



## Welcome!

Welcome to Gracetown Preschool and Academy.

It is the philosophy of our school that early childhood should be a time of spiritual formation and educational development. This will be intentionally achieved through learning, fun, warmth, security, exploration, and discovery. Young children are creative and receptive, and our program strives to nurture these qualities in each student.

Our purpose is to provide a Christ-centered and safe environment that promotes and encourages spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional growth in each child.

This handbook is being given to provide you with information regarding our school's purpose, goals, core values, philosophy, guidelines, policies, and procedures, as well as expectations of the staff. Any changes (updates, additions, or deletions) to this information will be given to you throughout the year to add to your copy.

Please read the information in this handbook. Write in it, take notes - it is yours! Please ask me any question you may have regarding any of the information contained in it. Once you have read it and asked any questions, please sign, date, and return the signature page to me. It will be placed in your employee file.

I am very excited to have you as a team member here at Gracetown!

Sincerely,

Ruth Sparling  
Gracetown Preschool & Academy Director

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## Gracetown Purpose, Goals, Core Values

### ***Purpose:***

To make Jesus known by serving local families who are working hard to educate their children.

### ***Goals:***

It is our goal to supplement the educational role of the parents as the primary educator in the family, not replace them.

It is our goal to raise up students who are followers of Jesus, understand God's Word and His Worldview, and to be academically successful.

It is our goal to accomplish these purposes with excellence. This means our school is professionally organized, adequately staffed, well resourced, and administrated in a manner that maintains high quality in all areas.

It is our goal that Gracetown be open to both church and unchurched students.

### ***Our Core Values:***

To disciple students to be followers of Jesus. Students will not be required to be believers to attend Gracetown, but parents will know that this is our core value.

To help students develop godly Christian character and habits by focusing on building these in the classroom, with family, and towards friends and neighbors.

To teach each student the Bible and a Christian worldview.

To, as much as possible, use only Bible based Christian Curriculum.

To routinely have chapels, or devotionals, during the week that include singing and Bible teaching.

All teachers should be believers and be fully devoted followers of Jesus.

We encourage all teachers to share the gospel in class and to integrate faith into all subjects.

To train students in liberal arts or enrichment studies with excellence, preparing students for success in their educational path.

## **Terms of Employment**

### ***Contacting the Program***

Ruth's cell phone number is (530) 940-8842

Church office number is (530) 823-8330

Our physical address is 3126 Olympic Way, Auburn CA, 95602

### ***Payroll Policy and Schedule***

Employees will be paid either by check or direct deposit biweekly. Staff members are required to complete their time sheets and submit them to the Director each Thursday before the end of each pay period. If a staff member works additional hours that have been previously authorized by the Director, they will receive payment for the additional time worked.

### ***Dress Code***

All staff are expected to dress professionally and modestly. Spaghetti straps are not permitted. Jeans are acceptable. It is recommended that teachers and aides dress for comfort to allow sitting on the floor, outdoor play, and getting messy. Wear footwear that allows for the same. Be an example to the students in all that you do, including your standard of dress.

### ***Cell Phone Policy***

Cell phone use is permitted in the classroom and on the playground to communicate with other staff or parents only. Phones should not be used for personal use during school hours, as we need to keep our attention on our students.

Sometimes things come up, such as a doctor calling, which may require an exception to this policy. Please speak with the Director ahead of time if you are expecting such a call and will need to step out to take it.

### ***Absence and Tardiness Policy***

It is our policy that any staff member who cannot come to work on their scheduled day or by their scheduled start time must contact the Director as early as possible so that appropriate alternative plans can be made.

### ***Playground Policy***

Gross motor activity is important to a child's health, and for their fine and gross motor growth and development. Outdoor play is part of each classroom's schedule. The children will go outside to play every day. In the event of inclement weather (too cold, too hot), staff will provide an opportunity for gross motor play indoors in Gracetown.

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Staff should be always engaging and alert. While monitoring play, Staff should position themselves in different areas on the playground to keep kids safe and prevent any behavior problems from occurring. Two staff members must be present at all times. Playground rules include, but are not limited to:

- Trikes must go in one direction. Only one rider at a time on trikes.
- No climbing on the outside of the play structure or jumping from the top of it. Bark stays in the bark area.
- No climbing up the slide.
- Students must ask permission to leave the playground to use the restroom or get a drink.

### ***Employee Harassment Policy***

Gracetown is committed to maintaining a work environment in which all individuals treat each other with dignity and respect, and is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment - including sexual harassment. Any complaints of harassment should be brought to the attention of the Director. The Director is prepared to take action to prevent and correct any violations of this policy. Anyone who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

### ***Staff Meetings***

The Director and staff shall meet once a month to address program issues, meeting individual needs of students, policies, and parent communication. Staff meetings will occur on the last Thursday of the month. If there is a change then the Director will notify you as soon as possible.

### ***Staff Supervision and Evaluation***

The Director shall observe, at least once a month, each staff member while working with children and meet with staff members as needed to discuss children's individual needs and needs of the families. Staff performance evaluations will occur in the fall and spring. Staff members shall review, provide input, comment on and sign the evaluations. Documentation of all observations and consultations shall be filed in that staff employee's file.

### ***Time-off Requests***

All time off requests must be given to the Director at least two weeks prior to the time being requested off, in order to find a substitute.

## **Expectations of Staff**

### ***Allegations of Abuse or Neglect***

All staff are mandated reporters and are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the California Department of Social Services through Placer County Child Protective Services immediately.

The numbers are:

Toll Free (866) 293-1940

Or (916) 872-6549

Please also inform the Director about suspected abuse or neglect.

### ***Assessing Children's Development: Observing, Recording, and Assessments***

Teachers will observe children in the program throughout the year by recording observations, anecdotes, checklists, and other methods. These observations will be shared and discussed with the Director. A conference with the child's parent may be requested if deemed necessary.

## ***Behavior Standards and Procedures***

We believe that God created families and gave them children to train and teach to know and love God and others. We believe that discipline belongs in the home as parents model and disciple their children in following Jesus. Gracetown is here to help you in that endeavor.

The Bible teaches that:

1. Children should obey and honor their parents. Ephesians 6:1,2a “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother.”
2. Parents and students should have proper respect and trust for the teachers and their roles. Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”
3. We are all taught to be kind and love one another. Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God, in Christ, forgave you.” Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Therefore, we will teach and reinforce these truths and provide practice at school in their development. Our students will be memorizing these verses and more throughout the year and will be asking God to bless His truths as we learn and practice following Him together.

In the event that a student has a major or recurring behavioral issue, the parent will be notified about the situation and our staff will work with the family to resolve the issue. Please note: A child may be asked to leave the school in extreme circumstances if their behavior is compromising the standard of the classroom atmosphere as a whole. This decision will not be made lightly and will involve the parents’ input.

We will be using the teaching and encouragement side of discipline as well as positive peer influence as our primary tools to encourage self-control and character development. We love our students and that will be the basis for our teaching and correction.

## ***Behavior Management***

It is our belief that if the environment is not developmentally appropriate, children can become frustrated, and unwanted behaviors can arise. To alleviate this, we will provide a developmentally appropriate program that engages children and gets them excited to learn. However, conflicts will arise, and teachers will respond in a positive, appropriate manner. Teachers will use behavior management techniques such as setting reasonable and positive expectations, offering “choices”, and providing children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings. There are times in which the child will be incapable of responding to these techniques and will need extra time to gain their self-control. During such times, the teacher will direct the child to a quiet place within the classroom for some time away from their peers to allow the child time to calm down. If a child is biting or

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engaging in other harmful behavior, contact the Director and the child will be removed from class and the parents called.

Parents will be notified of any behavior concerns and will be asked to work along with the teachers in helping the child with inappropriate behaviors. **Teachers will meet with the Director where the behavior will be discussed as a team prior to notifying a parent of the concerns.** The teacher shall then use discretion and reinforce that our staff wish to work alongside the parent to help the child with his/her behavior. Teachers will reinforce to the parent that the child is loved, but the behavior is undesirable.

Spanking or other corporal punishment of children is *never* used. It is also our policy to never subject children to humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, or deprivation of snacks. They also will not miss the entire movement period of their day. Any staff member who does not comply will be terminated.



## ***Child Pick-Up Policy***

Children may only be picked up by persons who have been authorized by the parent/guardian. It is the staff's responsibility to know who has been authorized. Staff members should ask for a photo identification for all persons picking up children and compare to the names authorized for pick-up. Staff should continue to do this until they are familiar with the authorized persons. When in doubt ASK FOR PICTURE ID. Parents are told this will happen and will be expecting it. Staff members are NOT to release a child to an unauthorized person. In the event this ever happens, please notify the Director and the child's parents immediately.

## ***Curriculum Planning***

Curriculum is provided and expected to be utilized. However, you have the freedom to supplement and get creative as long as the material and standards are being taught. As a Christian program we want to include Biblical truths across the curriculum and throughout the day.

If you are supplementing, please email your lesson plans a week in advance to the Director. If you would like to do a certain craft or art activity that requires materials to be ordered, please submit the request to the Director a month prior to allow adequate time for their arrival.

## ***Confidentiality***

Information regarding children and families is privileged and confidential. The staff is expected to keep all information confidential and not discuss it in front of children or with other families.

## ***Grievance Policy***

At Gracetown, we strive to work as a team with open communication with each other. From time-to-time individual employees may have grievances related to employment which must be resolved in order to maintain positive working relationships within our team. Individuals are encouraged to try to resolve grievances with each other informally through discussion.

If this format is unsuccessful, staff may notify the Director of their grievance. The Director will evaluate the complaint and address it, and possibly bring it to the attention of the Executive Pastor if deemed necessary. If staff has a grievance with the Director, please address it with the Director first. If after speaking with the Director, the issue has failed to be resolved, then the staff shall contact the Executive Pastor.

## ***Health and Illness Procedures***

### I. Administration of Medication for Children

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Medications will only be administered if the required dosage is due during the time the child is at school and under the following conditions:

- Written consent has been given by the parent and the child's physician.
- Medications will not be administered contrary to the directions on the original medication container.
- All medications must be in their original packaging with the child's name, directions for administration, the dosage, number of doses per day, and number of days the medication has been prescribed.
- The child must have taken this medication or dosage in the past.

### II. Children's Illness:

Children **should not come to school** if he/she:

- Had a fever in the past 24 hours
- Has had diarrhea, vomiting, within past 24 hours
- Has been on an antibiotic less than 24 hours
- Suspected or confirmed throat or sinus infection
- Head lice, open lesions in the mouth or on the body
- Any child who does not feel well and is need of comfort

A child with a minor cold may attend school as long as he/she is comfortable, not coughing excessively, and nasal discharge is clear.

If a child becomes sick at school, the Director will call parents first. If they cannot be reached, their emergency contacts will be called. If we are unable to reach anyone, the child will rest in a room separate from the rest of the children under supervision until someone is reached.

### III. Emergency Procedure for Children

If a child were to need emergency care due to an injury or a condition that requires more than first aid treatment, the following procedure will be followed:

1. In the event of a life-threatening emergency - 911 will be called first
2. The parent(s) will be notified next.
3. If a child's parent(s) cannot be reached, their emergency contacts will be called.
4. If we are unable to reach anyone, the Director shall assume responsibility for the child.

### IV. Injury Report

If a child is injured on the playground, in the classroom, on field trips, or any other time while in

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school, an “Ouch Report” needs to be filled out. These reports are then given to the Director. Be sure to notify the parent that the child was injured.

### ***Safety and Management of Classroom***

Staff is required to assist with classroom cleanup during the school day. This may include, but is not limited to: cleaning tables, chairs, and sinks, dusting counters and furniture, sanitizing toys, and vacuuming.

### ***Snack Policy***

Parents provide snacks for their children. We have a strict “no peanuts” policy. Please do not allow children to share snacks.

### ***PhotoCircle***

We take pictures of the children throughout the year and add them to the app PhotoCircle. Only families and staff are added to the group in the app so it remains private. Parents will sign a release to allow pictures of their child to be taken.

### ***Opening Procedures***

Unlock classroom and bathrooms. Make sure hand soap is in bathroom. Open Gracetown and set up videos for Bible. Set up classroom in preparation for the day. Check tables in courtyard to see if they need to be wiped down. Set up parent drop-off table so parents can sign kids in and out.

### ***Closing Procedures***

Clean tables, chairs, and sinks if necessary. Sanitize toys and vacuum if necessary. Make sure all playground equipment is returned to shed and the shed is locked. Lock up bathrooms. Turn off computer in Gracetown and lock up.

Gracetown Staff Handbook

**Signature Page**

I have read, understand, and agree to the information contained in the staff Handbook for Gracetown Preschool & Academy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date