

Tuition Assistance

*Applicants for tuition assistance will be prioritized according to financial need, faithfulness to your church and giving or tithing, commitment to Grace Christian School and Christian education, and the total number of children in Christian school. **Maximum tuition assistance is 66% of tuition.***

STEP 1 Submit completed Admissions Application to school office with \$50 fee and required paperwork. Tuition Assistance will not be offered until your student is accepted to the school.

STEP 2 Carefully read the Tuition Assistance FAQs.

STEP 3 There are a number of financial records you will need. Gathering your financial information is similar to collecting information to file your taxes and takes about the same length of time.

STEP 4 Once you have gathered your financial information, it takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete the application online. You do not have to complete the entire application at one time. Your user name and password will allow you to access your data until you have completed the payment section.

STEP 5 Go to our website: www.gracecs.org and complete the FAST tuition application by clicking the FAST logo. FAST offers a simple, online application, with very extensive directions. You will need access to a computer to process the application. There is a \$35 application fee, payable by credit card (MasterCard or Visa.) If you are unable to pay the application fee, please contact the school. If you do not have a credit card, you may purchase a voucher from GCS that will allow you to complete the application.



STEP 6 Please send a copy of your most recent **Federal Tax Return (IRS 1040 or 1040EZ)** and **W-2's** to FAST using a pre-addressed envelope which is available in the GCS Office. Your application will not be complete and ready for review by the GCS Tuition Assistance Committee until this information is received by FAST.

STEP 7 **Pastor Evaluation Form included in FAST preaddressed envelope.** This form must be submitted to your pastor. Your pastor's response should be on **official church letterhead and mailed directly** to Grace Christian School by your pastor.

NOTE: All information is kept strictly confidential. If you have any additional questions, please contact Mrs. Denise Lee, Business Manager, at 203-329-1482 or dlee@gracecs.org

Tuition Assistance FAQs

What is the process for applying for tuition assistance?

1. Applications filled out directly on a secure website through the link posted school's website. FAST, which is affiliated with Independent School Management. This FAST application costs approximately \$35 per family.
2. Parents should also stop by the GCS Office to pick up a FAST User Manual and envelope to mail supporting documents directly to FAST.

3. Parents should give their pastor the letter included in the envelope. The pastor's letter should be mailed directly to GCS.

4. It is always beneficial to include a personal letter with your financial information giving the Tuition Assistance Committee details about special circumstances that you may be facing as a family. This letter can be addressed to the attention of the Business Manager, and will be passed along to the Committee. All information received will be kept confidential.

Who decides what tuition assistance is awarded?

The Board of GCS has authorized an outside Tuition Assistance Committee, to consider tuition assistance applications. *The maximum award is 66% of the total tuition.* Award amounts awarded should always be kept confidential.

When can I apply for tuition assistance?

FAST updates the Tuition Assistance website each fall. You can complete the FAST application any time during the Admissions process; however, final decision for aid for the next school year will not be made by the committee until the new student has received a Letter of Acceptance from the Admissions Office.

What forms will I need to complete the FAST application?

Tax Information

W-2 Wage and Tax Statements

Most recent 1040 or 1040A

Copies of all supporting tax schedules

Business – Schedule C or C-EZ (1040)

Farm – Schedule F (Form 1040)

Rental Property – Schedule E (Form 1040)

LLC – Schedule E, Form 1120S and Schedule K-1

S Corporation – Schedule E, Form 1120S and Schedule K-1

Trust – Schedule K-1

Household Information

Year-end statements from your mortgage holder

Bank Statements

Brokerage Statement

Insurance costs for home, life auto and health

Utility Information

Medical records and expenses

Retirement account information

When will I hear about Tuition Assistance after my application is complete?

After FAST has sent its result to the committee and all paperwork is received including the Pastor's letter, the committee will make a decision and send an award letter within 2 weeks. The applicant will then have 2 weeks to accept the award by signing the letter and returning it to the Business Manager.

What if I do not feel the Tuition Assistance is enough?

The Tuition Committee's decision is final. If you decide the award does not make it possible for your student to enroll for the coming year and you return the signed letter within 2 weeks of receipt, the 10% down payment will be returned to you. **After 2 weeks the down payment becomes nonrefundable.**

As a single parent what financial assistance information will be required? When both parents in a separation or divorce situation are employed, the income of both is considered. Furthermore, if grandparents are providing a subsidy of any amount to the family, then they must also submit their financial information.

Does the family's need for Tuition Assistance impact the admissions decision for newly applying students?

No. The admissions process is a needs-blind approach. Grace Christian School does not consider financial need when deciding whether or not to accept an applicant. Keep in mind the Tuition Assistance is granted only *after* a student has been accepted to GCS.

If my child receives Tuition Assistance, will he or I be required to do anything in return?

Tuition Assistance is a gift. Neither a financial recipient nor his family is required to work in exchange for the award, nor does the award have to be paid back. However, the level of involvement in the school and commitment of the student(s) has a strong influence on the committee's willingness to work with a family. It is expected that the student will maintain at least a minimum GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, good attendance and good behavior both in and out of school

What if I have missed the application deadline for tuition assistance?

Applications will still be considered as long as funds are available. Obviously, those applications which were received on time will be considered first.

How is the amount awarded determined?

Many factors go into the Tuition Assistance Committee's determination of the amount of general tuition assistance awarded. First, financial information gathered from input to FAST is evaluated along with information from the family's latest tax return. Factors taken into account include family income, net worth and debt levels, housing and automobile ownership, number of children and educational costs for children, among others. Then special family circumstances are also evaluated, such as unemployment issues, single-parent situations, etc.

When are Tuition Assistance awards applied to fees?

Tuition Assistance awards are applied on a semester basis. A full year adjusted tuition amount will reflect the full award. If a student withdraws or is expelled during the school year the Tuition Assistance Fund shall retain all portions of the unused assistance.

What if I run into financial difficulties during the school year or early summer?

Most of the tuition assistance funds are distributed during the spring, but there may be limited amounts available for award during the school year. The best way to ensure that you are assisted during the year is to keep the Finance Office fully informed of your problems and to be as faithful as practical in making any kind of payment toward your tuition obligation. We ask parents to pay us some amount, even a minimal amount, on a regular basis during a time of financial difficulty. This will demonstrate financial responsibility, which is one factor in qualifying for assistance.

How is my financial information kept confidential?

Information submitted to FAST is kept in confidence by that organization. When the reports are mailed to GCS, the Business Manager opens them and shows them only to the Tuition Assistance Committee. Income tax returns are handled in a similar fashion. All members of the committee are fully aware of the need for confidentiality. When awards are made, the only people who know the amounts of the awards are the committee members and the Business Manager. We request that families also be discreet and keep the award amounts a private matter.

What if I still have more questions about tuition assistance?

Please contact Denise Lee, Business Manager at 203-329-1482 or dlee@gracecs.org