

Grace College and Seminary Statement on Community Lifestyle Expectations

Members of the Grace College and Seminary (Grace Schools) community are committed to the mission of the institution and to living in a manner that brings glory to the name of our Lord. To this end we agree to uphold the standards of the community as cited in this statement.

Since members of the Grace Schools community are also members of the broader community of the body of Jesus Christ, it is expected that everything we do will reflect our commitment, both to our Lord and to His body of believers. This commitment is to be demonstrated by faithful involvement in a local evangelical church, Christian loyalty to each other, and pursuit of the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Our beliefs on all topics are based on scripture (2 Timothy 3:16); therefore, the Word of God is the final authority on all matters of *faith and conduct*. Members of the Grace Schools community work hard to demonstrate Christ-like attitudes and actions appropriate for mature Christians in their personal lives and in the life of the community. In seeking to live out the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) rather than deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), items expressly forbidden in the Scripture are not acceptable for members of the Grace Schools community. Examples include pride, greed, lust, slander, drunkenness, profane language, premarital sex, adultery, homosexual behavior, and prejudice (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We affirm the holy institution of marriage as being between one man and one woman, rooted as it is in God's creation of man and woman and in the relationship of Christ and his church.

Grace Schools values the *worth and dignity of human life*. Having been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), those who learn, live, and/or work at the institution are expected to respect and uphold life-affirming practices that distinguish our faith community from other institutions of higher education, particularly for those who are vulnerable members of society. Consistent with a resolution of the Charis Fellowship (1982, 1996), Grace Schools believes that human life is worthy of respect and protection at all stages from the time of conception. The sanctity of human life is established by creation (Genesis 1:26-27), social protection (Genesis 9:6) and redemption (John 3:16).

Although Scripture does not provide specific teaching regarding all *social practices* in a given cultural setting, it does speak to our Christian responsibility in areas of conduct that may be harmful or spiritually offensive to ourselves or to others. In keeping with its objectives to develop moral and spiritual leadership, Grace Schools expects members of the community to demonstrate restraint and discretion in entertainment choices, social activities, and personal habits (Galatians 5:13-23), including substances that may harm our physiological and psychological well-being. Without question, the Christian should act in ways that honor the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1), and God's standard of purity; are morally uplifting; and guide us to godliness through the use of spiritual disciplines including scripture reading, study, and application; prayer; worship; meditation; evangelism; serving; and stewardship.

All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's standards in one way or another (Romans 3:23), but if we ask for His forgiveness, His grace and mercy are extended to us (Ephesians 2:4-5). While recognizing the existence of temptation, sin, and lifestyles that are contrary to biblical truth, Grace Schools expects tangible evidence of *life transformation*, commitment to growth in Christ, and sound judgment based on biblical principles. Jesus was full of grace and truth (John 1:14) and, in striving toward His example, we seek as a spiritual community to demonstrate a balance of both.

As a community of believers, therefore, those at Grace Schools strive to carry out both individually and collectively the model for *conflict management and resolution* described in Romans. We make use of biblically-based practices such as arbitration, mediation, grace, restoration, forgiveness, and redemption to live at peace with each other (Romans 12: 16-21) and strive to resolve disagreements in private or within the Christian community using the biblical principles of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Matthew 5:23-34, and Matthew 18:15-20 as guidelines.

We acknowledge that God has placed institutions and individuals in positions of *authority* over Christians and our biblical response is one of submission (Romans 13:1-8). God and His word are our final authority and give us guidance in areas such as relationships, marriage, the church, human government, spiritual leaders, and employers. Our testimony in these matters of authority is powerful when our actions are based on biblical truth rather than individual gain. Our responsibility as citizens is submission, but we also have rights as citizens to protection; therefore, although there may be competing interests, we value the right to appeal decisions based on our biblically-informed conscience (Acts 5:29). Grace Schools, however, recognizes and supports only those individual and campus advocacy initiatives that are in alignment with biblical teaching as outlined in this *Statement on Community Lifestyle Expectations* and our *Covenant of Faith*.

Above all, we the members of the Grace Schools community are committed to accurately representing the Lord Jesus Christ on our campus, in our community, and to the ends of the earth.

I affirm my willingness to abide by the Grace Schools' *Statement on Community Lifestyle Expectations* and understand that policies related to these expectations are detailed in the *Student Handbook*.