.

If at any time during the training of our child, we can no longer work together in a spirit of unity, and all reasonable avenues of communication are exhausted, we will withdraw our child from Great Commissions Schools. We understand that failure by our child to uphold these principles and guidelines of the Student-Family Handbook may result in dismissal from GCS.

We will faithfully participate in a local church.

I have discussed the Student-Family Handbook with my child.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

The Commitment from the School

The faculty and staff of GCS pledge by God's grace to uphold the principles of this covenant and guidelines as we assist the parent in training their child(ren).

Teacher Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal Signature: _____ **Date:** _____