



# GRACE FAMILY

Home School Group

## **GFHSG Participant Handbook**

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## GFHSG Board and Advisory Committee

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## "What Is Grace Family Home School Group?"

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Grace Family Home School Group is a long name for a rather lean organization. If you are new to GFHSG, you might be wondering what it is designed to do.

GFHSG is a confederation of families involved in homeschooling. We are unabashedly Christian, and invite all of the members to recommend others that would fit our philosophy of homeschooling. GFHSG maintains a contact list, holds kindergarten and high school graduation along with a student achievement night, organizes parties, produces a yearbook, and does a few other things for its affiliated families. The primary purpose of these services is to give homeschooling families access to other homeschooling families in our area so that we can share ideas and resources, and generally lend one another moral support.

If you are new to the homeschool "adventure", you will probably find some experienced GFHSGers who can give you advice. If you are wondering about a particular book or curriculum, you can probably find someone who has used it and can give you a review.

GFHSG is, by intention, an organization with a limited scope of operations. We do not lobby or engage in any direct political activity. We do not even attempt to provide many of the things needed for homeschooling. There are other organizations which adequately address these types of things, and GFHSG can point you to them.

How do the other GFHSG things happen? It starts with YOU. If you have something you would like to share with your fellow GFHSGers, you can do that through our website [www.homeschool-life/fl/gfhsg](http://www.homeschool-life/fl/gfhsg). Perhaps you want to organize some kind of event, study group, trip, or whatever else you might dream up that would be of interest to homeschoolers. Just submit your request via the website by clicking on "Calendar" and then in the upper right-hand corner, click on the "Submit new event" link. Once your event is OK'd, it will show up on the calendar. If you have any takers, you've got your event. GFHSG wants to be a conduit for many different workgroups and events over the years. Some will be one-time events, while others will be recurring. They will happen because GFHSGers take action. That's how most GFHSG things occur.

One exception to the "liberty" described above: If you want to use the GFHSG name in conjunction with your event, please check with the advisors in advance. Ordinarily this is not an issue, since most groups and events don't use the name directly.

So if you think of GFHSG as a massive organization with high-powered officers, formal committees, big budgets, lots of scheduled events, and a top-to-bottom power structure, you have probably confused us with Tallahassee or Washington, D.C.! But if you think of GFHSG as a sort of consortium or network of families in the Tampa Bay area who share an interest in education with the ultimate in parental involvement, then you have the right idea about GFHSG.

This "light weight" design is no accident. First, the advisors are all volunteers; then, most importantly, the genius of homeschooling is parents with ample time to spend with their children. This is rare today. We don't want anything to get in the way of that goal, especially not GFHSG itself!

Your GFHSG Board of Advisors

# **Grace Family Home School Group Statement of Faith**

## **Section 1:**

The GFHSG Statement of Faith is a broad declaration that we consider vital for the furthering of this ministry. It is required that all persons seeking membership be able to agree with this broad minimum statement. This is not an attempt to overrule denominational distinction. Rather, it is a means for those of varying denominational persuasions to unite in the simple truths and precepts of God's Holy Word.

## **Section 2:**

We believe the sixty-six canonical books of the Bible as originally written, are the divinely inspired and inerrant Word of God. As such, the Bible provides the only foundation of Christian faith and practice.

## **Section 3:**

We believe in God the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **Section 4:**

We believe that God created humans as male and female and that He created marriage to be a covenant relationship between one man and one woman modelled after the relationship of Christ and the church.

## **Section 5:**

We believe that Jesus Christ, who was God in the flesh, died, rose again, and now sits at the right hand of the Father, making intercession on behalf of the believer.

## **Section 6:**

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God's power within us; therefore, we seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

## **Section 7:**

We believe that faith in the atoning sacrifice and grace of Jesus Christ is the only basis for eternal salvation, and true faith results in works of righteousness.

## **Section 8:**

We believe in the person, work, power, fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit, who teaches and comforts the believer.

## **Section 9:**

We believe that Jesus Christ will return visibly to the earth to judge the living and the dead.

## **Section 10:**

There is spiritual unity of all true believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section 11:**

We believe the mission of the church is to advance God's Kingdom by extending to the world the love of God in word and in deed and to disciple the believers into spiritual maturity.

## **Section 12:**

The family is the primary God-established institution for the training of children of righteousness and in preparation for their life purpose.

## **Section 13:**

You must be able, with a clear conscience, agree to the statement of faith in order to teach a class, lead an activity or be a member.

## **Section 14:**

Failure to adhere to any provision of the statement of faith is grounds for termination of membership to GFHSG.

## **GFHSG Policies and Procedures**

A cooperative is “marked by willingness to cooperate; compliant”—all families must cooperate and be compliant in order for our co-op to run smoothly. The following guidelines and expectations will help our co-op to do just that. Failure to abide by policies and procedures may result in immediate dismissal from co-op without refund, or denial to return the following school year.

### **Attendance**

We expect families to miss no more than 3 days per year. With only 24 days of co-op each year, any more than 3 absences causes much fallout. We need every teacher, assistant, and student! Just as employment, recreational and extracurricular activities expect attendance commitment, so do we. A true co-op only works if *everyone* has it as a top priority. We know that extenuating circumstances can arise, and thus need to be discussed with the advisory board. If your family tends to be sick often, your work schedule conflicts with co-op days, or your family schedules frequent vacations or activities on Fridays, then this co-op may not be the right fit for you.

We expect all students to arrive to class *on time* and *fully prepared*, having completed any homework prior to arriving. If a student is taking an academic class, they need to commit to the academic work and have their homework completed prior to class. Students regularly not completing homework may be dropped from the class without refund. As homeschooling parents, we are responsible for our students’ participation and performance. We also expect all teachers to arrive to class *on time* and *fully prepared*. It is not fair nor respectful to others when we are late or unprepared.

Teachers/assistants may not bring their children with them to classes. All children are expected to be in their assigned classes or study hall. All nursery aged children must be in the nursery.

We expect all assistants to attend the full class period for all of the classes they are assigned to, regardless of the number of students in the room or activities being done that day. It is the assistant’s job to help with classroom management/crowd control, as well as to be ready if and when the teacher needs them. We also must have more than one adult per classroom for liability purposes.

### **Absentee Policy**

If a family is going to be absent, the parent must post it on the website (not Facebook) in the “Absent” forum and the parent is responsible for securing someone to substitute for them in their assigned classes as teacher/assistant. Names and phone numbers are on the website under “Family Info” to help in finding a substitute, or you may also post in the Facebook group to ask for substitutes. If necessary, call or text the coordinator—Christy’s cell 813-957-7380. If the parent is going to be absent but wants the children to attend, another adult must attend with the children and is expected to substitute for the absent parent’s assignments teaching and assisting.

## **Teaching and/or Assisting**

All parents will be teaching and/or assisting in classes, based on their length of time spent at co-op, and the needs of the classes. Five to six time periods are offered each year, so the expectation for teaching/assisting will be 3 out of 5 or 4 out of 6 class periods per family. If your child needs extra attention, you may be asked to assist in his/her classes. All teachers/assistants are expected to arrive to class on time and fully prepared. It is the job of the assistants to help with classroom behavior management, assist in the lessons as needed, as well as to take attendance at the beginning of every class period. Teachers, please keep receipts for class expenses and submit them with an Expense Reimbursement Form (see Appendix) to be reimbursed.

## **Additional Parent Duties**

Every year we have a spreadsheet for parents to sign up for an additional role throughout the year. Example duties may include planning a field trip, coordinating a holiday party, coordinating a community service project, etc. Each parent needs to sign up for one area.

## **Tardiness**

While occasional unforeseen circumstances do arise, routine tardiness is unacceptable and presents disruptions to classes, as well as communicates disrespect to others' time. Students, teachers, and assistants are expected to be in their assigned classrooms prior to the class start time. Teachers are encouraged to post the "STOP" sign on their door at the start of class time. If your child arrives to class late and the stop sign has already been placed, the child needs to go to study hall. Your child will be counted as absent since he/she was not in class. Teachers/assistants must record attendance in the classroom folders for each period. Do not mark someone as "present" if you have merely seen them on campus that day. Only mark those present who are in the classroom.

## **Assembly**

This is a short time (15 minutes) for all of us to come together, listen and learn. It is expected that all children and adults join us for assembly so that we can address everyone at once. We would like for those caring for our youngest children to join us also, but that will be the childcare teacher's choice. We will Facetime the assembly meeting into the childcare room if requested. Parents are responsible for their children during assembly. Please assure that they are quiet, respectful, listening, and participating.

## **Lunch Room**

Everyone will eat in the designated lunch room only or outside with a parent. Please note that all children younger than high school age *must* be directly supervised by an adult during lunch time. Parents, you are responsible to assure that your children are supervised. Everyone is expected to clean up after themselves, throwing away all trash, cleaning up any food on the floor, wiping down the table, etc.

## **Parents' Room Expectations**

Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the parents' room and study hall will share one large space. All students are to remain in the study hall space to allow parents their own space to socialize, prepare for classes, and hopefully relax when not teaching/assisting. If a child is not in their scheduled class, they must be in study hall.

## **Class Behavior Expectations and Discipline**

Be polite to adults, and address them as Mr. or Mrs.

If there is a problem in the classroom:

The teacher and/or assistant will address the student and redirect his or her behavior. If the student does not change his or her behavior, the teacher/assistant will complete a behavior report form (found in each classroom attendance folder). The completed report form needs to be given to Jen Leuthold. Jen (and/or the teacher) will then speak to the parent regarding the situation and the parent is responsible to follow up with their child. \*If your child receives three negative behavior report forms, you will be required to attend classes with your child to enforce appropriate behavior.\* Teachers, this procedure is mandatory to help us uphold appropriate behavior standards.

Children must be in their assigned classrooms or in study hall, no exceptions. Hall passes are available in every classroom folder for students to get a drink of water or use the restroom with teacher approval.

If you are not scheduled to teach or assist and you would like to stay with your children in a class, please approve it with the classroom teacher.

**DO NOT BRING TO CLASS:** Electronics, knives, or anything not used in class. This has become an issue in the past several years. There is no need for electronics (cell phone, tablets, laptops, etc) in most classes. If the student is using them, the teacher has the right to take them for the remainder of the co-op *day*. If this persists, the student will be withdrawn from the class. As for knives, other weapons, or any items that could harm students—we will not tolerate this at co-op. To no one's surprise, having drugs, alcohol etc. will be automatic dismissal from the co-op.

## **Dress Code**

We don't want to "police" what each child wears, so please keep your child's clothing modest and pleasing to the Lord. We will notify you if there is a problem with the way your child is dressed. A good rule of thumb is skirts and shorts reach to arm's length, no midriffs showing, and no low cut shirts. NO wheeled shoes, skates, rollerblades, etc are allowed at co-op.

## **Parents On Campus at All Times**

A requirement of the church as well as of the co-op is that a parent or responsible adult is on campus with their children at all times. Should you need to leave campus for any reason, you must designate a responsible adult to be in charge of your children while you are gone.

## **Building Use and Clean Up**

Bay Hope graciously allows us to use their building, we want to be good stewards and treat it better than our own. Every family is assigned to help clean a room at the end of the day. (Refer to Clean Up List in Appendix) The study hall monitor will also be the 'hall monitor' to check for roaming or lost students, to assure proper building use, and watch for safety issues. Additional hall monitors will also be assigned to help monitor the various areas of Bay Hope.

## **Health Issues / First Aid Kits**

Make sure any allergies or medical issues are addressed with the child's teachers. Please text a member of the advisory committee if a first aid kit is needed.

## **Fire Evacuation Plan**

Teachers and assistants will STAY WITH the class they are assigned to, and get that class safely to their outside checkpoint.

Take your class roster with you.

Close your classroom door when you leave. This will tell us that the room has been checked by the teacher.

Parents not teaching/assisting please report directly to the infant/toddler rooms to help escort and carry our youngest children to safety.

## **General Safety**

The building doors will remain locked throughout the day. It is in our best interest to keep our doors closed at all times and not prop them open. If you ever see someone in the building that you are not familiar with, please ask them, "May I help you?" then text/call or find Christy (813-957-7380) or Jen (507-398-2284).

## Communication Expectations

In order to assure that everyone knows up to date information, we require all families to engage in using our website (see recommended settings below), receiving and reading all email correspondence, and subscribing to our group text service (Remind). There is a Facebook group that is used for socializing and connecting, but please note this is *not* an official GFHSG mode of communication. Please use the website for all official communication. Remind is used as a one way, mass texting option to reach all families with pertinent and time sensitive information. Please do not reply to mass texts so that it does not become burdensome to the group. You may individually message users through Remind to reach someone directly. We will also not abuse the frequency of large group Remind messages, as we do not want it to be a nuisance. Remind messages are primarily used to convey last minute changes, share pictures of lost and found items each week, and provide reminders for specific events (ie spirit days, picture days).

To Join the Remind group... **\*\*ALLOW NOTIFICATIONS\*\***

Send a text to  
**81010**

Text this message  
**@gfhsgroup**

### RECOMMENDED WEBSITE SETTINGS:

Group web site address: [www.homeschool-life.com/fl/gfhsg](http://www.homeschool-life.com/fl/gfhsg)

Family Login: pick your own username

Family Password: pick your own personal password

**Please input as much info as you like for your family profile (pictures, birthdays, etc).** When adding the names of your children, please include last names, as these are the same names that appear on the class rosters.

FYI – Setting your profile up like the following, will be very helpful. Feel free to do what you like, but I do think you should *at least* receive a daily digest as some teachers will be inputting class information on the website (syllabus, class updates, needed materials, etc), and also check the website for updates before co-op each Friday for any "IMMEDIATE" needs.

*Weekly Email: Would you like to receive a weekly email update? **Yes***

*Forum Emails: Would you like to receive forum notifications via email (not just the ones you create)? **Yes***

*Many Emails: Would you like to receive notifications IMMEDIATELY? **Yes or No** (you would probably prefer a 'daily digest', but select "yes" if you want to see them immediately. On occasion, someone is giving away freebies, so you may want to see that right away.)*

*Daily Digest: Would you like to receive emails once a day? **Yes***

*Daily Digest Delivery Type: **Summary** (for complete details, you will have to log in to the website) or **Detail** (the complete content should appear in your email)*

*Classifieds: Would you like to receive all classifieds notifications once a day via email? **Yes***

## Account Payments

Payment for GFHSG classes is due before the start of the school year. If you are unable to pay the balance of your account, please contact the advisory committee and a monthly payment schedule can be arranged. See below for instructions and Frequently Asked Questions. Contact [gfhsgpay@gmail.com](mailto:gfhsgpay@gmail.com) with any questions.

### Instructions to Pay GFHSG Fees via PayPal

1. Go to the GFHSG web page, <http://www.homeschool-life.com/fl/gfhsg/>. Click the Login icon and log in with your user ID and password (the same way you registered for classes).



2. Once you've logged in, click the PayPal icon in the top right corner of the screen.



3. You will then see a statement of your account. To pay your balance in full, check the **Pay All** checkbox, then click the **PAYPAL** button.

If you wish to make a partial payment, click the **Pay All** checkbox, enter the amount you wish to pay, then click the **PAYPAL** button.

**Accounting**  
Statement of Account | [Invoice & Payment Details](#)

**Outstanding Balances**

Account: General			Total:	\$290.00	PAYPAL
Category / Invoice	Description	Due Date	Amount	Pay	
CR	[Total Balance]		\$290.00	290.00	
			Pay All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

4. You will see a redirect page for a few seconds, then you should be automatically directed to PayPal. If you are not redirected within a few seconds, click the Add to Cart button.

**PayPal Payment**

If you are not redirected to PayPal momentarily, please click the button below to proceed.

**Add To Cart**

5. Continue through the standard PayPal prompts to finalize your payment. You can use PayPal with or without a PayPal account. Your transaction will appear on your bank or credit card statement as “PAYPAL \*GFHSG.” Please contact [gfhsipay@gmail.com](mailto:gfhsipay@gmail.com) if you have any issues paying your fees.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### ***Is my balance up-to-date?***

Your balance should be up-to-date for all of your current class registrations, including any credits for Box Tops that have been previously submitted. Contact Becky Miller if you have any questions about the amount you owe.

### ***Can I make partial payments?***

Yes. See instructions in step #4 above. You must click the **Pay All** checkbox **FIRST**, then adjust the amount you wish to pay.

### ***Can I just send payment for my class or registration fees as a “Friends and Family” payment through PayPal?***

**NO!** Please don't send money to GFHSG as a “Friends and Family” payment.

GFHSG is legally a non-profit corporation in the state of Florida and is now a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt charity with the IRS, and as such, our transactions must comply with IRS regulations. Friends and Family payments are designed for personal transactions only.

**HOWEVER**, if you are paying someone for a field trip or extra event, then you **WILL** need to pay through “Friends and Family”, or the added fee will be applied to your account.

### ***Since GFHSG has obtained tax-exempt status with the IRS, can I get a tax deduction for my registration or class fees?***

As a tax-exempt organization by the IRS, any donation *above and beyond services you've received* is eligible for a tax deduction. However, yearly registration fees and class costs are **NOT** tax deductible.

### ***If I drop one of my child's classes, can I get a refund of the class registration fees?***

This will be handled on a class-by-class basis. You will be responsible for paying for any supplies that the teacher has already purchased for your child, along with all contractor art class fees **IN FULL** per semester.

### ***How else can I pay my class registration fees?***

You can pay class registration fees using cash, check (payable to GFHSG), PayPal, or using a credit or debit card in person at the annual Kickoff Party.

## **Appendix**

- **Clean Up List**
- **Expense Reimbursement Form**
- **Ways to Support GFHSG**

## Weekly Classroom Clean Up Check List

- ⇒ All rooms need to be reset to the original layout. Each classroom folder will contain the layout specific to that room.
- ⇒ Please wipe down all tables and countertops in your classroom.
- ⇒ Please pick up any trash or other items on the floor.
- ⇒ Place and straighten all books on the bookshelves in your room as well as any other items (ie toys) that are out of place.
- ⇒ Tie up the trash, leave the tied bag in the trashcan.
- ⇒ Please bring any lost and found items from your classroom to the Lost and Found cart in the lobby.
- ⇒ Note any stains on the carpet or other mishaps and text Jen 507-398-2284 or Christy 813-957-7380 before you leave
- ⇒ Place all folder contents back in the folder and bring the folder to the container in the lobby. **DO NOT TAKE IT HOME WITH YOU**



For administrative use only:

Paid to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Check # or Paypal: \_\_\_\_\_

## Grace Family Home School Group Expense Reimbursement Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address or phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
to be used for reimbursement through Paypal

Class Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Expense (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Requested \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please write any additional comments in the space below and then return the completed form along with a copy of your receipts to [gfhsipay@gmail.com](mailto:gfhsipay@gmail.com)

Thank you.

## **Ways to Support GFHSG**

First and foremost, we appreciate your support in prayer. We are blessed to be able to homeschool and raise our children to follow the Lord. The enemy will try to do whatever he can to divide us, distract us, and debilitate us. Please be in prayer for our co-op leaders as well as every family involved.

If you would like to make a financial donation to GFHSG, please contact our advisory committee. Your donation is tax deductible and you will receive a receipt for the IRS.

Multiple fundraising opportunities will be available throughout the year to offset family costs for building and operational fees, class fees, etc. If you are interested in organizing a fundraising opportunity, please contact a member of the advisory committee.

Thank you for your support!

**All members of GFHSG, whether for the group only or the co-op, must have an Informed Consent and Release form on file at GFHSG**

## **Grace Family Home School Group**

### **INFORMED CONSENT AND RELEASE**

I, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I, or any member of my family, may have against Bay Hope Church and Grace Family Home School Group (hereby known as GFHSG) or against its agents, employees, volunteers and contractors from any and all claims, damages or actions of any nature whatsoever, as a result of participation in the activity for which this Informed Consent and Release is signed, **Grace Family Home School Group events and/or co-op**, even if the negligence is that of Bay Hope Church and/or GFHSG or its agents, employees, volunteers and contractors. I hereby release those parties from any and all demands, claims or actions, including ones arising from their negligence or the negligence of any one of them, even if the negligence results in severe personal injury or death.

**If you attend any GFHSG function, including co-op, you are acknowledging that you are entering this partnership at your own risk.**

I recognize and agree that the activity for which this Informed Consent and Release was signed is one that is physically, emotionally and spiritually beneficial, and that the activity involves inherent and unavoidable risks. I have measured the risks against the benefits and have determined that the benefit far outweighs the risk. I also recognize that the activity may not be provided absent a signed Informed Consent and Release.

I have considered my ability to obtain independent insurance coverage or my other means to cover the expense of any loss, damage or injury, and I accept the risk and expense.

I have read the entire Informed Consent and Release, and voluntarily accept the conditions stated herein as a requirement to participate in the Grace Family Home School Group activities. I also accept these Consent and Release conditions for all people (family, friends, foster children, etc) not listed below that I bring to the GFHSG event or co-op on any given day.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 5

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 6

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 3

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 7

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 4

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child 8

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent or guardian of the above child(ren)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of parent or guardian of the above children

**Grace Family Home School Group**  
**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*After you have thoroughly read the handbook and asked any questions you may have, please sign this form and email it to gfhsginfo@yahoo.com*

I acknowledge that I have received the Grace Family Home School Group Handbook and have thoroughly read and understand the expectations set forth. I agree to comply with and abide by all policies, procedures, and expectations as indicated in this handbook and acknowledge that failure to do so may result in my immediate or end of year dismissal from GFHSG. I acknowledge that as the parent/guardian, I am responsible to communicate expectations with my children and am ultimately responsible for their compliance with these expectations as well.

The GFHSG advisory committee reserves the right to add, edit, or remove policies from this Handbook at their discretion if needed. While unlikely, if a change does occur, all members will be contacted by email.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name